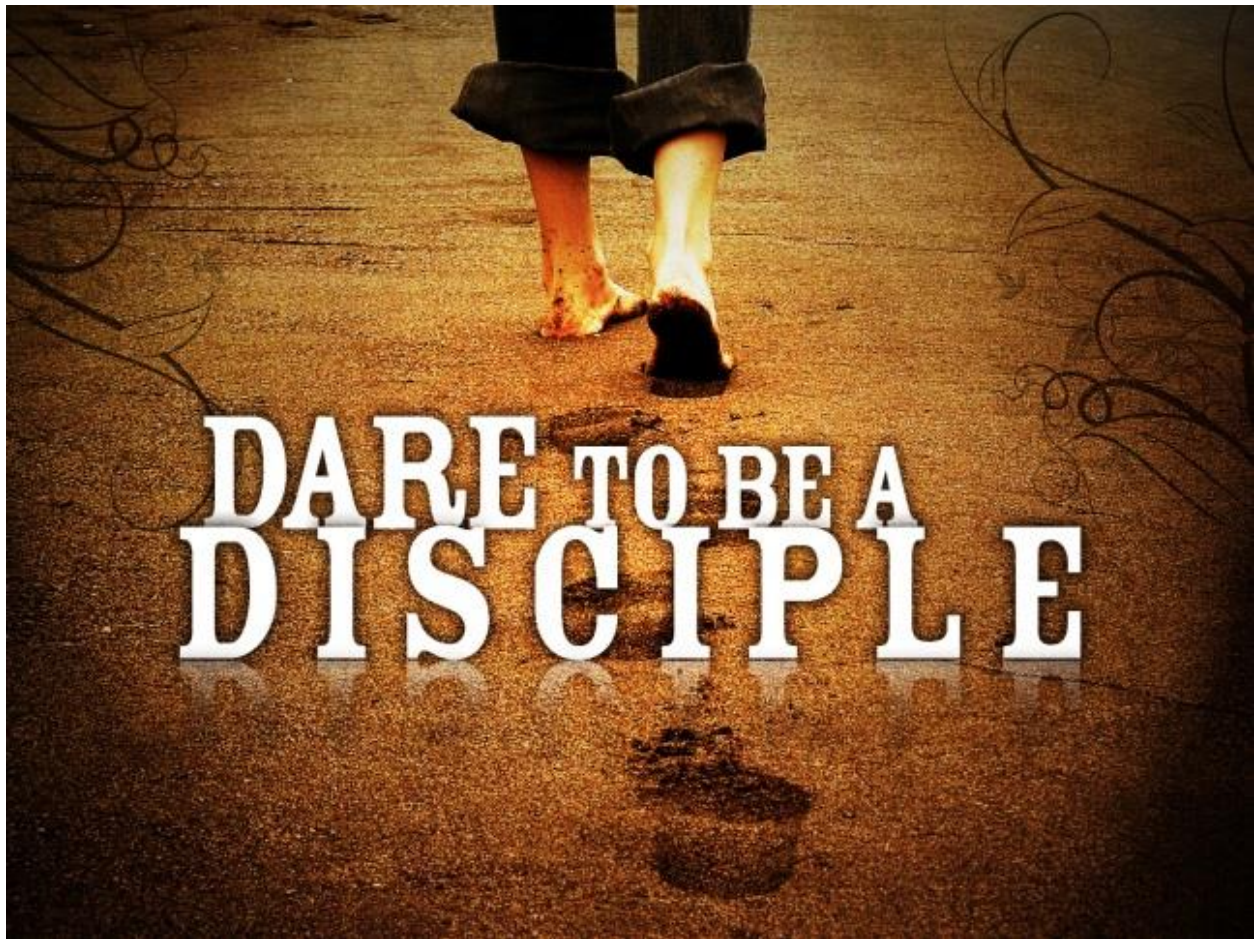


Faith Formation
St. James / St. Peter / St. Theresa
Parish Cluster
2023-2024 Handbook



Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Welcome!

Welcome, all of God's families! We are honored to have the opportunity to join you in the religious formation and education of your children.

Our child and youth formation program is a twelve-year journey into the truths of the Catholic faith, the sacraments, Christian life, prayer, and community. Each year is a building block in the overall understanding and living out of our faith as Jesus asks of us – through love and service to one another.

Our catechists and staff desire to work together with all of our families to combine curriculum with community and to offer a well-rounded education that will help our children recognize that church isn't simply a building with four walls, but that WE are church when we bring the risen Christ to each other through the sharing of our faith, our actions, and our deeds. In this way the church comes alive!

Never underestimate the power and importance of your role as the primary teachers of your children. Taking time out daily to put aside the distractions and noise of the day to pray together as a family, regularly attending Mass together, and using those gifts and talents that you have been given to help others in need are key components to not only your child's spiritual growth, but yours as well.

Contained in this handbook are the guidelines and procedures for the 2023-2024 formation year for grades K-12. If you have any questions, please contact the faith formation office.

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REGISTRATION

Registration Forms

Registration forms are available at the parish office or faith formation office. Additionally, they are available through the St. James website: www.stjamesmukwonago.org

Program Fees

Program fees are due in full at the time of registration. Any outstanding fees will be billed to the family directly. We do not withhold faith formation based on the ability to pay. If you are experiencing financial hardships, please contact the faith formation office to discuss payment alternatives. Fees are listed on the registration form.

Sacrament Years

If your child was not baptized at St. James, St. Peter or St. Theresa, please provide a copy of his/her baptismal certificate. Baptism is required before receiving the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. (Sacramental years are typically, but not limited to, grades 2 and 11.) Please submit a copy of your child's baptismal certificate along with your registration form. If you do not have a baptismal certificate, you may simply contact the parish of baptism to acquire one.

Per archdiocesan recommendation, our preparation for First Communion is a two-year process. We also want our families to recognize the importance of ongoing classroom formation as we strive together to bring Jesus to the center of life and family.

Medical Information

It is important to inform the Faith Formation coordinators of any medical conditions that exist or arise during the course of the year. On your registration form, be sure to note any conditions, medications, allergies, or learning needs that your child may have. This information will be kept confidential and shared only with those who would need to know in order to ensure the safest environment possible for your child.

Communication

Email is our main means of communication. It is important that we have up-to-date contact information for your family. If your contact information should change during the year (e.g. email, cell phone or mailing address), please notify the faith formation staff immediately. Pertinent information concerning child custody must also be shared with the appropriate staff. All contact information will be used solely for the purpose of communicating with our faith formation families.

If you are not receiving email from the parish or the faith formation department, please check your SPAM and JUNK folders.

PROGRAM ESSENTIALS

Family and Faith

Regular participation in Mass is the most essential part of your Catholic faith. It is at Mass that we give thanks to God for the blessings we have received, ask pardon for our sins, and receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. Class without Mass doesn't make sense.

Retreats

Retreats are offered to build individual spirituality as well as a sense of community among the students. All retreats are considered part of the faith formation scheduled program and are essential for those students soon to receive sacraments.

Grades K-6

Family Component

There is so much to know and love about our Catholic faith! This is why there is a family formation component in each of the parishes we serve.

St. James Each class will begin in the church, where families will get a 20-minute snippet from our Catholic tradition. These short "Church Talks" are for both the children and their parent/s. Children then go to class with their catechist while parents are invited to take part in a book discussion on matters of faith and family.

St. Peter On the first class of each month after Mass, families will meet in the school for a 30-minute interactive family presentation. Children will then be dismissed to class and parents are invited to take part in a book discussion on matters of faith and family.

St. Theresa On the last class of each month, families will meet in the school for a 30-minute interactive family presentation. Children will then be dismissed to class and parents are invited to take part in a book discussion on matters of faith and family.

Prayer

Home is the place where children first learn to *pray*, because parents are the first models of this relationship with God we call *prayer*. Whether it be bedtime prayers, prayer before meals or anytime prayers, "God-talk" is essential to daily home life.

In faith formation, we offer children and parents a list of tried and true Catholic prayers to be learned by memory. Our families will receive *Catholic Prayer for Catholic Families* with a grade specific list on the inside cover. Classroom catechists will incorporate the prayers into class, but the most meaningful prayer time happens at home!

Bible

To know Christ is to love him. And to really know Jesus we need to delve into the Bible! Our curriculum includes a *With My Family* Bible page in follow-up to each class. Parents are asked to read and discuss a short verse with your child/ren and return these pages to class. Classes with the most parent involvement have a pizza or ice cream party to celebrate!

Grades 7-11

Bible Gift

Every student in grade 7 will receive the gift of *The Catholic Youth Bible* (NABRE) by St. Mary's Press at the start of this faith formation year. Grade 8-11 students who are new to the program will also receive the gift of a Bible. These personal Bibles will be used throughout middle and high school as an integral part of every class. Therefore, should a student misplace his/her Bible, replacements will be available in the faith formation office for \$25. Students should bring their Bibles to every class.

Disciples in Action

Disciples in Action service opportunities allow students to take their faith beyond the walls of the church and put it into action by responding to the needs of others. DIA opportunities may be scheduled within class times or on separate dates. Please watch your email for DIA details throughout the year.

Confirmation Summer Option New!

For the first time, we will offer a summer option for Confirmation preparation. This new option will be an intensive course at the start of summer break. For five straight days, students will gather at St. James from 10:00am to 3:00pm to participate in lessons and activities that they would otherwise undertake during the school year. The Confirmation Retreat, service, and special events will still be incorporated during the school year, but those who participate in the summer option will not have a regular evening class for the 2023-2024 school year. The summer Confirmation intensive will be available to students who:

- will be juniors or seniors in 2023-2024
- were registered and attended regularly in their 9th and 10th grade years
- are available for the full week from 10am-3pm

PROCEDURES

Arrival and Departure

Please be prompt for class. Outer facility doors will be locked 10 minutes after classes begin and reopened 10 minutes before classes end for the safety of all. Early releases from class require a note from the parent prior to the start of class.

Kindergarten – Grade 3

Parents, please accompany your children to their respective classrooms at the beginning of class. When class ends, catechists will only release children to a parent unless prior arrangements have been communicated to the catechist or faith formation office.

Attendance

It is important that students be present for each class. If your child misses a class, he/she is welcome to attend a session being offered on another day. Please email Mary if you need to make such a change.

Weather / Emergency Cancellations

Faith formation weekday classes will be canceled if the Mukwonago Public School System is closed or canceled due to inclement weather. If at any time classes need to be canceled due to weather or an emergency, an announcement will be posted on parish Facebook pages and on all local television stations.

Parent Meetings

Meetings are occasionally necessary to facilitate ongoing and authentic communication. They are scheduled sparingly out of respect for your valuable time. However, your participation is vital as we strive to fulfill our mission of partnering with you in the religious formation of your child.

Cell Phones

Cell phones and electronic devices should not be used during class unless specifically indicated by the catechist. Students using cell phones at inappropriate times may have them held by a catechist until the conclusion of class. Respectful attention to rules and courtesy toward others is expected at all times.

Safe Environment Training

As mandated by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and in cooperation with the Safeguarding All of God's Family program of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, all St. Peter, St. James, and St. Theresa parish employees and volunteers who work with children receive Safe Environment Training to ensure that all young people in our parishes come to know God and His Church in a safe and appropriate setting. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee also requires mandatory criminal background checks for those who work with minors and upholds a Code of Ethical Standards. Additionally, all students will be offered grade appropriate safe environment lessons, which will be built into the curriculum, as mandated by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and in cooperation with the Safeguarding All of God's Family program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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