



# *One Catholic Family*

Holy Spirit • St. Helen • St. Mary

## **Faith Formation Policy Handbook**





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# Mission Statement for Catechesis

Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's **efforts to make disciples**, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ.

"Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more her **inner growth and correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on catechesis.**"

*Catechism of the Catholic Church: 4, 7*

Each one of us in **virtue of our baptism is called to live our faith and to bear witness to the Gospel** in our families, friends, parish communities and society. To share in the Church's mission of Evangelization and Catechesis is to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

It is our prayer that our common witness to faith, hope and love will continue to transform the world in the love of Jesus Christ. *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

The Office of Religious Education Faith Formation is commissioned by the Bishop to support and promote lifelong catechesis and faith formation for the Diocese of Gary. The Office aims to collaborate with the communities of the Diocese, varied in culture and background. It is within this diversity that the Office encourages the unfolding nature of Catholic Tradition and the shared **calling to be witnesses to the fullest expression of God's love, Jesus Christ.** *Gary Diocese*

Faith formation requires us to bring faith, worship, and life together, and respond to the power and insight that emerges when we do that. The goal of faith formation is to **know, love, and serve the Lord ever better and more fruitfully.** *Family Faith Formation-John Roberto; Program Creator*

We are the One Catholic Family of Holy Spirit in Winfield, St. Helen in Hebron, and St. Mary in Kouts. We are founded on the Spirit filled Roman Catholic faith, we are a people called by God to **make Christ real in the world.** We are committed to support this mission with and for our neighbors through hospitality, worship, works of charity, formation and stewardship. *One Catholic Family of Holy Spirit, St Helen, & St Mary*

# Parental Commitment

The general concept of our Family Faith Formation program (as in any religious education program) is to aid and encourage PARENTS as the primary teachers in faith formation. FFF only meets on a monthly basis, therefore parental cooperation and participation is of the utmost importance. Full parental responsibility in this mission includes:

- inspiring the undertaking and applauding the completion of home assignments and family activities
- praying with the children
- thorough attendance with them at Weekend Mass, FFF Sessions and Sacramental Preparation Sessions (as they apply). **CHILDREN MAY NOT ATTEND THEIR SESSION WITHOUT A PARENT/ADULT GUARDIAN.**
- It is assumed that parents would prioritize this commitment as well as they would any other academic or extra-curricular obligation.

“The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.” The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable. Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents. CCC #2221,2226

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In the Church, we are baptized. In the church, we receive the faith that the Church has preserved intact down through the centuries. In the Church, we hear the living Word of God and learn how we must live it we want to please God...Despite all her human weaknesses, apart from the Church no one can be a Christian. Children are a gift from God and not the property of the parents. Before they are their parents' children, they are God's children. The primary duty of parents is to present to their children the Good News and communicate the Christian faith to them. YouCat #343, 372



# One Catholic Family Faith Formation

The Faith Formation Teams of Holy Spirit, St Helen, and St Mary's are partnering to help aid and encourage our families in faith formation. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we provide information and experiences to encourage a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. Participating in faith formation along with practicing our faith at home and by attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist is essential to a relationship with Jesus. As One Catholic Family, we feel that combining our Faith Formation programs and offering you more opportunities to provide your families with faith sessions that precede or follow the Holy Mass is essential. One of the most important components of Family Faith Formation is faith sharing within the community. By combining our three Family Faith Formation Programs into two, we feel that we can better support our families in their faith formation.

Faith Formation sessions will be offered at Holy Spirit and St Helen. Holy Spirit will be offering monthly Family Faith Formation on Sundays at 9 am before the 11 am Mass and St Helen's will be at 10 am following their 9 am Sunday Mass. Holy Spirit offers a Monday evening session at 6pm to 7:30 pm. St. Mary's Kouts families will be able to choose to register for the Family Faith Formation Session location that works best for their families.

Sacrament preparation sessions will be provided by Holy Spirit and St Helen as well. Holy Spirit provides preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation with monthly Saturday morning sessions in the Fall and First Eucharist with monthly Saturday morning sessions from January through May. Confirmation Prep is provided at Holy Spirit as a two-year program with preparation beginning in 7th Grade as year 1 for those eligible and 2nd-year preparation beginning with 8th grade for those eligible to begin the final preparations to receive the sacrament on Thursday evenings. St. Helen offers a one year Confirmation Prep program for students who participated in Family Faith Formation through 7th grade.

## Family Faith Formation

Family Faith Formation is an innovative faith formation program that aids and encourage parents as the primary teachers in faith formation. Parents/Guardians must attend all sessions with their children, with the exception of Confirmation Prep. Full parental responsibility in this spiritual growth includes parental attendance along with their children at each month's session of Family Faith Formation, inspiring and applauding the completion of home assignments as assigned, praying with your children, and faithful attendance at weekend Mass. It is expected that children in first grade through the reception of Confirmation participate in yearly ongoing faith formation to ensure continuous, systematic, age-appropriate catechesis.

***The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith. All families ARE expected to weekly attendance at Sunday Mass. Attendance at parish events is also very important to your family's formation especially in preparing for the Sacraments.***

## Enrollment Policy

It is church policy that all families be formally registered as members at Holy Spirit, St. Helen, or St. Mary in Kouts to be enrolled in the Faith formation program. If you wish to register as a non-member, we must have a letter from your parish priest acknowledging that he has granted you permission to enroll in our Faith Formation program while you are a member at that parish. Non-members attending Faith Formation will be assessed \$150 per family plus tuition. It is expected that all families who are members of One Catholic Family contribute weekly using their Sunday envelopes or electronic fund transfer. If this condition is not met, the non-member assessment will be added. Registration with the parish can be accomplished by contacting the Parish Office to register.

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*If we were to rely only on ourselves and our own strength, we would not get far in our attempts to be good. Through faith we discover that we are God's children and that God makes us strong. When God gives us his strength, we call this "grace". Especially in the sacred signs that we call the sacraments. God gives us the ability actually to do the good that we want to do. YouCat #279*

# Sacraments

The Sacramental life of the Roman Catholic Church is what uniquely distinguishes it from other Christian denominations. The WHOLE LITURGICAL LIFE of the Catholic Church in fact revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the seven sacraments. The Bishop, along with Pastors, Pastoral Associates and the Directors of Faith Formation share in the responsibility to see that those preparing to receive the sacraments are well formed in accordance with Church standards and teachings.

## Baptism

Baptism is the beginning of a lasting communion with God. Baptism is the foundation and prerequisite for all other sacraments. It is the first sacrament of initiation into the faith. The celebration of any sacrament presumes the practice of the faith which, in the case of Baptism, gives the Church every assurance that the child to be baptized will be raised Catholic. It does a disservice to the sacrament when it is celebrated without the serious intention of practicing one's faith. Sacraments are meant to be celebrated in the faith community (parish) in which you are an active member. Parish registration helps to insure that individuals are an active part of a faith community. It affords them to opportunity to be a support to that faith community through their financial contribution but more importantly through their active participation.

- The family of the child must be registered parishioners for at least six months before requesting a sacrament.
- Parents must complete an online course on Catholic Baptism and attend a Baptism Parent Meeting, they are available by appointment only and you must be a registered parishioner.
- We ask that you contact the parish office at least six months prior to the time you would like to celebrate your baby's baptism.
- Only one Godparent is necessary but they must be a fully initiated Catholic (baptized, confirmed, receives Eucharist, is at least 16 years old, and actively participates in the faith).

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*The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop. CCC # 1253*

*A person who turns to Christianity is not just changing a world view. He travels a path of learning in which he becomes a new man through personal conversion..... YouCat #196*

# Sacrament Preparation

Sacrament Prep Session locations will be made available based on the needs of the parishes within our One Catholic Family accounting for the number of students registered.

## Sacrament Preparation Requirements

- The child must be baptized; we need a copy of each child's baptismal certificate on file. Please submit with registration (if not baptized at Holy Spirit, St Helen, or St Mary in Kouts).
- Any child baptized in a Christian tradition other than the Catholic faith, must be formally received into the Church by a profession of faith and an act of reception.
- Student MUST maintain 100% participation in all sacramental workshops.
- Student should maintain 100% attendance at Family Faith Formation Sessions and regular Mass Attendance.
  - ***An important part of the faith life of every Catholic is attendance at weekend Masses and each Holy Day of Obligation. This practice, an expectation for all practicing Catholics, will help keep your family strong spiritually as you grow in relationship with God and each other.***
- Student MUST complete ALL assignments; both FFF and Sacrament.
- Parent/guardian participation in sessions are also an integral part of preparation for each sacrament. Please prepare to be present at these sessions.
- All students, 1st through Confirmation, are required to participate in yearly ongoing faith formation to assure a continuous, systematic, and age appropriate catechesis.
- In that event that a family has no other alternative than to miss a session, online access is available so the session may be completed at home.

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*The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.* CCC #1131

*Sacraments are Christ's gift to His church. It is her duty to administer them and to protect them from misuse. Sacraments exist FOR the Church and THROUGH the Church. For: because the body of Christ, which is the Church, is established, nourished and perfected through the sacraments. Through: because the sacraments are the power of Christ's Body, for example in confession, where Christ forgives our sins through the priest. YouCat #175*



# First Reconciliation

In addition to the Requirements for ALL Sacraments (noted on page 8):

- Student should be in 2nd Grade or older
- One year of previous faith formation is required.
- The three Reconciliation workshops are only PART of the requirements to celebrate this wonderful sacrament. Students must also be enrolled in Family Faith Formation and weekly Mass attendance is vital to ensure our commitment as parents is prioritizing our faith first. Parent/guardian attendance is required for all sessions.

It is an important part of who we are as Catholics. It teaches our children about God's unconditional love and forgiveness.

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*The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart.* CCC #1432

*...we are full of sorrow for our sins; we resolved to change our life and place all our hope in God's help.* YouCat #229

*If we say, "We have fellowship with him," while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth.* 1 John 1:6

# First Eucharist

In addition to the Requirements for ALL Sacraments (noted on page 8):

- Student should be in 3rd Grade or older
- Participation in two full years of Faith Formation prior to the Sacrament Year
- The student must celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to reception of the Holy Eucharist for the 1st time
- The four Eucharist workshops are only PART of the requirements to celebrate this LIVING sacrament. Students must also be enrolled in Family Faith Formation and weekly Mass attendance is vital to ensure our commitment as parents to help guide our children to become strong followers of Christ. Parent/guardian attendance is required for all sessions.

It is the ultimate gift of God's love. It unites us as Catholics and strengthens us as one body of Christ each time we participate in the celebration.

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*...the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith: "Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."* CCC #1327

*...in the Eucharist we receive the Body of Christ and are increasingly being transformed into the Body of Christ.* YouCat #211

*When everything is subjected to Him, then the Son himself will [also] be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.* 1 Corinthians 15:28

# Confirmation

*In lieu of attending Family Faith Formation sessions, students who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation will attend Confirmation Preparation Sessions. Confirmation sessions are on a different schedule than family sessions. Confirmation Preparation sessions are available at Holy Spirit and St Helen.*

## Confirmation at St Helen

Confirmation at St. Helen is a one year Faith Formation Program. If your child is eligible to begin preparation for Confirmation, there is only one schedule for Confirmation (8th grade and up) which meets two Thursdays per three times per month on Sundays and Mondays.

In addition to the Requirements for ALL Sacraments (noted on page 8):

- Must be in 8th grade or older. The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually celebrated in eighth grade and is an opportunity for candidates to deepen their understanding of their Catholic faith and the mission of Christ.
- Attendance at all Confirmation Preparation sessions and weekly Mass attendance is vital to ensure their commitment to prioritize their faith first.
- All students in Confirmation Prep must also attend a Confirmation Retreat
- Participate in a Discipleship/Service Project.
- Students will select a sponsor who is at least 16 years old; fully initiated into and an active participant of the Catholic Church.

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*...by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed. CCC # 1285*

*...His mission resounds in our ears. We sense His help. We will not betray His trust or disappoint Him; we will win the game for Him. We just have to want to do it and listen to Him. YouCat #203*

# Confirmation at Holy Spirit

Confirmation at Holy Spirit is a two-year Faith Formation Program. If your child is eligible to begin preparation for Confirmation, there is only one schedule for 1st year Confirmation Prep (7th grade and up) which is the same as the Sunday Family Faith Formation Schedule and 2nd year Confirmation (8th grade and up) which meets two Thursdays per month.

## Confirmation 1ST Year

In addition to the Requirements for ALL Sacraments (noted on page 8):

- Student should be in 7th Grade or older
- Student should have had ongoing participation in Faith Formation after the celebrations of Reconciliation and First Eucharist (4th through 6TH grade) and regular Mass attendance.
- Student MUST maintain 100% attendance at the monthly 1st Year Confirmation Sessions (replaces FAMILY FAITH FORMATION Sessions).

Students attend this in place of Family Faith Formation. This class meets during our Sunday Family Faith Formation Session. There is no Monday option.

Parents/Guardians need not attend as they may be in Family Faith Formation with younger children). This schedule is the same as the Sunday Family Faith Formation Schedule.

## Confirmation 2nd Year

In addition to the Requirements for ALL Sacraments (noted on page 8):

- Student should be in 8th Grade or older and have completed Confirmation Year 1.
- Student should have had ongoing participation in Faith Formation after the celebrations of Reconciliation and First Eucharist (4th through 7th grade) and regular Mass attendance.
- Student MUST maintain 100% attendance at the bi-monthly Confirmation Sessions (replaces FAMILY FAITH FORMATION Sessions).
- Participation in Confirmation Retreat, Class Service Project, and 6 hours additional service/involvement in parish activities (Youth Ministry, Altar Server, Children's Liturgy aide, parish event service opportunities)
- Student will select a Sponsor who is at least 16 years old; fully initiated into and an active participant of the Catholic Church.

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*..they sent them Peter and John,, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit,, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-17*



# Attendance Policy

*The Formation Team does its very best to create the annual calendar around the schedules of all area school systems that feed into our One Catholic Family parishes. We strive to create opportunities for attendance for all families involved. Dates for monthly sessions throughout the upcoming year are typically available by the end of the current year.*

- *Holy Spirit sessions are usually held on the First Sunday (Session One) and the following Monday (Session Two) during each month. St. Helen sessions are usually held on the Second Sunday during each month.*
- *All students, aged 1st through 7th Grade, (along with their families) are required to attend their respective monthly Family Session. Students in grade 7 who have completed ongoing yearly faith formation may begin Confirmation Preparation at Holy Spirit by attending the Conf. Yr. 1 session on Sundays. Confirmandi (8th Grade students or older) will attend their bi- monthly Session.*
- *We have eight months of instruction (September through April) during the Formation Year.*
- *As a family, you are expected to choose one of the available sessions at registration time and attend that assigned session each month; therefore attending EIGHT sessions throughout the year (as opposed to other programs that meet EACH WEEK). It is imperative that you schedule accordingly so that your attendance is possible!*
- *Sporting events and/or practices DO NOT constitute a legitimate reason to miss your session.*
- *If the need to attend the alternate monthly session arises, an attendance adjustment can be made by giving advance notice to the Formation Office.*
- *Part of the student sacrament readiness assessment consists of an attendance percentage. Failure to attend sessions will elicit a failing attendance percentage. A failing attendance percentage may make it necessary to delay sacrament celebrations. Due to our limited time together and work assigned, attending the monthly sessions is mandatory*
- *In the event that an alternative session at Holy Spirit or St Helen does not work for your family, we make our sessions available via Google Slides so that you can complete the session at home with your family.*

*His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and devotion, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and power. Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love. If these are yours and increase in abundance, they will keep you from being idle or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:3-8*

## Mass Attendance

Mass attendance is a crucial part of the ongoing Faith Formation of each and every individual. It is where everything that we learn about in Family Faith Formation comes into play and **is necessary in fostering spiritual growth.**

- Your family's attendance at weekly Mass is required.
- Holy Spirit's Sunday Session begins at 9:15 am and ends by 10:45 am before the 11 am Mass . St. Helen's Sunday's Session begins promptly after the 9 am Mass. Mondays session begins at 6 pm.
- The usage of church envelopes is evidence of an active/practicing parishioner.
- Please make sure you submit your envelope every Sunday (even it is empty) so that we may gauge your attendance.
- Commitment to the faith signifies readiness for Sacraments.

### One Catholic Family Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday's 4pm at St Mary Kouts & 6 pm at Holy Spirit  
Sunday's 9 am at St Helen & 11 am at Holy Spirit

*The **Precept of the Church** specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day. CCC #2180*

*Since Sunday is an Easter celebration that occurs each week, Christians from the earliest times have gathered together on that day to **celebrate and thank their Redeemer and to reunite themselves with Him** and with others.....participation in the Sunday Eucharist is fundamental for a Christian life, the Church explicitly declares that **it is a serious sin to stay away from Sunday Mass without good reason.** YouCat #365*

# Registration and Tuition

- Registration begins in May and online registration is available
- A minimum payment of \$25 must be submitted with registration; allowing us to place orders with publishing companies.
- Registration Forms can also be found on the One Catholic Family website or directly from the Formation Office during office hours.
- We also have a locked “drop-off” box near the front office for submission after office hours
- Faith Formation is open to any and all REGISTERED and ACTIVE members of One Catholic Family parishes. If you would like to become a member of our parish, please come in during office hours, visit our website or give us a call to obtain information.
- If you are transferring from another Faith Formation program to ours please submit a CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER from your previous parish.
- If you would like to attend our Formation program while remaining a member of another parish, please submit a LETTER OF RELEASE from your current pastor (additional fees will apply).
- New families will need to submit copies of each child’s Baptism Certificate

## Tuition

- Family Fee or Confirmation Only: \$150
- Non-Parishioner additional fee: \$150
- Sacrament Fee First Reconciliation & Eucharis: \$35/child/sacrament
- Confirmation Sacramental Fee : \$50/child  
(does not apply for Confirmation Only unless more than one child)
- Late Registration Fee for registering after August 1st \$25
  
- A Monthly Payment Plan is available
  
- If you are experiencing financial hardship, please request the Financial Assistance Application.

*Promises must be kept and contracts strictly observed to the extent that the commitments made in them are morally just. A significant part of economic and social life depends on the honoring of contracts between physical or moral persons....All contracts must be agreed to and executed in good faith. CCC #2410*

*....The Seventh Commandment also pertains to the following: ....not abiding by contracts into which one has entered.... YouCat #428*

*When you make a vow to God, delay not its fulfillment. For God has no pleasure in fools; fulfill what you have vowed. Ecclesiastes 5:3*

# **O.C.I.A. (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) adapted for Children and Youth**

For children well past the age of reason and not yet baptized; it is a journey of conversion; a process rather than an instructional program that outlines the steps for the formation of catechumens, bringing their conversion to the faith to a greater maturity. It is gradual and suited to the individual's needs.

It helps them respond more deeply to God's gracious initiative in their lives and prepares them for union with the Church community. This process is meant to form them into the fullness of the Christian life and to become disciples of Jesus; their teacher. This includes an initiation into the mystery of salvation, the practice of faith, hope, and love, and other virtues in a succession of liturgical rites.

Persons baptized into another Christian church and now seeking full communion with the Catholic Church are also welcomed to participate along with catechumens in the OCIA in the process of learning about the Catholic faith and being formed in that faith. They bring to the process of preparation their prior experience of Christian life and prayer. For a baptized Christian, reception into full communion with the Catholic Church involves reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and then a Profession of Faith followed by the celebration of Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Children, not baptized as infants but of catechetical age, may seek Christian Initiation at the direction of their parents, guardians, or on their own initiative. Supplemental catechesis may be necessary and will be implemented and scheduled on a case-by-case basis after meeting with the Formation Team which includes the pastor of the parish.

## **Protecting God's Children**

The Gary Diocese has mandated that any individual that works with the children in any parish must attend a Virtus Training and register online with Virtus as part of the ongoing program.



Trainings are held throughout the year and are open to anyone who wishes to attend. Please contact us if you would like to participate.

Each year we also provide age-appropriate abuse prevention education programs for the students and families within our curriculum.

# **One Catholic Family Faith Formation Policy Handbook**

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FORMATION is our goal. We hope to help our families become informed, active, participating parishioners who are forming and supporting each other in love, worship and service as Jesus did.

## **Bishop of Diocese of Gary.**

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory

## **Director of Catechesis for Diocese of Gary.**

Sean Martin

## **One Catholic Family Pastor and Pastoral Associate**

Reverend Thomas Mischler and Karen Yankauskas

## **One Catholic Family Director of Religious Education**

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