

# St. Nicholas Catholic Church

# 17-18 Faith Formation

# Parent Handbook

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# CONTACT INFORMATION

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**The parish office hours are Monday – Friday from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.**

## WELCOME!

It is a great privilege to be a part of your children's faith formation. YOU are the primary educators of your children in the ways of our Catholic faith and we are here to guide and help along the way. Our program begins at 1<sup>st</sup> Grade and goes thru 9<sup>th</sup> grade, where the student will be invited to complete initiation into the Catholic faith through the sacrament of Confirmation.

This handbook, which contains important policies, guidelines and a wealth of information, is provided to unite parents and catechists in the preparation of responsible, faithful, and knowledgeable Catholic Christians. Again, this year the monthly flash will keep you updated as well as the bulletin and our website. **If you are not getting the monthly Faith Formation Flash update in your email, please contact Jodee at the phone or email addresses above.** This year we will again have an RCIA program here at St. Nicholas! Please let us know if you would like more information on that program. Please keep the entire Faith Formation program in your prayers so that we may have a great and successful year!

## REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Registration forms for the current year are available on the parish website at [www.stnicholascarver.org](http://www.stnicholascarver.org) or you may request a copy from the parish office. Forms can be mailed to **P.O. Box 133 Carver, MN 55315 ATTN: FF Registration**, dropped off at the parish office, or placed in the collection basket in church. Please turn your registration form in as soon as possible so that we can appropriately plan and prepare for the year.

Tuition is \$80 for the first child, \$130 for 2 children, & \$170 for 3 or more children if the registration/deposit fee is paid by September 12<sup>th</sup> (a \$50 minimum deposit which goes towards your total tuition) is required to secure the lower rate. Fees increase by \$10 if the registration fee/deposit is paid after September 12<sup>th</sup>. This helps cover the materials, books, and videos that are used in the classroom as well as other expenses. There is an additional fee for sacrament preparation years. They are as follows: First Communion (2<sup>nd</sup> grade): + \$40, Confirmation (8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grades): + \$50 each year. \*Tuition rates are subject to annual review and change. We welcome all children in the program regardless of the family's ability to pay. If you need financial assistance, please contact the parish office. If you have been blessed, we appreciate your additional support for those unable to pay.

Another way you can help us financially is by saving your aluminum cans and bringing them to church for recycling. Each year we collect several hundred dollars from this project. So, please help spread the word and support us generously as you are able.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes are CRITICAL in order to provide the best Faith Formation possible. However, we do understand that some absences are unavoidable due to illnesses or family emergency.

Please contact your child's catechist (teacher) to let them know of an absence or the parish office. You have the option to make up each absence by teaching your child the lesson at home and then bringing the end-of-chapter evaluation (test/questions) back to the teacher for attendance credit. It is your responsibility to gather the makeup work and return the completed assignments to the catechist within 3 class sessions in order to receive attendance credit for the missed session.

**Home Education** will be allowed on a case by case basis. Please contact the Pastor or parish office if you would like more information. Please note that Sacramental preparation cannot be completed at home.

## END OF CLASS DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

We will dismiss all children from the church or parish center and will update you in the monthly flash. We ask parents to please **pull up to the church or PC door and form a line from there.** **We will dismiss children as you pull up.** If you are in a hurry and need to get your student(s) right away, we ask that you park in the outer part of the parking lot and walk in and get your student(s). Parents with children 6<sup>th</sup> grade and older **only**, may also park in the outer part of the parking lot and have your student walk out to meet you if you prefer. **For safety reasons, no vehicles should be driving around the loop by the church unless it is part of the line to pick up your student(s).**

## CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

If the Eastern Carver County School District is closed, closes during the course of the day, or if after school activities are cancelled in the district; Faith Formation classes will also be cancelled for that evening.

If none of the above criteria are met, but severe weather is forecasted for our area, and/or in case of late changing weather conditions which may necessitate the cancellation of classes, the Faith Formation Coordinator will consult with the Pastor, and make the decision as to whether or not to cancel classes for that evening. As part of the decision-making process, one or more of the following may also be contacted:

- Carver County Highway Department
- Local Police Department
- Area Parishes (Guardian Angels, St. Victoria, St. Bernard)

Once a decision has been made to cancel a class, the coordinator will send out an email to all families immediately to inform them of the decision. We will also post the cancellation on our website if possible.

If we have several cancellations over the course of the program year, classes will need to be made up in May. This year classes begin September 20<sup>th</sup> and continue through April 25<sup>th</sup>.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PROCEDURE

**\*\*Please keep the FF calendar handy! You are responsible for getting your students to the listed events regardless of the reminders that come from the coordinator. We will do our best to send out plenty of reminders! Please see the updated calendar, and mark your calendar now with all of the activities and events we have planned for this year! We have some great events that you won't want to miss!**

Permission slips will be emailed or sent home with your child. You must return the permission slip to the Coordinator, your child's teacher, or the adult in charge of the activity in order for your child to participate.

This year we will may attend Feed My Starving Children. It is the parent's responsibility to get the children to the Chanhassen site by 6:00PM. We will also have a Confirmation Retreat but the date and location are not final yet. We do not want the children to miss out on any opportunities!!

## FAITH FORMATION DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is our philosophy that we must all work together in a supportive way to create a warm, welcoming, and caring community for each of our students in the Faith Formation Program. However, we all realize that at times, discipline will be necessary. So in an effort to clearly communicate our expectations of student behavior, we have established a few guidelines that will help us maintain our goal of ensuring that each of our students receives the full benefit of each week's formation effort.

The guidelines are:

1. The facilities we use during the Faith Formation Program belong to St. Nicholas Church and we are fortunate to have such a facility for use. Therefore, property belonging to the parish and may not be interfered with in any way. We must respect others' belongings.
2. If a child is experiencing a problem with another student(s) for any other reason, the child agrees to bring it to the catechist's or coordinator's attention.
3. The student agrees not to bring anything into classroom except their supplies unless otherwise directed by the catechist (NO food, beverages, candy, gum, electronic devices other than cell phones, toys, etc.)
4. Disrespect to an adult or another student is grounds for discipline and will not be tolerated.
5. Inappropriate behavior, language or attitude is grounds for discipline and will not be tolerated.
6. Disruptive classroom behavior is grounds for discipline and will not be tolerated.
7. Fighting will not be tolerated at all...fighting results in automatic dismissal from program for the rest of the year and/or permanent expulsion.
8. Vandalism will not be tolerated and will result in mandatory parent meeting. If the need for discipline does arise, we will adhere to these procedures:

### **FOR THE FIRST OFFENSE:**

1. The student will be sent to the coordinator to discuss the situation. (However, some offenses are grounds for automatic dismissal or mandatory meeting with the child and the parents - read the policies carefully). We will note this on student file.
2. The student will be returned to class only after he/she has agreed to apologize and discontinue inappropriate behavior.

### **FOR THE SECOND OFFENSE:**

1. The student will be sent to the coordinator and contact with parents will be made to notify them of the situation.

2. Parents will be asked to come and pick the child up for the evening/day.
3. The parent(s), student, teacher, and Faith Formation Coordinator will schedule a meeting to rectify the situation.
4. After the meeting has taken place and the problem resolved, the student may then return to their next class. We will note this on student file.

**IF THERE IS A THIRD OFFENSE:** The student will not be sent back to class. Student will be required to make up the class time missed and may be given additional requirements to complete before they return. A meeting with the coordinator and/or teacher, student and at least one parent will be required. At that time the parent will be advised as to what the child is required to do in order to attend classes again. And while we realize that all parents may not feel this is necessary for their own child, we ask you to do this, so that all the students may benefit from appropriate behavior of their classmates. Please review these behavior expectations with your child.

At the start of the new program year, each class and teacher will go over the rules for their classroom. After all rules and expectations have been discussed, each student will be asked by their teacher to sign the following discipline policy sheet. Each teacher will hold on to these signed sheets for the year as a reminder to any student who chooses not to follow the set expectations and has to be reprimanded. The sample below is for your reference only.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have agreed to the expectations and rules of my classroom.  
(Student's name)

I have read and understand the discipline policy and agree to follow it during this school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of student

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

## **WEAPONS AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES**

Diocesan policies regulate that any student found with a weapon or in possession of an illegal substance will be dealt with as follows:

- The weapon will be confiscated, the parent and pastor will be immediately contacted, the police will be notified, and the child will be suspended from the program. If an investigation results in expulsion from the Faith Formation program, the parish will work with the parents to find another means of religious education.

## **MASS ATTENDANCE**

At the heart of our Catholic faith is the celebration of the Eucharist. Attendance at Mass is an irreplaceable part of your child's faith formation. Please **DO NOT SUBSTITUTE** faith formation classes for attendance at Mass. Missing Mass on purpose, with the exception of serious circumstances, is a mortal sin as it is a violation of the Fourth Commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep it Holy. If you miss a Sunday Mass or a Holy Day of Obligation, instill in your child the beautiful habit of Confession through example. Remember it is also a mortal sin to receive communion in the state of mortal sin so please set an example to your child. Your attendance, as a family, at Mass is critical to your child's formation.

## SACRAMENTAL POLICIES

### First Reconciliation & First Eucharist

- The sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be received in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. First Reconciliation will be made in January and First Eucharist will be made in April.
- The sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist also have an accompanying booklet that the parents and child do together at home in addition to the work being done in class and at the workshops.
- If a student's family is not a registered member of the Church of St. Nicholas, **we will need the approval of the registered parish Priest** to celebrate the Sacraments here. You must submit your intention to receive the Sacraments at St. Nicholas to your home parish in writing for approval.

### Confirmation

- The sacrament of Confirmation will be received in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This year our Confirmation will be at the Cathedral of St. Paul on Monday, April 16th.
- The Confirmation program is a 2-year program beginning in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class is required to attend additional activities set up by the Faith Formation Program. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade class is **required to do 1 NET retreat and attend additional activities set up by the Faith Formation program. This year's retreat is not yet determined.**
- Service hours are required. Both 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders are required to do 30 hours. See the Confirmation materials for more detailed information on service.
- If a student's family is not a registered member of the Church of St. Nicholas, **we will need the approval of the registered parish Priest to celebrate the Sacraments here.** You must submit your intention to receive the Sacraments at St. Nicholas to you home parish in writing for approval.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and/or guardians are:

- Encouraged to participate by volunteering as catechists, classroom facilitators, service project coordinators, or substitute catechists.
- Father wants us to instill pride in our church community so we also ask that you volunteer with your family to clean the church at least once during the school year. Sign-up times by contacting the parish office.
- Expected to attend the mandatory parent and Sacramental Preparation meetings.
- Expected to have students in their classrooms on time and picked up upon dismissal by the teacher.
- Expected to carry on the religious education in the home; providing a continuity of learning for their children.

### ***"WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A PRIMARY EDUCATOR?"***

- Be involved on a regular basis in your child's religious education.
- Let your child see that you are involved, engaged and knowledgeable.
- Let your child's teacher know you support them and are willing to be partners with them in any way possible.
- Continue learning about your faith. Make religious education a life-long commitment.
- Share with your child your time, your attention your knowledge and your love—in this way you will model what it means to be loved, just as God loves your child.
- Pray. Participate. Laugh. Enjoy!

### ***OTHER WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE A SUCCESS:***

Before class: check up on homework (if any). Have a positive attitude about going to Faith Formation; **BE ON TIME.**  
After class: review your child/ren's lesson; ask questions to make them think about what they studied. Challenge them to apply it in their daily lives.

All week long: live faithfully. Practice your Catholic faith actively; teach with your every move.

## Protection of Children and Youth and Safe Environment

The Archdiocesan Office for the Protection of Children and Youth (OPCY) has essential Children's instruction requirements which are that all students in a parish Faith Formation Program to have two onsite lessons per grade per program year using Archdiocese-approved curricula. Below is a letter from Archbishop Hebda on the new curriculum. The date when the lessons will be completed is on the calendar. Any adults who volunteer to help with the program and all staff are required to have a background check, attend a Virtus training session and sign a Code of Conduct. We encourage all parents who may help with our program to complete the essential three as soon as possible. We have forms available for you to start the process. Please help us ensure a safe environment for all of our children.

If you are new to our program, please be sure you get a copy of Protecting God's Children which is a guide for parents, guardians and other caring adults to help you be informed of best practices in safety. If you have lost or misplaced your copy and would like a new one, we would be happy to give you a new one as well.

August 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians of Youth in Grades K-5,

Thank you for all you, as primary educators of your children, do to plant the seeds of faith in their hearts. Thank you as well for making it a priority to keep your children actively involved in parish and/or Catholic school programs.

Over the past eighteen months, the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth (OPCY) has overseen a process to update the personal safety materials at the elementary school level (grades K – 5). The process included: receiving survey input from catechetical leaders in parishes and schools regarding our present curricula choices; convening a task force of faith formation and Catholic elementary school personnel to examine all viable options at the elementary school level; and conducting a pilot study at parishes and schools representative of archdiocesan demographics.

The recommendations of the task force were to use *VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children, Grades K – 5*, as well as *Child Safety Matters* by the Monique Burr Foundation, in a combination with KidSmartz materials already in use beginning the fall of 2017. After the pilot study was completed this spring, these programs were approved for use in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Please let us know if you need further information regarding the materials. It is our goal to keep all children safe and give them the best tools possible to do so.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

# 2017-2018 Faith Formation Calendar (Wednesday)

## September

	20	6:00-7:30 PM	1st Night of Faith Formation	Parent Meeting/Review Handbook & Calendar with Mass
	27	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class

## October

	4	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Mass at 6:30 with Blessing of animals
	11	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class - Reconciliation grades 3-9
	18		No Class - MEA Break	
	25	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class

## November

	1	6:00-7:00 PM	All Saints Day	Mass at 6:00 PM with Fr. Bill S.
	8	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Safety Lessons
	15	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Confirmation mtg, parents & students Safety Lesson
	22		No Class	Thanksgiving Break
	29	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class

## December

	6	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	13	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	20	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Bible Bucks Store & Happy Birthday Jesus
	27		No Class	Christmas Break

## January

	3	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	10	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Reconciliation grades 3-9
	17	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	First rec. workshop Parents/students in church
	24	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
Saturday	27	9:00-10:00 AM	First Rec. Service	Families gather in church
	31	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class

## February

	7	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	14	6:00-7:30 PM	Ash Wednesday	Mass at 6:00 pm
	21	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	1st Communion Workshop - Parents and students
	28	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class

## March

	7	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	14	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	21	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
	28	6:00-7:30 PM	No Class - Holy Week	Use as opportunity to go to Confession

## April

	4	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
Monday	9	6:00-8:00 PM	Parish Center	Confirmation dinner, 9th grade students ONLY
	11	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
Sat.-Sun.	14-15	All Masses	Confirmation Sending Masses	In Church
Monday	16	7:00 PM	Confirmation at Cathedral	St. Paul
	18	6:00-7:30 PM	Faith Formation classes	Regular Class
Sunday	22	10:00 AM	First Communion Mass	In Church
	25	6:00-7:30 PM	Last night of Faith Formation	Bible Bucks/Trivia Challenge/Ice Cream Party