Our Lady of Peace

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Faith Formation Handbook

The family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God’s love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride.” -Pope St. John Paul II

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Welcome to Our Lady of Peace Faith Formation program for children grades 1-8. It is our privilege to assist you, the primary educator, with the awesome responsibility of passing on the gift of the Catholic Faith to your children. Teaching your children to know and to love God is one of the greatest gifts we can share with them. As partners in this mission, it is our goal to help draw our families into a deeper relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ, through better knowledge and understanding of the Sacraments and Church teaching. Faith Formation classes will be held Sunday morning from 9:45-10:45 in the Parish Center. The exception to this will be the first Sunday of the month (a total of 5), when we will begin with Children’s Mass at 8:30 followed by Family Faith Formation in the Parish Hall. Please consider that while regular attendance of Faith Formation class is integral to growing in knowledge of our faith, it cannot be a replacement for participation in the Sacraments, especially the Mass. *It is encouraged that children attend Mass regularly with their family. It is in the celebration of the Mass, where we are given the opportunity to receive Jesus in the Eucharist and encounter Him in the Word of God with our parish family****.*** *Our participation in the Mass is essential to a full spiritual life.*Thank you, for your support and confidence in our Faith Formation Program, as we work together to guide and to educate the children of Our Lady of Peace.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Faith Formation office.

May we allow ourselves to be encouraged by the Holy Spirit to come together as we help guide our children to know and love God through better understanding of our Catholic faith.

Mandi Welman Faith Formation Coordinator for Our Lady of Peace

Policies and Procedures

Registration: All new registrations must include a copy of your child’s Baptismal Certificate and a record of any other Sacraments received. Families should be registered members of OLP parish. Tuition and registration fees for 2017/2018 are $90 per student. **Registration will close August 25. After August 25 there will be a $25 late fee**. *Any parent willing to volunteer as a catechist or helper with Faith Formation for the duration of the school year will have their students tuitions waived.* Please note there will be additional fees for Sacramental years to cover costs of workshops and supplies.

**Please note: In order for your child to receive First Holy Communion in Grade 2, they must have completed the curriculum for Grade 1. In order for your child to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in Grade 8, your child must have successfully completed the curriculum for all previous grades. Special arrangements may be made with the cooperation of yourself and your child to review missing curriculum in order to allow for full understanding and participation of the holy Sacraments.**

Communication: Our preferred method of communication will be via e-mail. **In order to be certain we have a current email address that your family monitors regularly please email olopreled@sbcglobal.net.** Notifications for any class updates or cancellations will be sent via email. If at any time, you have something you would like to discuss, please call or email the Faith Formation without hesitation.

Change of Address/Number/Email: Please notify us of any corrections or changes. This will enable us to maintain accurate parish records and implement an effective communication process.

**Family Faith Formation Sundays:** The first Sunday of each month, as noted on the calendar, will begin with 8:30am Children’s Mass. There will be two grades (an older grade and a younger) that will participate in the celebration of the Mass and host Family Faith Formation held in the Parish Hall. Family Faith Formation will consist of a short lesson, as well as something light to eat. An email will be sent out notifying each child/family’s responsibilities for that Sunday, such as bringing bottled waters, paper goods, box of munchkins or baked good, as well as, helping with clean up.

Attendance and Classroom Behavior: Enrollment of your child in the Faith Formation program is a commitment to consistent attendance. Student absences should be reported to the Faith Formation office prior to the start of class, either by phone or email. If there is an extenuating circumstance for your family please contact the Faith Formation office to discuss options. It is also important that we are made aware of any behavioral or learning needs your child may have, so that we may best serve him or her. In order for the Catechists to fully utilize the hour they have to share our faith with your children, it is imperative that disrespectful or disruptive behavior not be tolerated. If a problem arises in a classroom, parents will be notified.

Safety Procedures: We are unable to distribute any medications to children. In the case of EPIpens or diabetic testing a child must be able to self-administer or a Virtus trained parent must stay on premises during class time. All students are required to be signed in and out of their classroom by an adult. If any adult other than a child’s parent is picking up a child please notify the Faith Formation office via email, as well as, notifying the student’s teacher. Please be on time. For safety and liability reasons we cannot allow a student to leave on their own.

Food & Drink Policy: No food or treats (including gum and candy) will be used in the program unless it is written into the lesson plans by the Catechist and approved by the Faith Formation Office. This policy is in place for the protection of all students particularly those with food allergies. No drinks are allowed to be brought into the classroom unless approved by the Catechist.

Protecting God’s Children: All catechists, assistants, staff, and volunteers (18 years and older) working directly with children are required to participate in the Vertus training workshop concerning child abuse and endangerment. This course must be completed before assuming their position. Also, a criminal background check will be conducted on all volunteers as well as a review of the Diocese of Bridgeport Code of Conduct.

RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children): Any child beyond the age of reason, seven years old and in Grades 3-12 who have not yet been Baptized or who have been Baptized but not yet received First Reconciliation and First Communion please contact the Faith Formation office for more information.

Home Study: Please contact the Faith Formation office to make request.

***All families need God.  Every single one.  We need His help, His strength, His blessing, His mercy, and His forgiveness.  It takes simplicity.  To pray as a family, simplicity is needed…***

***As a family, you can pray the “Our Father” around the dinner table.  That’s not difficult to do, it’s easy.  Praying the Rosary together, as a family, is very beautiful and it gives strength.  Also praying for one another:  a husband praying for his wife and wife for her husband.  Parents praying for their children and children praying for their parents and grandparents. Praying for one another.***

***–Pope Francis***