



SAINT CLARE AND SACRED HEART OF JESUS PARISHES

FAITH FORMATION & CATECHETICS

ELEMENTARY PARENT HANDBOOK

September 2025

Welcome to Saint Clare & Sacred Heart of Jesus parishes Faith Formation & Catechetics!

It is our goal to share with your children our Catholic faith, beliefs, prayers, as well as help them deepen their friendship with God that proves itself in love and service to others, especially with Jesus in the Eucharist in our liturgical thanksgiving celebration of Mass and Holy Communion.

We introduce your children to a *lifelong process* and ongoing relationship with God, and *not a program that is passed through and eventually completed*. The year ahead holds many opportunities to continue this journey of faith. We as catechists are not just teachers of our Catholic faith and tradition but are also called to share our own ongoing faith journey in the discipleship of Christ. **This sharing, echoing, of our faith is called *catechesis*.**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's (USCCB) theme this year is ***"Always be ready to give an explanation...for a reason for your hope"*** (1 Pet 3:15). This year's theme encourages us to be prepared to share the basis of our faith, the Lord, and the hope he provides. In the same manner Saint Peter encouraged the believers of his time, the Scripture reminds us, the sharing should be done with gentleness and respect. What a grace-filled year of faith in which we have the opportunity and challenge to share our faith with the children and families of our Saint Clare and Sacred Heart of Jesus communities!

We are privileged to have an excellent and gifted staff of background checked, trained, and certified volunteers. The people listed below are **wonderful individuals** who have **answered God's call** and **volunteer their time** each week to help your children grow in their understanding of their Catholic faith. We hope that you will support and encourage these catechists in their ministry. Please pray for them and for your children throughout the year. Your children need people who care about them and are willing to take the time to train them in their faith. Don't let them down! We assure all parents of our prayers for YOU in your primary role as religious educators of your children. May God's love and peace be in your hearts and homes and may the Holy Spirit guide you in this most important vocation!

ELEMENTARY STAFF

Director of Faith Formation & Catechetics ~ Lori Mascia

Administrative & Pastoral Assistant ~ Marisa Falcione

Grades PreK-1 ~ Laura Oliverio, Assistant Jen Feola

Grades 2-3 ~ Rebecca Guritza, with Jack Guritza

Grades 4-6 ~ Colleen Spinks, Assistant Katy Schunter

Grades PreK-7 Remote ~ Rachel Chase



**"The family is the fundamental cell of society,
where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another;
it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children."**

Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel) #66. Pope Francis. 11/24/13.

GENERAL POLICIES FOR ELEMENTARY FAITH FORMATION

1) **PARISH REGISTRATION** - Parents of children attending must be registered in St. Clare or Sacred Heart of Jesus parishes. If you are not registered, you will be contacted to complete a parish census form. If you wish to have your children attend our faith formation and are registered at another parish, we must have a letter of permission from the pastor of the parish in which you are currently registered for your children to attend classes here.

2) **TUITION** - The tuition for each child enrolled is as follows:

\$80 One Child

\$125 Two Children

\$150 Three Children or more children per family

\$150 per child for those not active or registered members of
St. Clare or Sacred Heart of Jesus parishes

Payment is to be made at the time of online registration at: <https://www.osvhub.com/st-clare-church/forms/psr-registration-form-25> Payment is needed to pay for our book & supply bills. Every child is welcome. If the tuition payment poses a hardship for you and you are not able to pay within the first month or would like to make other arrangements, select Offline Payment at time of registration and contact Ms. Mascia 440-449-4242 Ext. 119 or lmascia.stclare@att.net.

3) **MASS ATTENDANCE** - As a Catholic community we believe in teaching our children that the centrality of our faith lies in the celebration of the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. We teach the children that as Catholics we have the privilege and responsibility to attend Mass each week. **THIS IS NOT AN OPTION.** Parents who have children enrolled in our faith formation are expected to show their children by example of **faithfully attending Mass each week**. Because we feel so strongly about this, the parish staff consider it an utmost priority. We hope that when you choose to send your child to faith formation, you are serious about your responsibility to take your children to Mass each week.

4) **PRAYERS** - Because of limited class time, it is not possible for us to teach the children their prayers by memorization, therefore we ask you as parents and the primary religious educators of your children, to gradually teach them basic prayers. A list of prayers that your child should know by the conclusion of the year can be found in their Catechism Handbook under Treasure of the Catholic Faith. In addition to memorizing a prayer, it is far more important that the child understands the meaning of the words they recite. As parents you are the primary catechist to share our faith with your children. **Please take time each day to pray with your child to help them develop a prayerful attitude and regular prayer habits**, such as morning prayers, grace at meals, bedtime prayers and blessings. This will teach them to look for and see God in the world around them.

FAITH FORMATION POLICIES & GUIDELINES

1) All families must acknowledge reading and their commitment to adherence of **PSR In Person Guidelines** regarding health and safety before attending. This document was emailed to parents upon registration and can be found on our parish website <https://saintclare.net/religious-education>.

2) **ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES** - It is extremely important that children attend classes on a regular basis. **If your child will be absent, please email lmascia.stclare@att.net with the child's name, grade or classroom teacher, and reason for absence.** If a child is absent for any reason, the missed lesson(s) can be made up online using Google Classroom platform. Each family/student will receive link to their Google Classroom. Students will be asked to complete the lesson for that week online and post an appropriate response to the topic posted for the missed week. We realize that there will be times when children are ill or there is a family conflict or special occasion, but by completing lessons online the students can continue their faith formation and remain a part of the community. If all work is kept up and completed, then the child will not need to repeat the year.

- 3) **CLASS TIME, DROP OFF & PICK UP** - Classes begin promptly at 9am on Saturdays and all children are expected to be in their classrooms by that time. Classes are concluded at 10:15am. **For their safety, no child will be allowed to leave the building except with their parent/guardian or authorized adult.** Pick Up Authorization forms are online at: <https://saintclare.net/religious-education#>
- 4) **BOOKS & FOLDERS**- Each child receives their own folder, and each week will receive a Learner Leaflet with their lesson. These are to be used at home throughout the week and especially for Sunday's liturgy but folders **must be brought to each class.** Please check their folder weekly for newsletters and notes.
- 5) **PARENT CHILD FAITH FORMATION COVENANT**: Parents and children must read and commit to the Parent Child Faith Formation Covenant. This document was emailed to parents upon registration and can be found on our parish website <https://saintclare.net/religious-education>.
- 6) **DISCIPLINE** - If a child is sent out of the classroom because of a discipline problem, the child will finish their lesson under office supervision, and you will be called to inform you of the nature of the discipline problem. We then ask the parents to talk to the child about the problem when returning home from class that morning. If a child is sent out of the classroom a second time during the year, the child again completes the lesson in the office but this time when the parents are called, they are asked to come to the school after class to talk to the child's teacher.
- 7) **REPORT CARDS** -Simple evaluation records are sent home with the children two times a year **January 10th and May 10th**. This is not meant to be an evaluation of a child's faith, but merely a tool to find out a child's basic understanding of the doctrines taught in the classroom.
The report cards will be emailed to parents to review.
- 8) **LITURGIES** - We are tentatively scheduled to celebrate Mass together November 1 and March 14 to show our children the importance of community prayer and encountering Jesus in the Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist. Parents, families & friends are welcome to join us at 9am in the church on these dates.
- 9) **VISITATION** - **Anyone wishing to visit a classroom can do so only by coming to the office in Room 22 and receiving permission from the Director of Faith Formation and Catechetics.** We need to be aware at all times of people who are in the building for safety of the children.
- 10) **ALL cell phones** (per Ohio House Bill #250), **hats & sport shoes** with cleats and/or mud are to be **off** in the building.

DIOCESAN POLICY FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

If you know, believe or have a reasonable cause to suspect that a child under eighteen years of age or a mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or a physically impaired child under twenty-one years of age has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse (Examples include, but are not limited to, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse) or neglect of the child you SHALL immediately report that knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect to:

Cuyahoga County	216-696-5437 (KIDS)
Diocesan Response Services Resource	216-334-2999
Victim Assistance Coordinator, Kathleen McComb	response_services@dioceseofcleveland.org

You SHALL also: Immediately notify your parish catechetical leader, principal or program coordinator that a report has been made, or jointly make that call together. That person (the one you notified) must then report the same to the Bishop's Office.

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS (RCIA)



**Want to know the #1 reason why people haven't joined the Catholic Church? ...
... They haven't been INVITED yet!**

Jesus is calling all of us to invite someone we know who may be interested in joining us in the Catholic Church.

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is the exciting and life-changing journey in which people of any background explore, study & pray together with anticipation of entering into the Catholic faith and community at the Easter Vigil. RCIA is right for you if you:

- ~ Have never been baptized
- ~ Are baptized in another Christian denomination and would like to become Catholic
- ~ Are baptized Catholic but never received Confirmation and Holy Communion

OCIA meets every Thursday beginning September 18th, 6:30-8:30pm

To sign up or for more information please contact
Fr. Estabrook at 440-449-4242 Ext. 105 or fr.kevin.estabrook@gmail.com



**We ask all students & their families to join us to take time to pray the following prayer.
Please consider making a commitment to pray throughout the year ahead:**

Official Family Prayer for World Meeting of Families

God, our Father,

We are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son, One family, in the Spirit of your love.

Bless us with the joy of love.

Make us patient and kind, gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need.

Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.

Protect all families with your loving care, especially those for whom we now pray:

(We pause and remember family members and others by name)

**Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, keep us safe in your love,
make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.**

This we ask, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Mary, mother and guide, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, father and protector, pray for us.

Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.

Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, pray for us. Amen.

<https://www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/About-Official-Prayer>

