

Saint Andrew

Anchored in Faith  Catholic Church and School

Faith Formation Family Expectations

Then he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." – Luke 9:23

This document spells out the goals and expectations of the Faith Formation and sacrament preparation programs at Saint Andrew Catholic Church. The Church and the sacraments exist for one reason: the salvation of souls. We are all created out of love, in the image of God, for holiness and heaven—but we must *choose* to follow Him. From the scripture verse above, we know that discipleship, or following Jesus, involves work and sacrifice. Beyond that, it will look different for each person and each family. We all have different gifts, different responsibilities, different callings—but *we are all called* to love God above all, and our neighbor as ourselves.

So now is the time to ask: How are we responding to this call? And how can we respond better?

Please review the expectations below, then take the time to set a few family goals for the year before signing and turning in your Family Commitment on the last page of this packet.

Practicing the Catholic Faith

The practices below outline the minimum behaviors for a practicing Catholic. If your family is not yet doing these things, make them your goal!

- Attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from any work or activities that could impede the holiness of the day.
- Confess your sins as often as you need to, and every time you have unconfessed mortal sins.
- Receive the Eucharist frequently. You should *not* receive the Eucharist if you have unconfessed mortal sins or have not fasted from everything but water or medicine for an hour beforehand—so make sure you are prepared to receive and don't miss out on this great gift of Jesus Himself.
- Observe the Church's days of fasting and abstinence. Certain days of the year, Catholics are asked to reduce what they eat and avoid eating meats. Do this as an act of sacrifice and spiritual discipline.
- Use your time, talent and treasure to support the needs of the Church according to the gifts you have been given and your means.

Remember, these are *minimum* levels of participation in the life of the Church. Out of love for Christ and a desire to advance in the spiritual life, you should try to do more than they require.

Growing as a Family of Disciples

Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church? – Rite of Matrimony

You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking? – Rite of Baptism

At every Catholic wedding and at each child's baptism, parents are asked to undertake a serious obligation: to raise their children in the faith and to shepherd their souls to heaven. The family is the *domestic church* and is the best school of faith young people can have, provided we show by our example that our relationship with Jesus and His Church is our priority.

If your family is already faithful to the practices in the section above, take some time to reflect on how you would like to grow deeper in the faith and identify and share your gifts. Do you pray daily? As a couple? As a family? Do you read scripture or learn about Catholic teachings in some other way? Do you give of your time, talent, and treasure to support the mission of the Church? Think about where you are as a family, and where you would like to be. Write down some ideas, no matter how simple, of how to get there.

We don't have to be theologians; we just need to be faithful—and the parish Faith Formation team is here to help:

- The Faith Formation schedule includes a family event roughly every month. Many of these are Holy Days on which you should already be coming to Mass. Attend these to grow in communion with the other members of our parish.
- Just before Advent, you will also get a booklet called "Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families," providing a brief reflection on each Sunday's gospel, plus a question to discuss on the way to Mass and on the way home, and a single paragraph on applying the lesson to your life. Do this short exercise each Sunday with your family.
- Finally, this year we are asking for four *family* Mass reflections this year. We will provide guidelines for these reflections before Advent. Our goal is for families to choose a Sunday Mass to think a little more deeply about what God is doing in His Church and in your lives.

Additional Policies and Expectations

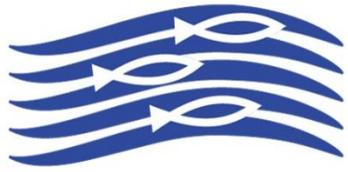
Beyond these things, our policies and expectations are straightforward:

- **Getting Here and Getting Home:** Your student's safety is important to us. To this end:
 - Students in grades 1-5 must be signed in and out of their class in person by a parent or guardian, with both a signature and the time of drop-off and pick-up. Students in grades 1-5 will not be dismissed to hallways, parking lots or streets.
 - Students in grades 6-11 will sign themselves into and out of class in the same manner (signature and time of arrival and departure) *unless it is requested in writing that parents or guardians sign their students in and out.*

- Please park in a parking spot when picking up or dropping off to keep the fire lanes open and to enable grade-school parents and their children, middle- and high-school students, and other cars to navigate the parking lot freely.
- Unless they are driving themselves, students of any age may not leave with anyone other than a parent or guardian or leave early unless the Faith Formation staff has been notified and has acknowledged the notification in advance.
- **Absence versus Absenteeism:** If your student misses a class, we will provide material they can do at home. We want your students here, no matter how many classes they have missed— however, if absenteeism is a problem, we will contact families to discuss the situation so students don't fall too far behind or become a distraction to the class or small group. Absences happen, but we expect families to make every effort to be here, just like any other activity (school, sports, fine arts, etc.).
- **Disruption and Discipline:** Again, we want your students here, so our preference is not to send students home for disciplinary reasons. However, our staff and volunteers deserve attention and respect. If a student is disruptive or disrespectful and does not respond to verbal correction, we may sit an adult volunteer with the student or we may remove the student from the class for a period of time. If disruptions are frequent, continuous or in any way harmful or offensive, the student will be removed and parents will be called to come get their student. In some circumstances we may ask parents to meet with us before the student returns or come with their student to the next class.
- **Homework:** Students in grades 1-11 will receive journals this year and will be encouraged to use them to record their thoughts at an age-appropriate level, both during and outside of class. Additionally, throughout the year families will receive simple family activities to do in the “off” weeks between classes. These will be tied to the liturgical calendar, not grade-specific lessons, so families can do them together.
- **Service Hours:** We are asking all students in grade 6-10 to record at least six hours of service from at least three *different* activities this year. At least one of these activities should be a Saint Andrew activity or project (a SAINTS project or a particular parish ministry), and ideally at least one would involve the entire family volunteering together. We will have a service form posted on the website soon, but a letter describing the activity and who participated, signed by either a parent or the activity leader, is sufficient. Any service activity is fine, provided it is unpaid/non-fundraising, is not an expected family activity or regular chore, and is in keeping with Catholic teachings. Students in grade 11 will be encouraged to take on adult service commitments in the parish following Confirmation.

Our goal for Faith Formation is to encourage entire families to become better disciples of Jesus. Wherever you are on the path toward Him, we want you to take a step (or several) forward this year. If you are ready to commit to that, complete the Family Commitment Form on the next page. The goals you set are our measure for your family, and we are committed to helping and encouraging you to achieve them. You have my prayers!

Jim Thorp
 Director of Evangelization and Catechesis
 763-441-1483 x312
jimt@saint-andrew.net



Saint Andrew

Anchored in Faith  Catholic Church and School

Faith Formation Family Commitment Form

We, the _____ family, commit to growing in faith and discipleship during the 2018-2019 Faith Formation year.

We agree to follow the program policies and expectations outlined in the attached document this year and to cooperate to the best of our ability with the parish and Faith Formation staff to deepen our family faith life and become better disciples in the following ways:

Please write up to three family goals for the year. No step toward God is too small!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We ask you to support us in this effort with your prayers, direction and encouragement.

Signed:

Have all family members sign—even the little ones. Consider keeping a copy in a visible place, then turn the signed form in at the next Faith Formation class, at the Parish Office or by email to jimt@saint-andrew.net.