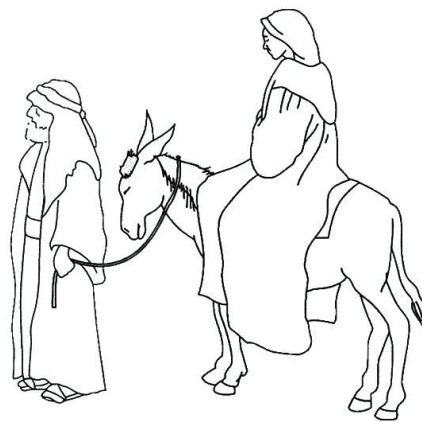


St. Mary & St. Joseph

Faith Formation

Parent and Student Handbook



About Our Program

Our Mission Engage. Encounter. Transform.

We believe that you have entrusted your children to us to deepen the faith you have given them as parents. With your cooperation, such as attending parent sessions, celebrating the Eucharist and the Sacraments together, and reinforcing Christian values in your homes, we can help your family grow in the faith as you all journey together.

The goal of our faith formation program is first and foremost to grow in a relationship with Jesus. We accomplish this goal by learning and studying the Bible, discussing how virtue, grace, morals and values help us to grow closer to God and how to share the light and truth of Jesus with others.

Parish Staff and Contact Information

Pastor: Fr. Trevor Peterson

Secretary: Rick Norris

Bookkeeper: Tracy Smith

Director of Faith Formation: Liann Bommersbach

St. Mary's Address: 15 1st Ave, Deer River, MN 56636

St. Joseph's Address: 51061 Wolf Drive, Ball Club

Mailing Address for both: St. Mary P.O. Box 98, Deer River

Office Phone Number: 218-246-8582

During Classes Contact Number: 360-463-0517 (Liann's Cell)

Email: stmarysreligious@duluthcatholic.org

Website: <https://lakewinniecatholicparishes.com>

Calendars and Forms are available on the website

Family Mass Participation

It is so important for our families and our faith formation program to work together as a partnership to raise our children in the Catholic Faith. Mass attendance each week is critical to the child's (and family's) spiritual health. The parent is the child's first teacher and role model in faith. The faith formation program represents the Church's partnership with parents to raise children in the Catholic faith. It is essential that families attend Mass each week and on holy days of obligation so that the children not only receive the most important part of their faith formation experience, but also because Mass attendance gives the child a context and understanding for what they learn in the classroom.

Our Mass and Confession schedule:

St. Mary's:

Daily Mass: Tuesday 8:30am Wednesday 8:30am

Adoration: Wednesday 9:00am – 10:00am

Sunday Mass: Confession at 8:00 am Mass at 8:30 am

St. Joseph's:

Saturday: Confession at 4:30 pm Mass at 5:00pm

*Please remember that it is never too late to come back to church if you haven't been in a long time – you are welcomed with open arms at St. Marys and St. Josephs!!

Circle of Grace

The Diocese of Duluth requires all children and youth from kindergarten through 12th grade, who attend a Catholic School, Religious Education or Youth Ministry program, to be taught Circle of Grace lessons each year.

Circle of Grace educates and empowers children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others, while being taught in the framework of our Catholic faith.

Circle of Grace lessons bring God and our Catholic beliefs into the center of child protection by teaching:

- God's presence and assistance in difficult and confusing situations as an essential component in the Pre-K– gr. 12 curriculum.
- A philosophy that can be used at all times that reinforces God's real presence in our lives, respect for self and others, and skills for good decision making.
- The sacredness of each person and how relationships are called to be experiences of divine love.

There will be one Circle of Grace class each year and is marked on the calendar. See the last page for an opt-out form. Lesson plans are available upon request.

Class Schedule/Structure

Our program runs from the first Wednesday of October to the first Wednesday in May. A calendar is attached to this handbook.

Kindergarten – Fifth Grade: 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm.

Sixth Grade – Twelfth Grade: 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm.

Youth Group Meals

In an attempt to keep from charging a fee for our program, parents take turns bringing dinner for the students every Wednesday of classes at 5:30pm. A printed schedule will be sent home on the first day of class. If you are unable to cook on the night you are assigned, please feel free to switch with another family from the schedule. If an emergency arises, please call the parish office 246-8582.

Meal Ideas:

Sub Sandwiches	Soup & Sandwiches	Sloppy Joes
Chili	Spaghetti	Hotdish
Hamburgers	Grilled Cheese	Pancakes
Tacos	Your Own Specialty	

Please use real plates and glass cups from the cupboards in the kitchen. Have the kids help with cleanup. Make sure the kitchen and surrounding area is completely cleaned up. All the trash should be brought outside. Leftovers may be left in the fridge for Father or brought home.

Fees

In an attempt to provide faith formation for free, we ask families to donate whatever they are able to help cover the cost of workbooks, snacks, and classroom materials.

Each year we spend approximately **\$60** per student on food and supplies. No one will be turned away for not donating.

Catechists and Volunteers

Our Faith Formation program, as in the vast majority of parishes, is supported by many generous volunteers. Our catechists (classroom teachers) are all volunteers. As per the United States Bishop's Charter for Protecting God's Children in conjunction with the Diocese of Duluth policy on protecting the youth, all volunteers participate in criminal background checks and Safe Environment training.

Behavior Plan

If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him/herself or others, or makes the running of the classroom unduly difficult for the catechist, the steps below will be followed to ensure that group participation may continue:

- 1) At first incident the child will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior with a verbal warning.
- 2) If the child continues to disrupt the class, he/she will be sent to the DRE to brainstorm ideas to help him/her behave.
- 3) If inappropriate behavior continues, the child's parent/guardian will be asked to sit in on the next class.
- 4) If the child's behavior continues to disrupt the learning environment, an individualized program will be arranged, or the child will be dismissed from the program for the remainder of the year.

*We understand that some behavioral issues are related to a child's special needs. Letting us know in advance what works best for your child enables our staff and catechists to facilitate an optimal classroom environment and experience for him/her and the other children in the classroom. As such, we invite our parents of children with special needs to advise us on their child/children's unique way of learning, perceiving, interacting etc. so that we may be able to accomplish this together.

Alternate Pick-Up Authorization

If anyone other than a parent is going to pick up your child, we must have written permission from the parents. There is a space on the online registration form to add anyone with permission to pick up your child after class. If, at the last minute, you need someone not on your list to pick up your child please call Liann so she can get the necessary information.

Sacramental Preparation

First Reconciliation / First Communion

First Reconciliation celebrates God's loving forgiveness. The experience of forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel message. Jesus came to show us the Father who is loving and forgiving. This is the God whom we wish our children to meet in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

First Communion is an opportunity to introduce the children of our parish into a fuller participation in God's family of which they are members through Baptism. The faith community of St. Joseph and St. Mary welcomes these children to the Table of the Lord, as they receive for the first time the Body and Blood of Jesus.

First Reconciliation is usually scheduled during Lent.

First Communion is usually the first Sunday in May.

Any special issues related to First Communion should be communicated to the Director as soon as possible. These may include but are not limited to a family member in ministry who wishes to serve during the Mass (priest, deacon, or lay minister), seating accommodations for guests with special needs, etc.

Usually, our parish children are in the second grade when they celebrate these sacraments for the first time.

*If your child is in 3rd grade or older and has not received First Reconciliation/First Communion yet, please contact the parish office so that a plan for sacramental preparation appropriate for your child can be created.

**Low-gluten hosts are available. With regard to such issues as peanut allergies, there is always the possibility of cross contamination, especially with regard to the cup. Families should discuss any such issues with the Pastor or Director in advance.

Confirmation

"It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost." CCC, 1302

Our Confirmation program is a 2-year program which takes place Wednesday evenings from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm.

There are Confirmation requirements put in place by the Diocese of Duluth to ensure that candidates have a well-developed understanding of not only our Catholic faith but of how to put that faith into action. The list of requirements are as follows:

- Baptized
- Regular class attendance for our 2-year program
 - Participate in Mass
- Attend a Confirmation overnight retreat or equivalent
- 20 hours of volunteer community service over the course of our 2-year program
 - Interview with the DRE or Pastor
 - Choose a Confirmation Name
- Write a letter to Bishop Daniel Felton requesting the sacrament of Confirmation

*There is a required parent meeting to discuss the details of Confirmation at the beginning of each year to ensure the students are fully prepared and on track.