

Southern Moraine Parishes
St. James / St. Peter / St. Theresa
2024-2025 Handbook



*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he
will not depart from it.*

Proverbs 22:6

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. 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 is essential, as is regularly attending Mass together.

Our catechists and staff desire to work together with all of our families to meld curriculum with church community in order to offer a well-rounded formation. We hope to instill a sense that church isn't simply a building with four walls, but that WE are the church when we bring the risen Christ to one other. In sharing our faith, through words and actions, the church becomes truly alive in the world!

Child and youth formation 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. When parents demonstrate using their gifts and talents to help others in need, the whole family grows spiritually!

Contained in this handbook are the guidelines and procedures for the 2024-2025 formation year for grades K-12. If you have any questions, please contact us in the faith formation office.

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REGISTRATION

Registration Forms

Registration forms are available at each parish office and from the Faith Formation office at St. James. Additionally, they are available through your parish website.

Fees

We ask that yearly fees be paid in full at the time of registration, unless prior arrangements are made with the Faith Formation staff. We never withhold faith formation based on the ability to pay, but if you are experiencing financial need please contact the faith formation office to discuss payment alternatives. Fees are listed on the registration form. Any outstanding fees will be billed to you directly.

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 at the time of registration. If you do not have your child's baptismal certificate, you will need to contact the parish of baptism to acquire one. Baptism is necessary before receiving the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. (Sacramental years are typically, but not limited to, grades 2 and 11.)

Per archdiocesan recommendation, our preparation for First Communion is a two-year process. We hope that our families come 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.

FAITH FORMATION ESSENTIALS

Family and Faith

Regular participation in Mass is the most essential part of our Catholic faith. It is at Mass that we give thanks for our blessings, ask pardon for our sins, and receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. *Class without Mass just 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 a regular part of the faith formation process and are essential for those students soon to receive sacraments. Parents of First Communicants accompany their children to the retreat.

Grades K-6

Family Component

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

St. James

Each class begins 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 parents. Children then go from church to class with their catechist.

St. Peter and St. Theresa

Once a month right after Mass (at the start of the Faith Formation session) families will gather in the school for a "Family Day". Refreshments will be followed by a 20-minute interactive family activity. Children will then be dismissed to class while parents enjoy a parent presentation.

Prayer

Home is the place where children first *learn to pray* since parents are the first role models of this relationship with God. Classroom catechists reinforce the prayers in class, but the most meaningful prayer time happens at home! Whether at bedtime, grace before meals or *anytime*, "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. Each family receives the book, *Catholic Prayer for Catholic Families*, along with a grade specific list on the inside cover.

Bible

To really know Jesus we need to delve into the Bible! Our curriculum includes a take-home page called "*With My Family*" after each session and parents are asked to read a short Bible verse with your child and return your responses to class. The group with the most parent involvement will 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 session. 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 session.

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 at a variety of times and dates. Please watch your email for DIA details throughout the year.

Confirmation Summer Option

The summer Confirmation option is an intensive course at the start of summer break. For five straight days, candidates will gather at St. James from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM to participate in discussions and activities that they would otherwise undertake during the school year. The Confirmation Retreat, service, and sponsor interaction will be incorporated during the school year, but those who participate in the summer option will not have a regular evening session for the 2024-2025 school year. The summer Confirmation intensive will be available to students who:

- will be juniors or seniors in 2024-2025
- were registered and attended regularly in their 9th and 10th grade years
- demonstrate a competent level of faith understanding necessary to begin preparation for the sacrament
- are available for the entire week from 9:30am-3:30pm

PROCEDURES

Arrival and Departure

Please be prompt for all sessions. Outer facility doors will be locked 10 minutes after sessions begin and reopened 10 minutes before sessions end for the safety of all. Early release from any session requires a note from the parent prior to the start of that session.

Kindergarten – Grade 3

Parents, please walk your children to their rooms at the beginning of a session. When the session 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 session. If your child misses a session, 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 sessions will be canceled if the Mukwonago Public School System is closed or canceled due to inclement weather. If at any time sessions 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 sessions unless specifically indicated by the catechist. Students using cell phones at inappropriate times may have them held by a catechist until the conclusion of the session. 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. James, St. Peters, 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.