



St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Handbook

Items Covered:

Program Goals

Faith Formation Classes

Sunday Mass

Sacramental Preparation

Role of Parents

Child Expectations

Catechist Information

Logistical Info i.e. late arrivals, early dismissal, pick-up

Safety

St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church
600 Columbia Drive
San Mateo CA, 94402

650-347-0701

Updated: August 2025



Program Goals

The goal of the St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Program is to create a program of lifelong faith formation that is centered in and flows out of the events of church life. It embraces all ages and generations, promotes faith growth at home, and promotes participation in the church community.

By providing a welcoming environment and an array of activities, St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Program invites and empowers 1st through middle school grade children and their families to more fully understand and live Catholic values and faith. Through on-going development, these children strengthen their personal relationship with Christ, become active members of the community, and share in Christ's mission to be a light to the world through several service projects and parish events completed throughout the year.

The first catechists in any child's life are the family members with whom he or she lives. The staff and volunteers at St. Bartholomew are here to assist the parents and guardians, who are the primary teachers of their children in the Faith.

Faith Formation Classes

Faith Formation classes meet once a week, beginning in mid-September and ending mid-May.

Elementary Faith Formation (EFF) is for children in grades 1 - 5. We offer classes on either Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m. in the Parish Center.

Children are grouped into their "faith" age; not necessarily the same as their grade in school. Every class has a lead catechist and at least one assistant catechist.

Middle School Faith Formation (MFF) is for kids in grades 6 - 7. We offer classes on Tuesday afternoon from 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.



Sunday Mass

Weekly Commitment: Families enrolled in St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation agree to accompany their child to Sunday Mass weekly. Each child is expected to learn and experience the beauty of the Sunday Mass in preparation for future sacraments and development of their Catholic identity. The Sunday Mass is the source and summit of Catholicism, and our program intends to help families encounter God during Sunday Mass.

Family Mass & Youth Mass: St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Program offers two different masses dedicated to families: Family Mass & Youth Mass.

The Family Mass is scheduled once a month at the Sunday 9:00 a.m. Mass. Family Masses focus on the significance of families and the role of parents. The Youth Mass is scheduled once a month during the Sunday 5:00 p.m. Mass. Youth Masses highlight a teenager's experience in developing their Catholic identity.

Mass Times: St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church offers four Mass times for families to attend: 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. Our Sunday Vigil Mass is at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon. The Vietnamese Mass is offered on Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

Sacramental Preparation

First Holy Communion: Children seven and older who have been baptized, accompanied by their families, may take the next step in the Initiation process and prepare for First Eucharist.

Children are enrolled in the parish Faith Formation Program for two years, and receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion during the Easter season of their second year of preparation. Attendance to three family workshops are required. These are offered from September through March for children and parents together.

First Reconciliation (Confession): Children are prepared to celebrate this Sacrament before they receive their First Eucharist. All parents are expected to assist in the sacramental preparation of their children and are required to attend the scheduled parent meetings for this purpose. See the Faith Formation Program Calendar for specific dates



Confirmation 1st Year is offered to students in 7th Grade (or older) who are ready to explore preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The class focused on growing the student's knowledge of the faith and is offered weekly on Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. Each candidate is required to attend classes weekly, Family Masses, and a two-day Confirmation Retreat (The Confirmation 1st Year Retreat).

St. Bartholomew Confirmation Program is a two-year program. Students must have taken Confirmation 1st Year before enrolling in Confirmation 2nd Year, regardless of age or grade.

Confirmation 2nd Year is for all students entering 8th grade (or older) who have completed Confirmation 1st Year. Over the course of one school year, students attend ten two-hour classes, OnFire Norcal (a one-day retreat), and a two-day retreat weekend prior to the Rite of Confirmation.

RCIA Adapted for Children: For older children (ages 7-17) who need preparation for the sacraments of Baptism and/or Eucharist and Reconciliation, we offer special classes as part of our Faith Formation Program. Unbaptized children who complete this process will receive the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass.

Role of Parents

The first catechists in any child's life are the family members with whom he or she lives. The staff and volunteers at St. Bartholomew are here to assist the parents and guardians, who are the primary teachers of their children in the Faith.

We do ask that parents prioritize St. Bart's EFF/MFF/Confirmation classes accordingly and make every attempt to promote good attendance at our weekly classes, regular Sunday Mass attendance, and our monthly Family Mass. This also means staying informed of news and programs offered at St. Bartholomew by reading our monthly Faith Formation Newsletter, occasionally checking our Web page, and reading the weekly church bulletin.



Change of Address/Phone: Please notify the Faith Formation office of any change of address or phone number (work or home) immediately so that the Faith Formation Staff will be able to contact parents in the event of an emergency involving their child.

Child Expectations

Children also have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the Faith Formation Program at St. Bartholomew. They are expected to:

- Be respectful of the catechist and other children.
- Listen carefully, follow directions and participate in the session activities.
- Complete any home assignments.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures.
- Share what they have learned and experienced in their Faith Formation sessions with their parents and families.

Parents will be notified in the case of on-going inappropriate behavior.

The first offense will be a meeting between parent/guardian, Director of Religious Education, catechist, and the child. The second offense will be a meeting between the parent or guardian, Pastor, Director, and child. The third offense will be a transfer to a different Faith Formation Program offered at another parish.

Catechist Information

All of St. Bartholomew's Catechists are volunteers who are committed to share their love of God, their faith and their time with children and young people of the parish. Catechists help children build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the word, building a sense of community, leading prayer and worship, encouraging loving service to others, and setting an example in their own lives.

"Catechists are people who keep the memory of God alive; they keep it alive in themselves and they receive it in others." - Pope Francis



The St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Program requires 16 volunteers to successfully run our program - 8 lead catechists and 8 assistants. *We are always in need of new catechists.* We offer expert guidance, training, and support throughout the year.

In addition all catechists are trained in VIRTUS online Child Safety Program: Protecting God's Children. See Safety section for more information regarding St. Bartholomew's Safe Environment Programs.

Logistical Information

Late Arrivals: If arriving 15 minutes or later to class, please escort them directly to their classroom.

Early Dismissal: If a child must leave class before the usual dismissal time, parents/guardians must meet their child **at the classroom** before leaving. Children will only be released to parents/ guardians or persons annotated on the child's emergency card. *No child will be released to meet an adult in the parking lot.*

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures: Children should be dropped off in front of the Front Office Building on 600 Columbia Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402. For the safety of the children DO NOT DRIVE INTO THE LOWER PARKING LOT FOR DROP-OFF.

Children should be picked up from their teachers in the classroom. Pick up location is on 600 Columbia Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402 in the Office Building.

Supervision is provided up to 15 minutes before and after the Faith Formation session. Children should not arrive earlier than 15 minutes before their session.

Parents can park near 600 Columbia Drive or utilize the side parking lot of the parish center and meet their children at the Front Office. Children should not walk across the parking lot by themselves. This is for the safety of your children.

If a parent knows they will be late picking up their child, please call the office at 650-347-0701 and ask to speak to Jacob or Pattie. If we don't hear from the parent, a parish staff member will call the parents. Parents must pick-up their child in the Faith Formation Office.



Safety

The safety of our students and Faith Formation staff is of paramount importance. All action taken bears in mind the safety and wellbeing of both students and staff members.

For the safety of all, we adhere to a strict NUT FREE POLICY. Please do not bring **any** snacks/food/potluck items that contain nuts or that were processed at a facility where cross-contamination could have taken place.

In the case of an emergency/natural disaster, catechists, coordinators and the Faith Formation Director will remain with the children until either a parent or designated adult picks the children up.

The emergency pick up location is 600 Columbia Drive, San Mateo, CA 94402.

Medical Emergency/Accident/Sudden Sickness: In the case of accident or sudden sickness, the Faith Formation Director, coordinator or his delegate will give appropriate immediate care and notify the parents/guardians.

Dangerous Materials: Faith Formation Director/assistants or designated persons have the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of the participants of the Faith Formation Program. This includes the right to inspect property of individuals suspected of possessing drugs, weapons and other illegal materials. If such materials are found, parents or guardians and/or appropriate authorities will be notified.

Child Abuse: As “child care custodians” Faith Formation Directors, assistants, and catechists are required by state law to report evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect, or child abuse to the proper authorities.

Child Protection: St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Program is committed to the protection and safety of all children entrusted to its care. During all scheduled parish activities and programs, at least two adults are required to be present. As mandated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, all adults working with children (EFF/MFF/Confirmation/Youth Group Catechists) must be trained using the VIRTUS ONLINE TRAINING: “PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN” and obtain a background check using the Live Scan electronic fingerprinting system.

The training curriculum raises awareness in regards to recognizing, reporting, and preventing child abuse. The Policies and Procedures and the Standards of Conduct regarding sexual misconduct in the Archdiocese of San Francisco are a part of the training.

If there are any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email/call Jacob Tolentino at jacob@barts.org or [650-347-0701](tel:650-347-0701) ext. 1003.





2025 - 2026 Parent & Student Handbook Signature Page

After reading St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Handbook, please sign the appropriate lines below and return the form to the Front Office.

We, the parent(s)/ guardians of _____ have read and understand the contents of St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Handbook.

We agree to follow the policies outlines in St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Handbook.

We understand that the St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Program reserves the rights to amend policies and procedures when necessary, and that we will abide by changes. Any changes made to the Handbook will be distributed by St. Bartholomew's Faith Formation Program.

Signature of:

Parent/ Guardian: _____

Date: _____