

*St. Sylvester  
Faith Formation  
Handbook*

*Catholic School Families*



*Family Life & Parish Life  
"A Sacred Partnership"*

*Updated September 8, 2017*



## Welcome to St. Sylvester Faith Formation Process

Please be assured of our prayers for you as we continue on this journey of faith together. We look forward to being with you at regular Sunday worship and at the many other occasions that bring us together as one community... praying, growing, serving and welcoming in Jesus Christ.

The goal of the Pastoral Leadership Team, Support Staff and Volunteers at St. Sylvester Parish, is to serve God by serving the people of this community. Please let us know how we are doing. Thank you!

**St. Sylvester Roman Catholic Church**  
**68 Ohio Avenue Medford, New York 11763**

Faith Formation Office Phone:  
Phone: 631-475-4506 Ext. 118  
Www.stsylvesterli.org  
Fax: 631-475-1057

**Pastoral Ministry**  
Rev. Thomas W. Coby, Pastor

**Faith Formation Office**  
Frances McMahan, Director  
Michael Lofaro, Coordinator  
Terese Tornincaso, Office Assistant

In an effort to do what is best for the children and families of St. Sylvester Parish who have children in Catholic School, we have made some changes, effective for the 2017-2018 year in the Faith Formation Process.

As a Catholic School student, your child receives religious education in Catholic School, but their formation in the faith and preparation for the reception of Sacraments (Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation) takes place at St. Sylvester Parish where you are registered and worship.

“The parish is the center of the spiritual and sacramental life, and the parish community is the normal community setting for the initiation into the sacraments, upbringing in the faith, and the development of the Christian personality. The Catholic school religious education program may offer additional religious instruction. However, the parish worshipping community is the appropriate setting for sacramental initiation and celebration. The parish community has the responsibility to lead the children and their parents/guardians through a special sacramental catechesis and celebration.” *Pastoral Manual Diocese of Rockville Centre 2011 pg. 1 Sacraments*

In order to assist you in what is your privilege and responsibility as parents, we will support and assist you in preparing your child for Sacraments in the following way:

**Level 1: Parent/Child Faith Formation (Prerequisite for Level 2 Reconciliation and Eucharist)** Please call the parish and make an appointment to come in and register your child for Level 1. Level 1 meets 6 times during the year on Saturdays from 9am to 10:15 am. The first meeting is held in the church. The remaining 5 are held in the Parish Center. **Parents are expected to stay at the parish for a presentation, while your child is in a class doing lessons, crafts, etc. with the other children and catechists.** The year ends with a prayer service and bagel breakfast that all families help to make happen.

**Level 2: Immediate Preparation for Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist** Please go to [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org), Faith Formation-Registration and register your child in one of the Level 2 classes being offered. Your child will attend classes weekly according to the calendar that you will receive. **Parents are expected to attend all parent meetings pertaining to the Level their child is in.**

### **Levels 3, 4, 5, 6**

Please go to [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org), Faith Formation-Holy Angels Regional School page and click on Calendar to see the special gatherings that your child and you are invited and encouraged to attend. **If your child attends Catholic School, no registration in Faith Formation is necessary for these years.**

### **Level 7: (Prerequisite for Level 8 Confirmation)**

Please go to [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org), Faith Formation-Registration and register your child in one of the Level 7 classes being offered. Your child will attend classes weekly according to the calendar that you will receive. **Parents are expected to attend all parent meetings pertaining to the Level their child is in.**

### **Level 8: Immediate Preparation for Sacrament of Confirmation**

Please go to [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org), Faith Formation-Registration and register your child in one of the Level 8 classes being offered. Your child will attend classes weekly according to the calendar that you will receive. **Parents are expected to attend all parent meetings pertaining to the Level their child is in.**

As we work toward the faith formation of all families, you and your child are invited and encouraged to attend all of the many liturgical celebrations and other events that take place here at St. Sylvester. Please see [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org) for details.

It is most important for your child to know that faith is a part of your family's daily life. Regular attendance at Mass and daily prayer are necessary to the development of your child's faith formation and are expected of all participants in the Faith Formation Process.

**Please call us if you have questions at 631-475-4506, Ext. 107.**

Please be assured of our prayers for you as we continue on this journey of faith together. We look forward to being with you at regular Sunday worship and at the many other occasions that bring us together as one community... praying, growing, serving and welcoming in Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

*Fr. Tom Coby*

*Frances McMahon*

### **Protecting God's Children Information for Parents**

Parents have the awesome right and responsibility of educating their children in matters of personal safety, and we, in the Faith Formation Office here at St. Sylvester Parish, as directed by the Diocesan Office for the Protection of Children/Young People, have the responsibility of assisting you in ensuring that age appropriate abuse prevention education is made available for both the elementary and secondary levels.

In an effort to ensure that all parents and children in the Faith Formation Program have been properly informed in matters of abuse (defined as any physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child) parents and guardians are encouraged to go to our website [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org) to Faith Formation, Protecting God's children tab and read the "Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide; Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians" (*Copyright 2015 by National Catholic Services Risk Services*). In this guide you will find information that will increase your awareness about abuse and offer suggestions on how to discuss this with your child.

### **Medical Conditions**

Please notify the Office of Faith Formation when you register your child if your child has a medical condition including allergies of any kind, that we need to be aware of.

### **Custody Issues & Orders of Protection**

Where there is an order of protection in effect, a copy of the order is requested for the program's files and the parent or guardian must provide a list of names of those persons allowed to pick up the child. This list must bear a notarized signature of the parent or guardian. Where there is an order of protection in effect, anyone picking up the child must present photo I.D. to the Catechist. If the Catechist sees the person referred to by the Order of Protection, the police will be called immediately.

### **Visitors**

No unauthorized persons will be allowed in the classroom unless they have been previously authorized by the Program Director. Parents and all other visitors should report directly to the Faith Formation Office or the designated waiting area.

**Bathroom:**

To avoid disruption of class or other activities and utilize time most efficiently, please have your child use the bathroom before going to class. If your child has a physical condition that might require multiple trips to the bathroom, you must notify the Director of Faith Formation and the Catechist.

**Snacks:**

Food, candy and drinks are not allowed in class or the church.

**Electronic Devices:**

All electronic devices should be left at home so they are not a distraction during class. Cell phones may be brought to class but **must be turned off** while the class, event, prayer or program is in session.

**Vandalism:**

Students caught vandalizing anywhere on the parish property will be responsible for the repair of damages. Depending on the extent of damage, the Parish Faith Formation program may remove the student from the program.

**Substance Abuse:**

Substance abuse is defined as the possession of, use of, selling or distributing any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance, which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, or injection. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance on parish property or at parish-sponsored events will be immediately suspended from the program. A conference with the student parent, the Catechetical Leader and the Pastor is mandatory for re-admittance into the program. Any student selling or distributing will be turned over to the local authorities.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

All who are employed and volunteer in the Faith Formation Process are in full compliance with the diocesan policies and procedures which can be found at **<http://www.drvc.org/efforts-to-protect-children-and-young-people/diocesan-efforts-to-protect-children-and-young-people>**.

## Policies & Procedures

**Admission:**

St. Sylvester Faith Formation Process does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, nationality, or disability. Parents are asked to formally register their child in the Faith Formation program when your child is entering 1st Grade and provide an original copy of the child's Baptismal certificate.

Transfers from another parish faith formation program will require verification. The parent is responsible to provide St. Sylvester Faith Formation Office with a letter of transfer from the child's previous faith formation program. Children must successfully complete each level according to the individual parish guidelines. All children who have not received prior instruction will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine the appropriate level at which they should begin the faith formation program.

**Registration Fees would apply to Levels 1, 2, 7 and 8 and can be found on the website at [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org).** These fees help defray the cost of materials used in the program.

Families experiencing financial hardship please contact the Faith Formation Office at 631-475-4506 Ext. 118 for assistance. No child is ever denied faith formation due to financial difficulties.

**Attendance & Lateness:**

If your child is going to be absent, a call should be made on or before the day of the absence to 631-475-4506 Ext. 118. If a child is frequently absent, the parent is expected to send a doctor's note to the Faith Formation Office explaining the reason for each absence.

**Cancellation of Class:**

In case of inclement weather, please go to our website at [www.stsylvesterli.org](http://www.stsylvesterli.org) or Channel 12 News for information on cancellations or closings.

**Program Calendar:**

Your child will receive a calendar containing class dates and times including special events such as parent meetings, seasonal prayer services, service project, etc.

**Textbooks:**

All religious education textbooks used in the St. Sylvester Faith Formation Process are in conformity with the guidelines published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

These can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currentlist.pdf>.

Please note: all supplemental materials used in the St. Sylvester Faith Formation Process are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

**Children with Special Needs:**

Providing faith formation for children with special needs is an important part of our Faith Formation Process. Many children with mild developmental delays as well as ADD, ADHD and those diagnosed as being on the Autism Spectrum are included in classes, prayer services and other events. An assistant is sometimes placed with the class to help if necessary. In some cases we have an individual Catechist who will work with children on a one-to-one basis, or in a very small group. We use supplemental materials that are designed to reach these children, and that present the life of Jesus and the fundamentals of faith in a simple and visual manner that they can understand. Every reasonable effort will be made to assist parents to provide the best possible experiences for their children.

**STUDENT CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY****St. Sylvester's Discipline Policy**

As Catholics we believe we are called to live as Jesus, both in our words and actions. Unfortunately, in our society, our children are exposed to values very different from our beliefs. We need to provide all our children with a loving, caring and safe environment where rules are followed and they can pray, play and learn more about their faith. To ensure this, all children are expected to adhere to the following:  
No violence of any kind: pushing, kicking, fighting, shoving or hitting. No cursing, swearing, or use of foul language. Follow the directions of the Catechist, Hall Guardian and Office Staff. Be respectful of your Catechist, yourself and others. No vandalism of church property, including pads on the chairs in the East Wing. No writing on any surfaces other than paper. Cell phones may be brought to class but **must be turned off** while the class, event, prayer or program is in session. No food, drink or gum in the Parish Center or church. Come prepared with your book, folder, Bible (If you are in Level 6 & 7) and a sharpened pencil. If your child is sent to the office for inappropriate behavior, you will be called. As a result, your child may have to complete the year at home. Adhering to the policy will insure that all who come to St. Sylvester Parish will experience a true Christian community in a safe, peaceful and respectful environment.

**Dress Code:**

Children should not wear (sneakers with skates on them) in the parish center or church for safety reasons. Appropriate clothing must be worn at all times. Students will be reminded of the following guidelines once. If the student continues to disobey the rule, the student will be referred to the Director of Faith Formation to set up a meeting with the student's parent.

No clothing may be worn with suggestive or questionable language or drawings.

No bare midriffs or any shirt or top that exposes cleavage.

No basketball jerseys or see through mesh unless a T-shirt is worn underneath.

No sagging pants that expose undergarments.

No pajamas, bedroom slippers, or shower shoes.

Hoods may NOT be worn inside the church or parish/ school building.

No chains or any attire that could be used as a weapon.