



2023–2024

FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK



ST. FAUSTINA
CATHOLIC CHURCH

WELCOME



Community & Education Center

The Catholic Faith Formation program at Saint Faustina Catholic Parish seeks to partner with families in the religious formation of their children. Our program is one that stresses the importance of Faith Formation for all “from womb to tomb”, which may differ from your own experiences. The “Classroom Model” that has been prevalent for the last few decades teaches that it is okay to skip from one sacrament to the next until “graduation” at the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Catholic Faith Formation program at Saint Faustina Catholic Parish is designed to support families in their spiritual formation. We strive to provide a comprehensive program that includes instruction, prayer, and opportunities for families to grow together in their faith. We encourage parents to be actively involved in the faith formation process and to support their children in their journey of faith. By working together, we can help our children grow in their relationship with Christ and become strong Catholic adults.

As parents, you are the best teacher of the faith for your children! No priest, missionary, catechist, or small group leader can replace the influence you alone have on whether your child has a living faith in God and the Catholic Church. We understand it can be very overwhelming in this day and age when there are so many things vying for the attention of children, teens, and parents, which is why we are inviting you into this partnership with us for the upcoming Faith Formation year. Faith Formation is not like a class at school, as it does require Faith. While we have some amazing faithful and faith-filled volunteers who have stepped up to accompany your child in this process, they need a model of faith at home to follow. Please see your commitment to this Faith Formation year as one that echoes the promises made at your child’s Baptism, and allows your own response to your Baptismal calling.

EXPECTATIONS

Parents play a vital role in the faith formation of their children. We encourage parents to attend Mass with their children on Sundays, participate in parish family events, and actively participate in the faith formation program. We encourage parents to consider serving as Catechists, Aides, Missionaries, part of a food team, hall monitors, taking a holy hour of Adoration during your child's class time, or in other ways to support the program. We ask parents to support their children in their faith journey by regularly praying with them, talking to them about their faith, and setting a good example of Catholic living. In particular, we encourage the following:



Attend Mass

Faith Formation begins with the Source and Summit of our faith – at the Mass. Mass attendance is the single greatest requirement in any of our programs, and is an obligation given to us by the Church. Attending Catholic Mass regularly nurtures the soul and is crucial for families as it provides a unique opportunity for spiritual growth and communal worship. It allows parents and children to actively participate in the sacred rituals and teachings of the Church, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith, while nurturing a sense of belonging to a larger faith community. If you have difficulty understanding the Mass, the obligation, or have any resistance to it whatsoever – please reach out to one of our coordinators who can provide additional resources and support here. <https://saintfaustinachurch.org/mass-times>



Register with Us

Our parish continues to grow by leaps and bounds, and the needs of our parish community are scaling with that growth. Therefore, we are asking that all families involved in our Faith Formation program need to be registered members at St. Faustina Catholic Church. Registering offers numerous benefits for families, and allows you to commit to becoming an integral part of our vibrant faith community. If you have not yet registered for our program, you can do so at <https://saintfaustinachurch.org/parish-registration>.



Partner with Us

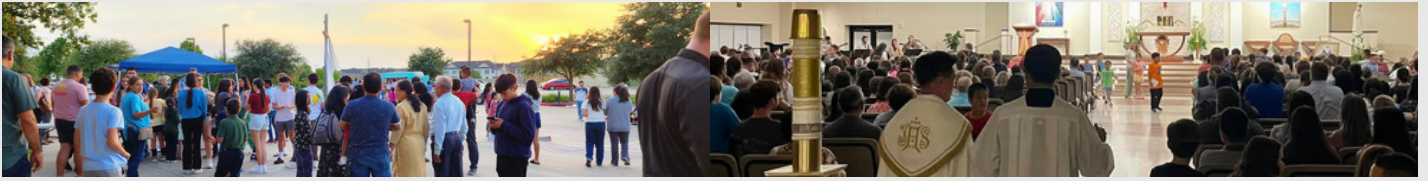
Get involved! We have over 2,500 students in our program, and have a Faith Formation staff that is less than that of a baseball team. We ask that all parents get involved in some aspect of our program – whether it be a weekly, monthly, or even a quarterly commitment. **We will provide a 50% discount as an incentive for those who wish to offer their help weekly as a Catechist or Missionary.** There is something for everyone to do, and our programs can only be successful with the help and support of our parents. Please view our volunteering options below, and then contact the appropriate coordinator to discuss where you can partner with us.



Pray with Us

As mentioned earlier, Faith Formation is different than a normal class or subject in school because of the element of faith that is required. Faith is not something that can be discussed but needs to be lived out. This past year, we took a leap of faith by including Zion in our regular faith formation program and will be doing the same this year. Zion is our monthly night of worship, where we stop everything else and ask our families to gather together and pray with us. Please continue to make this an important part of your family's faith formation experience. New this year is the opportunity for perpetual Adoration as well. On evenings where you have the time, please consider stopping in to the Adoration Chapel during your child's program and pray for them and their class.

ZION: FAMILY NIGHT OF WORSHIP



Once a month, our separate Faith Formation programs converge together for Zion, which is our monthly Family Night of Prayer. Zion has community dinner, great speakers, and time for prayer, replacing the regularly scheduled Faith Formation program for that week. Attendance is still taken these evenings, but it is a time for the family to pause from the busy weekly schedule and gather in community and for prayer.

2023–2024 Zion Schedule**

September 13, 2023, October 11, 2023, November 8, 2023, December 6, 2023, January 7, 2024, February 7, 2024, March 6, 2024, April 3, 2024, and May 1, 2024

* – Our January Zion will be held on Sunday evening instead of a Wednesday night to help kick off the spring semester.

** – Our Zion nights typically begin with Community Dinner at the beginning, with those times and schedules subject to change due to weather and daylight.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

The Sacraments of Initiation (*Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation*) are offered in our programs through a separate process outside of Faith Formation registration. Please note that these programs are open to all age groups (including adults), with the exception of infants. If you have a child under the age of 7 who has yet to be Baptized, please contact our Coordinator of Infant Baptism to discuss that process.

Sacrament Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established according to Archdiocesan requirements and apply to all Sacraments of Initiation.

1. Parents/guardians need to be registered members of the parish.
2. Students must be 7 or older (*2nd Grade*) and be baptized in the Catholic tradition for Reconciliation and their First Communion.
3. Students preparing for Confirmation must be in the 10th Grade or older.
4. Students must be enrolled and regularly attending their Faith Formation Class. The exception is if they are currently attending Catholic School or an otherwise pre-approved program.
5. Students must have actively participated in Faith Formation classes at Saint Faustina or another parish for **one full year** immediately prior to registering for sacrament preparation.
6. Any student transferring from another parish must provide documentation showing that they meet these requirements.
7. A copy of the candidate's Baptismal Certificate must be provided when registering for sacrament preparation.
8. Weekly mass attendance is also expected of your child, as part of their continuing faith journey, and as an enhancement to their Faith Formation classes.
9. If your child has met all of these requirements, they will be invited into the sacrament preparation process by the coordinator for the particular sacrament. If your child has met all of these requirements, please be sure to indicate that as part of their registration, so that they will be added to the list for the sacrament preparation process. If you are unsure or have more questions about this process, please contact the appropriate coordinator.

ELEMENTARY

Our Elementary Faith Formation program is designed to instill the fundamental teachings of the Catholic faith in our young learners, empowering them to confidently live out their beliefs in society. We have two tracks for our families to consider when registering their child: our weekly on-campus program as well as our home study program. On campus, students will have interactive lessons, creative activities, and a supportive community, aimed at nurturing their spiritual growth and equipping them to become compassionate, responsible, and faithful individuals who positively impact the world around them.

Schedule

- Weekly On-Campus Program
 - Monday Afternoons 5:00 pm–6:15 pm
 - Tuesday Afternoons 5:00 pm–6:15 pm
 - Wednesday Afternoons 4:30 pm–5:45 pm
 - Wednesday Evenings 6:45 pm–8:00 pm
 - **Students are expected to attend weekly, and to gather with us on the weeks we have Zion.**
- Home Study Program through Sadlier Publishing:
 - All-year at-home lessons with no classes on-site. This program needs to be kept up with on a weekly basis at home, and cannot be put off until the end of the semester or year.
- Sacrament Preparation for First Reconciliation and Communion is a separate registration you will be invited to if your child is eligible.

JUNIOR HIGH

Our Junior High Students (*Grades 6–8*) have the option to attend the EDGE on Sundays as their on-campus Faith Formation program, or choose a Home Study Option instead. The EDGE is our engaging and interactive youth ministry program that empowers our junior high students to explore their faith, build meaningful connections, and journey together in a faith-filled environment that develops and nurtures an intimate relationship with the Lord.

Schedule

- Weekly Program EDGE
 - Sundays: 2:45 pm–4:15 pm
 - **Students are expected to attend weekly, and to gather with us on the weeks we have Zion.**
- Home Study Program through Sadlier Publishing:
 - All-year at-home lessons with no classes on-site. This program needs to be kept up with on a weekly basis at home, and cannot be put off until the end of the semester or year.
- Sacrament Preparation for First Reconciliation and Communion is a separate registration you will be invited to if your child is eligible.
- Abide (*No Registration Required*): Weekly Wednesday Night Community and Formation, 6:30 pm–8:00 pm, sponsored by Junior High Youth Ministry

HIGH SCHOOL

Our High School Program (*Grades 9-12*) prioritizes building one's faith and fostering a sense of community through our small group approach. Our program embraces each individual's unique journey, empowering them to recognize their call to be an intentional disciple of Jesus. Through meaningful discussions, faith-sharing, and engaging activities, we inspire our high school students to deepen their faith, embrace their identity as followers of Christ, and make a positive impact on the world around them.

Schedule

- Weekly Program – Life Teen: D-Group Sundays: 6:30 pm–8:00 pm
 - Dynamic large group and small group format evangelization & catechesis through talks, games, prayer, and community
 - **Students are expected to attend weekly, and to gather with us on the weeks we have Zion.**
- Home study family option available FOR FIRST YEAR TEENS ONLY
 - Book and Video Family Catechesis
- Sacrament Preparation for Confirmation is a separate registration that you will be invited to if your child is eligible. All teens, including Catholic School Teens, must register for regular Faith Formation the year they are eligible for Confirmation!
- Encounter (*No Registration Required*): Weekly Wednesday Night Community and Formation, 6:30 pm–8:00 pm, sponsored by High School Youth Ministry

ADULTS

Our youth and children are not the only ones who are called to continue growing in their faith. At St. Faustina, we offer Adult Faith Formation opportunities that cater to the spiritual growth and evolving needs of our parishioners. As adults, we face unique challenges and complexities in our faith journey, and our programs will meet you where you are at and help you deepen your understanding of Catholic teachings and traditions. These programs are offered at various times throughout the week, and can often be found taking place at the same time as your child participates in their class. Rather than dropping them off, we encourage you to stay, grab a snack, and participate in one of our faith-sharing opportunities.

Moreover, if you have missed one (or more) of your Sacraments, or are interested in becoming Catholic – we have classes for you as well. Please contact the Coordinator of Adult Formation to learn more about these sessions, as well as any other session you may be interested in attending.



VOLUNTEERS

As you may be aware, St. Faustina is a young and growing community. Over these past few years, our faith formation programs have grown significantly and require support and assistance throughout each grade level. To fully partner with our parents, we are inviting you to join us in some capacity in our programs. All volunteers regardless of the length of commitment must have completed and been approved through CMG Connect - the Archdiocesan child and safe environment training program.

ELEMENTARY

The Role of a Catechist and Aides

The role of a catechist/aide is called to nurture a living, conscious, and active faith in the youth he/she teaches. A Catechist witnesses to the faith by sharing his/her faith commitment through word, experience, prayer, and liturgy.

The Catechist/aide is responsible for planning and leading catechetical sessions. This is a weekly commitment for the duration of the Faith Formation year. Each of the sessions last one hour and fifteen minutes. The commitment involves ongoing personal faith formation. It is vital that as a sharer of the faith that the catechist continues to grow in their own faith. Formation, support, resources and ongoing training will be provided to all who volunteer in this area so that they can continue to develop a deep understanding and love for the Catholic faith which he/she shares.

Hospitality Patrol

The move into the CEC building has been a good one, providing a very safe environment for our children to learn about their faith. We are looking for additional volunteers who can commit once a month to being a part of our Hospitality Patrol. You would help greet our families as they enter, assist families in finding their way, and serve as a hall monitor during classes. Note: a smile is all you need to volunteer in this capacity.

JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL

Missionary

To best serve the ever-growing youth ministry program, we are looking for men and women interested in serving in our programs weekly as missionaries. You are called to be a disciple and to show teens what it looks like to really walk with the Lord in love and friendship. Jesus called people in and through relationships, just as God's original plan for humanity was to be taught what they were made for, including the truths of the moral life, in a perfect relationship with the Father. This is why we call our volunteers Missionaries! This is a relationship-first ministry that will strive never to compromise the truth by watering it down or by failing to offer it in real love.

CMG AND SAFE HAVEN TRAINING

The Diocese asks that you go through Safe Environment Training. If you don't know what it is, it consists of a criminal background check and three 30-minute training sessions intended to help adult volunteers be more equipped to protect the youth from all the sketchy stuff that unfortunately happens in the world. This is required for all adult volunteers and staff.

- Below is the website to register an account and take the training sessions:
<https://galvestonhouston.cmgconnect.org>

COMMUNICATION, ATTENDANCE AND FLOCKNOTE

We understand that things can change weekly, so please contact one of us if you have any questions or concerns about the program. We also recommend that you email the respective coordinator and inform us if your child is ill or cannot attend class.

Each program has an attendance policy that will be sent out after registration. If there are questions or concerns about regular attendance, please discuss those with your faith formation coordinator.

Our staff also communicates with our families weekly using Flocknote, which is an email service that has been adopted by the parish for Faith Formation as well as other ministry activities. It is important to make sure you are receiving your weekly emails, as we will also use this service to update you in the event of inclement weather or other important updates. Note: the email address used to register the child(ren) will be the one that is receiving the updates from Flocknote. To log in to Flocknote, please visit <https://stfaustinacctx.flocknote.com/> with the email address you want to receive communications to and verify that your email account is working.

CONTACT US

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