

# Holy Family Area

## *Faith Formation*

## Parent Handbook

## 2025-2026



*O Sacrament most Holy,  
O Sacrament Divine,  
All praise and all thanksgiving,  
Be every moment Thine.*

Have Faith. Bring Hope. Embrace Love.

# Faith Formation Staff

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## Sacraments

Participation in the life of the church is a large part of passing on the Faith to our younger generations. The expectation of our Faith Formation program is that all parents and guardians participate in the life of the parish by service, attending the scheduled Parent Meetings throughout the year, attend weekly Sunday Mass with their families and seek Reconciliation on a regular basis. Here are the scheduled times for your convenience.

## Area Reconciliation Schedule

Check the Area Website ([www.holyfamilyarea.org](http://www.holyfamilyarea.org)) for the current Reconciliation Times. They are also listed in our bulletin. Reconciliation times can also be made available by appointment.

## Area Mass Schedule

### September through April

#### Saturday:

5:00pm St. Andrew, Granite Falls

7:00pm Spanish Mass at St. Joseph, Montevideo

#### Sunday:

8:30am St James, Dawson

10:30am St. Joseph, Montevideo

### May through August

#### Saturday:

6:30pm St. Joseph, Montevideo *(with Spanish elements)*

#### Sunday:

8:30am St. James, Dawson

10:30am St. Andrew, Granite Falls

# Curriculum

The following curriculum is used within all parishes of the Holy Family Area:

## Elementary:

- “GPS: God’s Plan in Scripture”, Ascension Press
- Sadlier “Believe, Celebrate, Live Reconciliation” & “Believe, Celebrate, Live Eucharist”.

## Middle School/ High School:

- “Connect: Bringing Faith to Life”
- “Altaration”
- “Chosen”
- “YOU: Life, Love, and the Theology of the Body”.
- Symbolon for Teens - YDisciple

**\*\*More information can be found about these programs online with the following publishers:**

<https://www.sadlier.com/>

[smp.org](http://smp.org)

[ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com)

[formed.org](http://formed.org)

## **VIRTUS SAFE ENVIRONMENT:**

All students will be taught from the *VIRTUS Safe Environment* curriculum during one class in the school year. Parents must submit a signed **Virtus Opt-Out form** to the Faith Formation office or local Site Coordinator at their local parish **BEFORE** the date of the training if they do not wish for their child to participate. These dates are:

St Andrew Gr K-9, St Joseph Gr 1-8, St James Gr 1-9: **Wed. October 22**

St Joseph Gr 9: **Sunday, October 12**

Holy Family Area Confirmation Prep students, Gr 10-11: **Sunday, October 12.**

If students miss this class, but have not turned in an Opt-Out form, a rescheduled training will be held sometime before Feb 1, **UNLESS** we have a signed opt-out form in hand before the date(s) above.

For more specific information on your child’s curriculum, please reach out to the Area Director of Faith Formation or your local Parish Faith Formation Coordinator.

# Guidelines for the Journey

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes is very important for the continual spiritual growth of the child. Please have children arrive 5 minutes before class begins; arriving late is disruptive to the rest of the class. If you know that your child is going to be absent/late, please make sure to contact the local Faith Formation Coordinator. You have registered your child to be with us for class, so we are responsible for them unless you tell us differently. The Class Calendar is included online at [www.holyfamilyarea.org](http://www.holyfamilyarea.org).

## **CLASS TIME**

St. Andrew	Grade K-9	Wednesday - 6:30-7:45 PM at St. Andrew, Granite Falls
St. James	Grade 1-4	Wednesday – 3:30-4:45 PM at St. James, Dawson
Grade 5-9	Wednesday - 6:45-8:00 PM at St. James, Dawson	
St. Joseph	Grade 1-4	Wednesday – 5:00-6:15PM at St. Joseph, Montevideo
Grade 4-8	Wednesday - 6:45-8:00 PM at St. Joseph, Montevideo	
Grade 9	2 Sundays/Month - 6:00-8:00PM at St Joseph, Montevideo	

Grades 10-12 students- all parishes– 2 Sundays/Month - 6:00-8:00 PM at St. Joseph, Montevideo  
(\*NOTE: There is no Year 2 Class in the 2025-2026 School Year)

## **CLASS CANCELLATION/CHANGES**

**WEDNESDAY CLASSES:** When the local public school has canceled school or closed school early due to severe weather there will **NOT** be Faith Formation classes that evening at that parish. If a storm develops later in the day, be sure to listen to the radio to hear of a cancellation; we inform KDMA. We also send an email to notify you of any instant cancellations and a GROUPME text message. If other changes in the schedule are necessary, you will be notified by a note/newsletter sent home with your child. **Please check with your child *after each class session* as to materials/letters/notices they might have for you.**

**SUNDAY CLASSES:** If weather is inclement on a Sunday evening, please watch for email/GROUPME text notifications.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**GROUPME APP: Please download the Group Me app for the most current notifications. This is the fastest way for us to notify you of any changes, cancellations!**

Parents will be kept informed of important information, dates, etc. through the GroupMe app, Area church bulletin, flyers, emails, and notes sent home, and through our Facebook Page – Holy Family Area Faith Formation/Youth Ministry or Follow us on our website: [www.holyfamilyarea.org](http://www.holyfamilyarea.org). It is very important that you update your contact information every year, so we know the best way to reach you.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Ideally in a Christian educational program, discipline would not even be a topic of conversation. Realistically, we are dealing with young people who sometimes need help setting priorities. We

recognize that learning cannot take place unless the environment is one with order and purpose, where every person and all property are respected. Furthermore, faith formation classes are short in length. For catechists to have enough time to teach the necessary concepts, they should not have to spend a lot of time on discipline.

Our volunteer catechists have an important and awesome task – the task of helping parents to impart the light of faith to young Christians in a way that will give meaning and joy to their lives now and in the future. This task can best be accomplished in an atmosphere that speaks of GOD’s presence – an atmosphere in which there is peace, order, love, and joy. Catechists try to model respectful and compassionate behavior so that children, too, will respect and value themselves and others as children of GOD. Catechists and students will take time to discuss conduct that is appropriate to maintain this type of atmosphere in the classroom.

### **The Discipline Policy:**

1. Minor discipline problems are handled directly by the catechist in the classroom.
2. The first time a major problem occurs, the Catechist will dismiss the student from class and send the student with an Incident slip. Student must report to the Faith Formation Coordinator(FFC)/ Site Coordinator(SC). The FFC/SC meets with the student to discuss the problem and possible solutions. The student remains in the office until he/she can identify the behavior that attributed to this situation. The student may return to the class IF they understand what they did and attest that their behavior will change. After class, the Catechist will visit with the FFC/SC to go over the details of what had happened, and if the situation was rectified or not.
3. If the student is asked to leave class a second time during the same class, he or she again reports to the FFC/SC with another Incident slip. The FFC/SC visits with the student. The student will remain with the FFC/SC for the remainder of the class. The FFC/SC will visit with the catechist after class. There will also be a call to the parent to notify them of the situation.
4. If the student is asked to leave class 3 or more times in a calendar year, parents will be contacted to notify them of the situation and ask for their help from home to rectify the situation.
5. Anytime there are 5 or more Incident slips turned in to the FFC/SC for any single student in a calendar year, Parents will be contacted for a Conference with the student, Area Faith Formation Coordinator, Catechist, and the Pastor (if his schedule allows). At this conference, options on disciplinary actions in the future will be presented and agreed upon by all present.

For any concerns regarding the learning environment, parish facilities, or any other factors regarding the well-being of the child, parents are encouraged to communicate these concerns to the following individuals in the following order: 1. Local Site Coordinator, 2. Area Director of Faith Formation/Youth Ministry, and then 3. Pastor.

## **Enhancing the Journey**

**The journey of faith involves much more than classrooms, textbooks, desks, and papers! Young people will best “take to heart” the message of Christ when the adults that surround them fully participate within the life of the church/parish so that they have been given opportunities to practice their faith in real life situations. They will benefit greatly if the teachings that they receive on Wednesdays/Sundays concerning our Catholic faith, values and practices are exemplified at home and carried over into their daily lives.**

## **YOUR VOCATION AS A PARENT:**

*Parents are the primary religious educators of their children (CCC 1653).* The home is where a child first experiences the Catholic faith. You teach primarily by the example you set. It is extremely important for children to experience the love of God in their homes. The Faith Formation Program aims to work in partnership with parents to assist them in living their vocation as educators of their children. The Faith Formation Program should merely complement, not replace, the catechesis that your children should receive in the home.

Please ensure that your children participate in the life of the Church by attending Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Finally, please make every effort to have your child arrive on time for their Faith Formation session. This is particularly important because our sessions are held only once a week. Your child(ren) should arrive no earlier than 5 minutes prior to the start of the session unless there are special events going on that evening.

We remind you that the role of a Faith Formation program can only be secondary to you, the parent. We encourage you to do all you can, and we promise to do the best we can to aide and guide the sacramental preparation of your child. We do not prepare children to receive their First (and only) Communion. Instead, we prepare children to receive their 500th+ Communion. Similarly, we do not prepare children for their First (and only) Reconciliation, but instead to receive the grace and forgiveness of God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis for the rest of their lives.

- Attend Sunday Mass together each weekend.
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation with your child.
- Do an examination of conscience with your child.
- Help your child to fully participate in the Mass. Remember if you do not sing or recite the responses, neither will your child(ren).
- Pray with your children– you are their first example of the faith.

## **ADULT/PARENT FAITH FORMATION:**

Our faith is a complex and mature faith that takes a lifetime to develop and understand. For this reason, the Bishops of the Catholic Church tell us that adult faith formation is not only important, but IS NECESSARY – to the extent that it is considered the *primary* way to pass on the faith.

*“Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis”* (General Directory for Catechesis).

### **\*Grade 2 Sacramental Preparation Parent/Student Meeting:**

Grade 2 students and their Parents will be expected to attend the Grade 2 Parent Meeting/ Student Retreat in February/March that will cover the needs of students/parents preparing for First Reconciliation/First Communion.

### **Grades 10-11-12 Parent/Student Formation Nights:**

Year 1 and Year 2 Confirmation Students and their Parents will be expected to attend four (4) Parent/Student Formation Nights throughout the 2-year process to Confirmation. Students are generally confirmed in the Spring of Year 2, after successfully completing all the necessary classes and learning experiences presented at the beginning of Year 1. These dates will be advertised with

a mailer to the specific families and notes home from class.

### **Family Learning:**

Parents are welcome to join us at any time in the classroom. Occasionally materials for enriching faith at home will be made available. Families **are expected** to make use of these resources as a way of opening the door for quality conversation within your family circle. Students may be asked to bring pieces of these back to class the following week to share with peers what was learned in the home. Please take the home lessons seriously. It is a great learning experience for the entire family.

### **SERVICE NIGHTS:**

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to create service opportunities for Faith Formation staff and classes. If you know of a great service project we can do, please let your Faith Formation Coordinator(s) know! Watch for more information to be sent home with children and in the bulletin; please support your child in their acts of service!

### **YOUTH GROUP/ YOUTH ACTIVITIES:**

All Junior/Senior High Students are **strongly encouraged** to attend these special events, as well as to watch the calendar for other youth activities to help students grow in their faith outside of the classroom. Examples include:

- Youth Group nights in your Parishes (middle school and high school options)
- Totus Tuus
- Steubenville Youth Conferences
- Diocesan Summer Youth Camps – Camp Greatness/Camp Beloved
- Diocesan COR Team and/or attending COR nights
- And many more yet to be determined!