



FAITH FORMATION



2024-2025 CATECHISM
FAMILY HANDBOOK

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GENERAL INFORMATION

PARISH STAFF

PASTOR	Rev. Steven Hoffer
PARISH OFFICE PHONE	(702) 399 - 6897

FAITH FORMATION STAFF

COORDINATOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	Karen Washburn 702-399-6897 ext. 108 kwashburn@saplv.com
COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY	Vincent Farina 702-399-6897 ext. 109 vincentf@saplv.com

CLASS TIMES

All PreK – 5th Catechism classes are held on Sundays mornings either at (8:15 AM – 9:45 AM) OR (11:15 AM – 12:45 PM) OR Tuesday evenings at (4:00 PM – 5:30 PM) OR Wednesday evenings at (4:00 PM – 5:30 PM). All Middle School (6th – 8th) classes will be held on Sunday afternoon from (1:00 PM – 2:30 PM). All High School Confirmation classes will be held on Sunday afternoons either at (1:00 PM – 2:30 PM) OR (2:30 PM – 4:00 PM). The class schedule is emailed to registered families in late August.

MEDICAL INFORMATION / SPECIAL NEEDS

If a child must receive medication during class time, parents must make special arrangements with the Faith Formation Staff in advance. The Faith Formation Office must be informed in writing of any special needs, dietary restrictions, or medical conditions that a child may have.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION OPTIONS

FAITH AND LIFE SERIES

Faith and Life Series Sessions are designed for children in grades 4th–5th and taught by volunteer catechists who receive training to enable them to share our Catholic faith and tradition in an age-appropriate, effective and meaningful way. These sessions utilize the Faith and Life Series text and activity books. Children are immersed in Scripture from day one, with the Bible as the core text. This program is exciting, active learning that will get your child out of their seat as they excitedly dive into the Bible, connect the teachings of the Church and explore how best to answer Jesus' call of discipleship. Family pages reinforce the chapter themes in fun, family-friendly ways and featured persons of faith provide inspiring Catholic heroes for focus. This program engages children on spiritual, emotional, and physical levels to help them transform a learned faith into a vibrantly lived faith.

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (CGS)

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a program developed 60+ years ago by Sophia Cavaletti, a Scriptural Scholar with the Vatican & Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori Educator. It has spread throughout the world and has been endorsed by St. John Paul II, St. Teresa of Calcutta, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Bishop Robert Barron, Scott Hahn, Jeff Cavins, and others. It is a Montessori-based contemplative program offer to children from 3–12 yrs. of age. We currently offer Level I for 3–5 yrs. of age Level II for 6–8 yrs. of age. The program is shared in an "atrium," our sacred space, with hands-on materials to entice the senses and encourage their ability to wonder. Here the child and the catechist come to listen to the Word of God and open their hearts to the one true Teacher. The program is multi-aged and appropriate to their development and religious characteristics. We celebrate the essential mysteries of the Catholic faith as revealed by Sacred Scripture, Divine Liturgy, and Sacred History while following the life of the Church. The Catechist has received extensive training to present the faith in an age-appropriate manner while addressing the needs of each child. We work closely with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, USA Association. On the website, parents have access to books, documents, materials, and even podcasts to use within their domestic church.

SACRAMENTAL GUIDELINES

FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST EUCHARIST

Eligibility

- The Child must be at least seven years of age, and in second grade or above on the year they will receive the sacraments.
- The child must complete two consecutive years of Communion Preparation Classes (see attendance policy).
 - The regular preparation period is First and Second Grades.
 - Students beginning this process at a later age must also complete two consecutive years of catechetical preparation.
- Parents or guardians must be registered members of St. Anthony of Padua Church.
- Attendance at the 1st Reconciliation & 1st Communion Retreat for the child's appropriate grade level is required.
- Students who are not baptized at St. Anthony of Padua Church will need to submit a copy of their baptismal certificate before receiving First Reconciliation or First Communion.
- Students who are **NOT** baptized within the Catholic Church must speak with the Coordinator of Children's Ministry to handle the necessary details for the R.C.I.A. programing.

CONFIRMATION

High school-age Confirmation preparation falls under our Coordinator of Youth Ministry. Registration for Confirmation Preparation is done separately from 1st – 8th Grade Catechism. Confirmation guidelines are outlined in the entry interviews for the Confirmation students at the beginning of each year and in the Confirmation Handbook.

ALTERNATE CATECHETICAL FORMATION

As the primary educators of their children, parents may choose various alternate ways to teach their children. It is the Pastor's place to ensure that proper catechesis takes place in preparation for the sacraments. Catechesis such as Catholic home school programs and enrollment in a Catholic school may adequately provide a portion or all of the necessary catechesis to prepare for a sacrament. These exceptions are determined on an individual basis. Families should schedule a meeting with the Faith Formation Staff to discuss this possibility. If a family receives this exception, they will still need to attend all parent meetings, rehearsals, retreats, and other required activities.

PROGRAM POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Children enrolled in catechism classes at St. Anthony of Padua Church **must not exceed 4 absences during the faith formation year**. A student preparing to receive sacraments and who misses more than four classes will be required to repeat the year. Parents should bring extenuating circumstances, such as prolonged illness, to the attention of the Faith Formation Office.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is essential to the faith formation of a child. The United States Bishops reinforce that the parents are the primary educators in the faith of their children. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the following ways:

- Attendance at Mass with your child every Sunday is **expected**.
- Spend some time with your child during the week sharing scripture of the upcoming Sunday. You can easily find the readings for Mass at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>.
- Take time after class to review their lesson and work with them.
- Regularly as a family, pray the grade-level prayer(s) that the student is learning.
- Attend seasonal activities at the parish such as Trunk or Treat, the Parish Feast Day, Holy Days of Obligation, Stations of the Cross during Lent, and attendance during Holy Week liturgies.

Parents are always welcome to visit our sessions. You must first check-in with a member of the Parish Staff at the Faith Formation Office. Repeated visits (more than 1) would mandate that the parent meet the Diocese of Las Vegas requirements for catechists to ensure a safe environment for all of our children. This includes fingerprinting and completion of an online Protecting God's Children class. Parents visiting a class are "observers" and may not have any interaction with the children.

INFORMATION ABOUT RECORDS

Records of attendance are maintained for each child. These are kept in the Faith Formation Office. If a family moves or transfers to another parish, we can send a letter to the new parish if a written request is made. This request should include the complete address of the parish to which we will send them. We will only release student information to authorized persons. As a student receives the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation – they are recorded in our Church records. If the original parish where a child was baptized is other than St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, the parish of baptism is notified of the reception of each new sacrament.

PROGRAM POLICIES

PARENT MEETINGS AND RETREATS

Parents must attend the beginning of the year Parent Meeting held before our first class day each year. Additional meetings may be held for students preparing for baptism or first communion. We will inform parents of meetings with adequate time to schedule attendance.

Middle School students (grades 6-8) attend a retreat in the spring. This Middle School Retreat is only one day, usually in the early spring. This is a mandatory part of the catechetical program. Please see the calendar for the date of the Junior High Retreat.

Students in grades 2 through 6 who are preparing to receive their First Holy Communion will attend a First Communion Retreat and a Reconciliation Retreat in the spring of their second year of preparation. This retreat is a mandatory part of their preparation for First Holy Communion.

CUSTODIAL RIGHTS

This parish catechetical program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment concerning the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Faith Formation Office with an official copy of the court order.

And/or

We respectfully request that all divorced parents provide a copy of the divorce decree's custody section, which applies to the child(ren) registered in St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Religious Education Program and prepared for sacraments. This information will also help us determine when, if ever, we can release a child to a non-custodial parent. It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information.

COMMUNICATION

CONTACTING CATECHISTS

If a problem arises during the year with a student, the parent is encouraged to first speak to their child's catechist before or after class. Communication with the catechist should never be limited to problems only. It is equally important to maintain open communication concerning achievements and success.

CONTACTING PARISH STAFF

If you cannot resolve a matter, both the parent and catechist must request a joint meeting with the Faith Formation Staff. If the matter remains unresolved, the final step is to request an appointment with the catechist, the Faith Formation Staff, and the Pastor. This should only take place when necessary.

MAKING APPOINTMENTS

To request an appointment, call the Faith Formation Office at (702) 399-6897.

The staff's availability is determined by the needs of the classes, students, and teachers. Evening appointments can easily be arranged during the week if needed. Office hours fluctuate based on things such as evening adult classes, teacher training sessions, etc. Please call ahead to make an appointment with the staff to meet with them.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

We request that parents provide the office with emergency contacts and phone (and/or cell phone) numbers during the registration process. In addition, parents are asked to provide any necessary medical information regarding their child(ren). Parents are responsible for keeping the information updated when changes occur. If a student has any special needs, the faith formation department will inform the catechist at the beginning of the year.

GRADE LEVEL DETERMINATION

In general, students enter the catechism grade level, which corresponds with their school grade. In the case of homeschoolers or students who have received advanced grade placement, we ask families to enroll students in age-appropriate grades. Any requests for exception to this must be made in writing and would only rarely be granted.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

GUIDELINES

God calls each of us into a relationship with Himself and to respect the dignity of every person. To encourage understanding of this in our students, we must have mutual respect in our sessions.

A student's behavior must not interfere with order in the classroom. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Disruptive/disrespectful words or actions.
- Intentionally injuring another person with physical or verbal abuse.
- Defacing or destroying church property or the property of oneself or another.
- Bringing inappropriate items to class.
- Inappropriate dress: including immodest clothing (no stomachs, cleavage, underwear... should be visible) and clothing/backpacks with inappropriate pictures, writing, or themes.

RESPONSE TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Children who have been warned and whose parents have been notified, and continue not to adhere to these policies, may be asked to withdraw from the program. The appropriate measures explained below will be taken before such recourse is taken.

First Offense	The catechist will point out to the child the behavior that needs to be corrected.
Second Offense	The catechist will send the child to the Faith Formation staff who may consult with a Parent. A meeting could be called for, which could include parents, catechists, and the Faith Formation staff to find ways to remedy the situation.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

SERIOUS INFRACTIONS:

Serious offenses against Christian behavior may warrant, or even demand, immediate suspension. Such incidents could include but are not limited to bullying, violence, or threats of violence. Determination of what warrants a serious infraction is at the sole judgment of the Pastor and Faith Formation Staff.

If an extreme situation occurs where a young person is suspected of having weapons, drugs, or other illegal or dangerous items in their possession, we could undertake the following procedures:

1. The catechist and/or Formation Staff would express suspicion of illegal or dangerous items to the student.
2. The student would be asked to cooperate with any reasonable request for the search of personal items.
3. If the student refuses to cooperate, a parent may be asked to come to the site and assist in the search of personal items.
4. If the parent refuses to cooperate, the student may be suspended from the program until the parent meets with the Catechist, Faith Formation Department, and the Pastor.
5. Law enforcement authorities will be notified when warranted.
6. The staff will always notify parents in the event of these incidents.

PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACTIONS OR STATING GRIEVANCES

If the parent is not satisfied with the action taken, they may request a meeting with the Pastor and Faith Formation Depa. Be assured that our commitment is love and patience for all. If a student is asked to leave the program, it will only be after all other reasonable efforts have been made.



ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE OF STUDENTS

POLICY FOR ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF STUDENTS

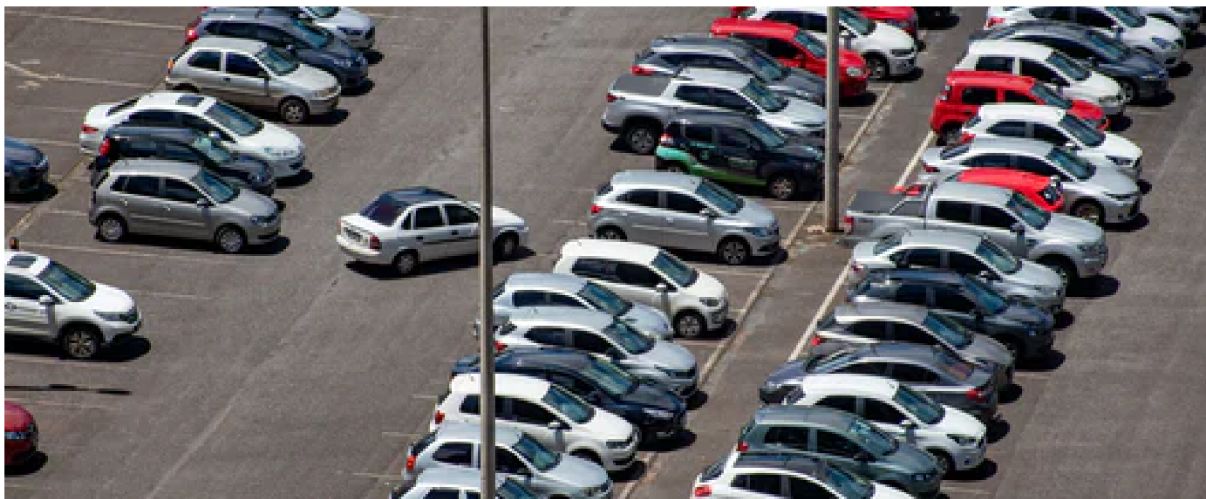
Catechism participants must not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before the designated class time to ensure proper supervision for all students. **Children should not enter their classroom if the catechist or other supervisor is not present.** A parent should meet their child within 5 minutes of the regular time for class to end. If a parent is late picking up their child, the catechist may bring the child to the Faith Formation Office to wait for their parent to pick them up.

ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES K-8 MUST BE PICKED UP FROM THEIR CLASS BY PARENTS OR OTHER DESIGNATED ADULTS!!!

As the parent/guardian, please submit in writing that you, as the parent/guardian, give the Faith Formation Staff permission to release your child(ren) to a designated adult other than yourself.

ACTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

If parents repeatedly refuse to pick up their children or are continually late, they will be asked to withdraw from the program. If a child is left over 45 minutes after the end of class without the parent contacting someone in the Faith Formation Office, the Faith Formation Office will contact Nevada's Department of Family Services. While this may seem extreme, our priority is to ensure the safety of the child. If an emergency comes up and you are forced to be this late, call the Faith Formation Office at **(702)-399-6897 ext. 108**



PROGRAM POLICIES

OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Events that may take place off property:

- Middle School Retreat or Conference
- High School / Confirmation Retreats and Youth Conferences
- Diocesan Youth Rally
- Service Projects

Permission Policy

Any activity off parish property will require Permission/Liability release forms (available from the Faith Formation Office) to be filled out by the parents. Students who fail to submit a proper form within the allotted time will not participate in the field trip. All off-site activities must be approved by the Faith Formation Department and have the parent's consent.

Telephone calls or parent notes will not be accepted in place of proper forms. Parents/Guardians have a right to refuse to allow their child to participate in any field trip. Parents/Guardians are expected to sign all consent forms required for the activity.

Liability information

Field trips are privileges offered to students. No student has an absolute right to participate in a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet program behavioral requirements.

RIGHT TO AMEND

The Faith Formation Office reserves the right to unilaterally change the policies contained in the handbook at any time, to cancel any policy as needed, or to decline to apply a particular policy to a given situation, if, in its discretion, to do so would serve the interests of the Diocese of Las Vegas or St. Anthony of Padua Parish. If a policy is amended, added, or changed, the parents/legal guardians will be notified by the Faith Formation Staff.

FAMILY AGREEMENTS

The Family Agreement is located on the following page of this handbook. It is expected as part of the registration process to submit a signed and completed form.

FAMILY AGREEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

I acknowledge receipt of the 2024–2025 Catechism Family Handbook containing the policies, rules, and regulations for the St. Anthony of Padua Faith Formation Program. I agree that the handbook is binding on the students and parents during the current faith formation year. I understand the program's administration will have the authority outlined in the handbook and retains all rights to abridge, amend, and add to these policies as needed or necessary.

I understand that the policies, rules, and regulations contained in the handbook are established for the welfare and benefit of all Faith Formation students. I accept my responsibility to support the Department of Faith Formation in its established policies and to see that my child adheres to the rules and regulations outlined in the handbook.

NAME OF STUDENT: _____ **GRADE:** _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____

DATE: _____

Please return this form signed before your child's first day of faith formation classes.

AUTHORIZED ALTERNATIVE PICKUP

PURPOSE:

The Faith Formation Staff of St. Anthony of Padua is committed to providing a safe environment for your children. The staff and catechists will only release your child(ren) to pre-authorized adults. This includes the parents/legal guardians and anyone else who will be picking up your children. For adults, other than parents/legal guardians, this must be pre-approved in writing and provided to the Faith Formation Staff. If you expect certain adults or family members to pick up your child regularly, please make sure to turn in this form.

**Please fill out the below form to authorize any adult
other than the parent/legal guardian.**

NAME OF STUDENT: _____ **GRADE:** _____

NAME OF AUTHORIZED ADULT: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD: _____

PHONE #: _____

**SIGNATURE OF PARENT
OR LEGAL GUARDIAN:** _____

DATE: _____

PHONE #: _____