

St. Anthony Catholic Church

Faith Formation Handbook

2017-2018



Mission Statement

The St. Anthony Catholic Church Faith Formation Committee seeks to help bring people into communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ and develop a living, explicit and fruitful faith. We will do this by collaborating with other parish committees to provide opportunities for parishioners of all ages that will:

- increase their knowledge of the faith
- deepen their knowledge of and participation in the liturgical life
- help them learn about and grow in their moral development
- learn about prayer and deepen their prayer life
- promote and support active membership in the Christian community
- prepare them to act as disciples in mission to the world.

Contact Information

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Faith Formation for Children and Youth

Parent-Parish Partnership

Several years ago, researchers conducted a study of more than 3,000 Christian and Jewish teenagers to find out their beliefs and attitudes about God, faith and religion. During this *National Study on Youth and Religion* (NSYR), researchers found that “the single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parent.”

This finding echoes what the Catholic Church has said for years in a variety of its teachings and documents—that parents are the primary teachers of the faith for their children. It also confirms the significant responsibility that parents take on at their child’s baptism when they commit to bring their child up in the practice of the faith.

The St. Anthony parish pledges to help parents in the important role of nurturing the faith life of their children by providing:

- a quality faith formation program to supplement formation that takes place in the home
- faith formation resources for use at home
- social and service opportunities for families
- pastoral care for families as needed

In turn, the parish asks parents to help their children grow in faith by:

- attending Mass weekly with their children
- eating together as a family at least once a week
- praying with their children on a regular basis (e.g. meal prayers, morning blessing, evening prayer)
- teaching their children the traditional prayers of the Church
- bringing their children to the parish faith formation/youth ministry program each week and attending parent meetings and/or sessions as requested
- modeling a commitment to the Church by participating in parish ministries and activities
- modeling lifelong faith development by participating in adult faith formation opportunities (e.g. retreats, Bible studies, seasonal programs, regular course of reading)

Program Descriptions

K-8 Faith Formation

Laura Hollinrake, Coordinator

K-5 Content

The K-5 program uses the *Finding God* series by Loyola Press. This curriculum helps children recognize the presence of God in the sacraments, in their communities of faith, in their experience of God's creation, and in their lives as people for others. At each grade level, children learn about Scripture and Church teaching through the following units: God, Our Creator and Father; Jesus, Our Lord and Savior; The Church, Our Community in the Spirit; Sacraments, Our Way of Life; and Morality, Our Lived Faith.

Middle School Content

The middle school program uses the *Catholic Connections* curriculum by St. Mary's Press. Over the course of three years, youth in the program will cover units on God, Revelation and Faith; Jesus the Christ; The Holy Spirit and the Church; Sacraments and Prayer; The Eucharist; and Christian Morality and Justice.

General Information

Grades are combined in a classroom as needed. Currently, there are combined classes for K/1, 2/3, and 4/5. Grades 6-8 are combined and then divided into class sections as needed.

Children in the program participate in a variety of activities throughout the year that help them learn more about our Catholic way of life, provide service and have fun. Such activities include helping at Mass, leading Stations of the Cross during Lent, collecting and sorting food for the Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets, attending diocesan events such as the junior-high youth rally, and joining in the fun of family bingo night.

High School Youth Ministry

Laura Hollinrake, Coordinator

The high school program uses a youth-ministry based approach, with each session including prayer, community building activities, learning about the faith and discussion.

In addition to the weekly gatherings, youth participate in a variety of service and social activities and are encouraged to participate in diocesan activities such as the annual diocesan youth rally; various retreats such as Quest, TEC, and COR; CLI, a Christian leadership program; and the biennial National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

Senior Scholarship

The St. Anthony Catholic Church Scholarship and Mary Kolbe Memorial Scholarship are awarded each year to selected graduating high school seniors. The scholarship committee considers the following guidelines when awarding scholarships:

- participation in faith formation and youth ministry programs
- service to the Church
- service to the community
- participation in retreats

Scholarship applications are available at the church office; call for application deadline. Applicants will interview with the scholarship committee.

Safe Environment Program

Laura Hollinrake, Coordinator

The U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* mandates that each diocese have a safe environment program to help prevent sexual abuse of children and youth. St. Anthony Catholic Church follows the safe environment program for the Diocese of Davenport, which includes two main components:

- Using the *Circle of Grace* curriculum, which helps children and youth understand and respect their own dignity and that of others, teaches them to recognize when they are safe or unsafe, and helps them learn how to bring their concerns to the trusted adults in their lives. *Circle of Grace* lessons are incorporated into weekly faith formation and youth ministry programs.
- Volunteers who work with children or youth, as well as all parish employees, must pass a background check and become trained in safe-environment principles through a program called *Protecting God's Children*. The background check and training must be renewed every 5 years.

Sacramental Preparation for Children and Youth

Baptism

Rev. Kevin Anstey, Coordinator

Parents wishing to have their child baptized should contact the church office. Parents must attend a preparation session before their child's baptism unless they have attended one for a previous child.

Unbaptized school-age children should enroll in and attend the parish faith formation program and, depending on their age, will also be enrolled in the RCIA for Children program in order to prepare for their initiation into the Church. Contact the Director of Religious Education for more information.

Please note that no baptisms are scheduled during Sunday Mass in the seasons of Advent or Lent, but may be scheduled privately.

First Reconciliation and First Communion

Laura Hollinrake, Coordinator

Preparation for these sacraments usually takes place when a child is in second grade, although older children may be enrolled in the program upon parent request.

Preparation for these sacraments takes place through seven family sessions held monthly from October through April; children attend these sessions with their parent(s) or other significant adult in the child's faith life. The preparation sessions include parent-led and group learning activities and adult faith formation components.

In order to celebrate these sacraments, children must:

- be previously baptized
- have a parent or guardian who is a registered member of the parish
- attend Mass weekly
- participate in the weekly faith formation program
- attend all of the sacramental preparation sessions with a parent or other significant adult
- celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation prior to first Communion

First reconciliation is usually celebrated during the Advent parish communal penance service in December; first Communion is usually celebrated in late April or early May.

Confirmation

Laura Hollinrake, Coordinator

High school youth who wish to be confirmed will complete a one-year preparation program, which is offered every other year, beginning in the fall. The program includes a retreat, several sessions attended by both youth and their parents, monthly mentoring sessions, and service experiences. Youth need to apply to participate in the program.

In order to celebrate confirmation, a youth must:

- be previously baptized
- have celebrated the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist
- have a parent or guardian who is a registered member of the parish
- attend Mass regularly
- attend all of the preparation sessions (with a parent or guardian)
- attend the confirmation retreat
- meet with their mentor each month
- participate in service opportunities within the parish and/or their local community
- participate regularly in the parish youth ministry program

Confirmation is celebrated every other year.

Vacation Bible School

Laura Hollinrake, Coordinator

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a four-day program held each summer during the last full week of July. Each day of VBS focuses on a specific Bible point taken from Scripture. Children 4 years of age through those who have completed 5th grade are placed in small, mixed-age crews that participate in a variety of activities which reinforce the Bible point. All of the crews gather for an opening and closing session and spend the rest of the evening traveling to stations where they learn a Bible story, do a science experiment, play games, have a snack and watch a movie. The activities at each station relate to the Bible point of the day.

Adult Programs

Adult programs and events are scheduled throughout the year, particularly during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Check parish communication sources for upcoming events.

Sacramental Preparation for Adults

Tom Hardie, Coordinator

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process by which adults—those who are unbaptized, those who were baptized in another Christian denomination, or those who have not completed their initiation in the Catholic Church—are welcomed and/or fully initiated into the Catholic community. This process happens over several months and includes several steps:

- period of inquiry
- acceptance into the order of catechumens
- period of the catechumenate
- rite of enrollment
- period of purification and enlightenment
- rite of election
- initiation (which normally takes place during the Easter vigil)
- period of mystagogy

The RCIA includes weekly sessions focused on the teachings of the Church and the Catholic way of life. At the completion of the preparation sessions, those in the program, along with their sponsor and the parish team, will determine their readiness to be fully initiated into the Church.

Registration and Fees

- **K-12 program** registration takes place in September, but children are welcome to join the program at any time. Registration fees are \$30 per child with a maximum of \$100 per family. Fees may be reduced or waived for families with financial need.
- **Vacation Bible School** registration takes place in early July; there is no registration fee.
- **Adult program** registration varies by program; check bulletin and website for information.

Schedules

K-8 faith formation sessions are held on Sundays from 9-10:15 a.m. in the church hall from mid-September through April. A copy of the schedule is available on the parish website.

High school youth ministry sessions are held on Sundays from 7-8:30 p.m. in the church hall from mid-September through April. A copy of the schedule is available on the parish website.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is held in the church hall from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday during the last full week of July; a family service night is held on Thursday evening. The program is open to children who are 4 years of age through those who have just completed the 5th grade; older youth may serve as volunteers.

First reconciliation and first Communion preparation sessions are held on Sundays, from 9-10:15 a.m. once a month from October through April. *On the days these sessions are scheduled children in the program will attend sacramental preparation instead of the weekly faith formation program.* Parents attend these sessions with their child.

Cancellations

Weather cancellations regarding all programs will be announced on KNIA AM 1320/KRLS 92.1 FM. Cancellation of programs will be made as follows: Sunday morning programs by 7:30 a.m., Sunday evening programs by 5:30 p.m., and Wednesday evening programs by 5:30 p.m.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to:

- share their faith as a catechist (teach)
- assist the catechist
- supervise halls and parking lot
- drive children and youth to off-site events
- help prepare and serve meals for sacramental preparation sessions
- lead adult Bible studies and other small groups
- help with decorating for vacation Bible school
- help with social and service programs and events
- chaperone off-site events

Volunteers who work with children or youth must pass a background check and become trained in safe-environment principles through a program called *Protecting God's Children*. Volunteer drivers must present current driver's license and proof of insurance (\$100,000/\$300,000 minimum liability).

Contact the program coordinator if you are interested in volunteering.

Discipline

Behavioral expectations

The word “discipline” comes from the word “disciple”—a follower of Jesus Christ—and means to correct, train, develop or mold in a certain way. In order to create an environment in which all can learn about and experience what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, the following behaviors are expected of all who participate in St. Anthony Catholic Church’s faith formation programs:

- Be respectful of and courteous to everyone
- Obey those in authority (catechists, aides, program directors, chaperones)
- Refrain from inappropriate physical contact (e.g. hitting, kicking, wrestling)
- Refrain from inappropriate speech (e.g. no teasing, name-calling, or use of inappropriate language)
- Take good care of property and possessions (those belonging to the parish or others)
- Leave electronic devices (e.g. iPods, video games) and toys at home unless they are to be used as part of the program
- Stay on the program site (parish or event grounds) unless given permission to leave

Consequences

Children and youth whose behavior is disruptive will be given a verbal warning. If the disruptive behavior continues, they will be given a supervised time-out in order to regain self-control. If disruptive behavior persists, parents will be notified and may be asked to pick up their child from the session. Persistent disruptive behavior may result in dismissal from the program.

Safety

Drop Off and Pick Up of Children

- Children and youth should arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before the start of a program and should be picked up promptly after the program ends.
- Parents dropping off children in the K-8 program should pull into the first driveway of the church parking lot, drop off their child/children, and then exit the lot through the second driveway. All children must enter the building through the hall doors (not the front church doors).
- Because the K-8 session ends at the same time people arrive for Mass, the parking lot will be busy. For safety reasons, parents **MUST** come in to the hall to pick up their children.

Medical Concerns

- Medical information regarding allergies, medications, chronic conditions or special needs as well as health insurance and emergency contact information should be provided on the registration form.
- Volunteers and staff will not give medication to children without prior parental approval and only in unusual circumstances (e.g. day-long events).
- If a child becomes ill or receives a non-life-threatening injury during a program, parents will be notified to pick up their child. In case of medical emergencies, 911 will be called and parents notified.

Custody

Divorced or separated parents will both be provided with ongoing program information, have access to their child's/children's records, and be allowed to pick up their child/children from program sessions unless the faith formation office has been provided legal evidence to restrict such access.

Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco/Weapons

- The presence of illegal drugs or weapons on parish property is strictly prohibited.
- The use of alcohol or tobacco by minors on parish property is strictly prohibited.
- Pursuant to the Iowa Clean Air Act, smoking is prohibited in all parish buildings.

Concerns and Questions

Concerns or questions about faith formation programs should first be directed to the program coordinator. Unresolved concerns or questions may be addressed to the chairperson of the faith formation committee and/or pastor.

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