

FAITH FORMATION

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA CHURCH



“They all ate and were satisfied” Matt 14:20

St. Catherine of Siena Faith Formation Handbook

Dear Parents,

We are happy you have chosen a faith formation program for your family in the parish of St. Catherine of Siena in the Diocese of Metuchen. This program helps your family to grow in faith, teaches the traditions and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, supported by Church documents, including 'The Catechism of the Catholic Church' and utilizes diocesan programs to form and train catechists.

Sunday (or Vigil) Mass attendance is the most important part of our curriculum.

Participating in the Holy Mass is the highest form of prayer, uniting yourself and your family to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ you will be strengthened and renewed each week. By listening to the word of God, and the Psalms, our minds and souls can be opened to hear the truth and the personal message God has for each one of us. The Holy Eucharist is the true Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus who truly enters us to bring Divine life to our souls.

As Catholic parents, it is your obligation to model your faith and bring your children to weekly Sunday Mass.

We expect families to take this responsibility very seriously.

Please sign the agreement contained in this handbook, stating that you have read the contents and agree to our policies.

Please return the agreement by June 30, 2025, it will be kept on file in the office.

Rev. Chester Zalubski
Pastor

Sandra Kopka
Parish Catechetical Leader

St Catherine's Faith Formation Mission Statement

Faith Formation is the presentation of the Gospel message according to the doctrine and traditions of our Catholic faith. This presentation seeks to inspire families to grow in a loving relationship with the Lord which in turn will lead them to prayer, trust, and docility to *Mother Church's* provision of God's grace. Liturgy and reception of the Sacraments will be the central focus of this program.

Goals of Faith Formation

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children (CCC, #2223).

The goal of St. Catherine's faith formation program is to assist parents in that role. "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ" St. John Paul 11

Children and Parents Responsibilities

Parents and students are strongly encouraged to:

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days
(This includes monthly Family Mass)
- Participation in faith formation classes (see note *)
- Development of personal prayer life
- Frequent reception of Holy Communion and Reconciliation

* *Parents will be required to attend*

Sacramental Preparation Classes:

- Two years of faith formation immediately preceding reception of the Sacraments (Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation) is a Diocesan requirement. Additional preparation will take place in the form of, but not limited to: retreats, service hours, and rehearsals.
- Parents will be required to attend meetings that correspond to their child's Sacramental grade.

Cooperation in these areas will open our hearts to receive the love and mercy God freely offers each of us.

Christian Code of Behavior

Jesus asked us to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. As we try to live as disciples of Jesus, we strive to show respect and courtesy to each other at all times. The encouragement of parents/guardians is expected in helping their child(ren) live God's commandment of love.

The respect and participation of each student are important for the success of the program. The Office of Faith Formation has established a process to address unacceptable behavior. There will be set guidelines for the classroom that each catechist will implement. If a student is disruptive, disrespectful, or refuses to follow these guidelines the following actions will be taken:

First occurrence: A warning will be issued to the student

Second occurrence: The student will be sent to the office. After class, the catechist, PCL, and the student will speak about the situation, and the parent may be called.

Third occurrence: A conference will be held with the catechist, PCL, pastor, parent, and student, in which the student will not be permitted to attend class until **AFTER** the meeting has been held. A make-up assignment will be given and must be returned before returning to the class.

Cell Phone Policy: Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted during class time. Failure to adhere to this policy will prohibit the student from bringing a cell phone to future classes.

Faith Formation Program

Grade 1: online program (My Catholic Faith Delivered)

Grade 2: Sundays 8:30am – 9:20am Mass 9:30am

Grade 3: Sundays 8:30am – 9:20am Mass 9:30am

Grade 4: Sundays 8:30am – 9:20am Mass 9:30am

Grade 5: Sundays 8:30am – 9:20am Mass 9:30am

Grade 6: Sundays 8:30am – 9:20am Mass 9:30am

Grade 7: Wednesdays 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Grade 8: Wednesdays 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Classes are generally every other week. Schedule may change due to holidays.

- **LATENESS:** Lateness greatly interferes with the process of learning and is disruptive to catechists and fellow students. Please be on time.
- **ATTENDANCE:** Attendance at all classes is expected. In the event of an absence: Please call the office (908) 735 – 4024, or email: stcscre@gmail.com prior to the scheduled class to discuss the situation. All assignments will need to be made up by the next class. The Diocese permits 3 hours of absence from class time

- HOMEWORK: All grades will be assigned homework to promote faith and support class lessons. Assignments may include: committing prayers to memory, work in the activity book, and research (ie. lives of the saints).
- TEST: To ensure students are learning about the Catholic faith, oral or written tests will be given periodically. Every student will need to have a basic knowledge of the material before advancing to the next grade. This is most important in Sacramental years. *Faith formation will not be treated as a subject that focuses on academic performance, but rather on cultivating an encounter with Jesus.* Daily pray is strongly encouraged to introduce the children to the tender love of Jesus and support what is taught in Faith Formation.

Registration

- Annual \$150 per family + one-time 8th grade \$40 Confirmation fee.
 - **No one will be denied faith formation due to financial difficulties. If there is a financial hardship, please contact the PCL. All correspondence will be kept confidential.
- Children should register for Faith Formation in the grade they are attending in school.
- All families need to be registered members of St. Catherine's parish.
- First time registrants must provide a copy of the child's Baptismal certificate.

Food Allergies

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the PCL in writing of the child(ren)'s allergies on the registration form. *Because there are so many allergies that endanger children today, it is a policy of the Office for Catechesis that ALL FOOD AND DRINK BE PROHIBITED DURING CLASSES.*

Parent /Guardian Responsibilities

- Arrival: Please bring students into the Church.
- Dismissal: Students are to be picked up by the parent/guardian in their designated rooms. **FOR THEIR SAFETY, STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE PARKING LOT UNATTENDED!**
- Photos for children under the age of 18 may not be published in print or electronic media without the permission and completion of the Photo Release by the parent/guardian.
- Parent/guardian must provide emergency phone/cell numbers
Notification of family change of address and phone numbers
- A **copy of the Baptismal certificate** must be presented at the ***initial registration*** unless the child was Baptized here at St Catherine's church.
- It is the parents' responsibility to notify the PCL in writing of the custodial status and any restrictions concerning the non-custodial parent.

Child Abuse Policy

If a PCL/catechist suspects a child has been abused, New Jersey law requires that the State Division of Youth and Family Services be notified. The Office of Child and Youth Protection of the Diocese of Metuchen (732) 562-2413 will also be notified of suspected abuse.

Illegal Substances and Weapons

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and weapons of any kind are not allowed on parish premises or in buildings being used for religious education purposes. If anyone is found to be in possession, the person will be detained until proper authorities are notified. A PCL/catechist will NOT send a child home with a visibly impaired driver.

Special Needs

If a child has special needs, parents/guardians are asked to share the information with the PCL and /or catechist. This information will not marginalize the child in any way but help the catechist meet the particular needs. This information will be kept confidential.

Office Hours and Contact

Sandra Kopka, PCL

Director of Religious Education

PO Box 245

Pittstown, NJ 08867

stcscre@gmail.com

Phone: (908) 735-4024

Hours: Monday - Thursday (afternoon is best)

Appointments can be made on a mutually agreed on time.

Questions/concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

I consider it a great privilege to serve as the Parish Catechetical Leader at St Catherine of Siena Church.

Please print, sign, and return this page, the registration forms (on St. Catherine's website), and the registration fee to the office by June 30, 2025. Applications submitted after June 30, 2025 will be charged a \$50 late fee.

Faith Formation Agreement

I have read the terms in this handbook and agree to follow the guidelines set forth.

Signature

Date: _____

Please print name

