

St. Nicholas Faith Formation
High School
Family Handbook
2011 - 2012

Faith and Worship



Welcome to the 2011/2012 High School Faith Formation Program

As we look towards another year of excitement and challenges, we are reminded why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide us and support us. The excitement centers around another year of helping our youth grow in their faith and relationship with God. Our mission is to assist you, their parents, in sharing our Catholic faith and preparing them for a mature adult faith they can share with their children. The challenges this year is that we must do this with less because of the financial condition of the parish. Another challenge is to prepare them and you for the new Roman Missal, the book that is used to say the Mass. On November 27th, we will start using the new Missal that was developed by Pope John Paul II and has been in the works in being written and translated into English for over 10 years! This Missal will replace the Missal issued by Pope Paul IV in the early 70's. Many of the prayers and responses used at Mass will change as they used a different criterion in translating the Missal from the Latin. The new Missal will be more of a direct translation of the Latin, while the old Missal focused on translating the general meaning into current English word usage. Another challenge this year will be a standardized test that will be given to the 5th, 8th and 11th grades to assess their knowledge of the faith. Bishop Ricken has asked us to give this test (ACRE) each year. The testing will be done in the spring.

It takes effort to maintain our focus on the God who created us and loves us with all the school, family and sports activities. It does get difficult with the press of other demands to keep in perspective who created us (God) and why we were created (to love and serve God and others).

The High School years are critical in teaching our youth what is important in life. We as a parish try hard to assist the parents of each of our students in this task. The world screams at our youth to live a life based on **me** first. Jesus taught us to love, to have compassion, to forgive, and to grow closer to God. Our youth's life of happiness, joy, and peace depend on them having a strong relationship with Christ. Ultimately we hope and pray that each one of them, after living a full and wonderful life, will end in the loving arms of Christ in heaven. Each year of the high school faith formation program and each session is meant to help the youth achieve these goals. Each year of High School faith formation program is also an integration of the whole process of preparing the youth for Confirmation and not just the 11th grade classes. We ask each and every parent to help us in assuring that their student attends each and every faith formation program night. We also ask that each and every week you and your child attend weekend Mass. This is critical to their faith formation. Teaching our faith requires a team effort between the parents and the parish faith formation staff and volunteers.

Please also check out the parish web site <http://parish.stnicholasfreedom.org/> for updates on schedules and other faith formation forms throughout the year. It is a great resource when we lose that form or need to check the schedule.

Michelle Kettner will take the lead in the Mission Trip Planning and Youth Ministry activities associated with the Mission trip. I will be assisting her as much as possible for next year's trip. The Mission Trip is another great way for our youth to experience their Catholic faith in action during an exciting week of helping to serve the poor and less fortunate and praying and praising God while meeting other Catholic youth from around the country. I encourage all parents to consider sending their child on next summer's trip as part of their High School faith formation experience. The Summer Mission Trip meets the requirement for a service project for Confirmation.

I am looking forward to another year in the role of leading the High School Faith Formation program and being the Director of Faith Formation. I enjoy watching the youth express their faith and grow in their relationship and knowledge of Christ. If during the year you have any concerns or you would like to offer any help with the program, let me know.

Yours in Christ,

Deacon Greg Humpal

Deacon Greg Humpal
Director of Faith Formation

St. Nicholas Parish Mission Statement

We, the people of St. Nicholas Parish, through our loving relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist to spread the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to ourselves, our children, and the world.

We share the Good News of Jesus Christ through the Word of God, the Sacraments, and service by the power of the Holy Spirit and as part of the Roman Catholic Church.

Staff

Pastor

Fr. David Hoffman

Oversees all parish activities and leads community in prayer and worship

Director of Faith Formation

Deacon Greg Humpal

788-1451 ext 128

ghumpal@stnicholasfreedom.org

Oversees faith formation program and leads High School faith formation, RCIA, and adult faith formation

Coordinator of Grades 1 – 8

Michelle Kettner

788-1451 ext 124

mkettner@stnicholasfreedom.org

Leads the grade 1-5 after school program, the grades 6-8 evening program and leads the Youth Mission Trip

Faith Formation Secretary

Sandy Schmit

788-1451 ext 126 sschmit@stnicholasfreedom.org

Handles registration, tuition, Virtus requirements, attendance, and other administrative duties

The faith formation office is located in the Parish office. A box is located outside the east door for use for dropping off or picking up faith formation material.

Faith Formation Phone: 788-1451

Faith Formation Office hours: Monday – Thursday 8am – 2 pm, Sept. - May, summer hours varies

Parish Office hours: Monday – Thursday 8am -4 pm, Friday 8am-Noon

Living our Faith

Our faith must be integrated into all areas of our life. As faith-filled Christians we must live as people of integrity, manifesting the fruits of the Holy Spirit--- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Our faith affects: who we listen to in our lives, how we interact with our spouse and our children, how we interact with co-workers and customers, how we interact with fellow students and teachers. How do I live my faith?

1. Am I a person of integrity---a person of honesty and truthfulness with others and myself? Do I forgive others when I feel wronged? Am I a person of mercy and compassion?
2. Do I use my hands, heart, ears, eyes, and feet in serving and caring for others?
3. How do I respond to the issues that face us in society? Are my views consistent with Jesus' teachings? Am I doing what I am able to further God's Kingdom in light of Jesus' teachings on life and justice for all peoples?
4. Are my moral choices consistent with Scripture?

Living our faith requires us to pass along our faith. This is an important part of who we are as Catholic Christians. Jesus has asked each of us to take part in this important mission. The Church teaches that the primary teachers of children are the child's parents. The Parish is given the task of assisting the parents in teaching the faith to the children of the parish. The mission of the Faith Formation Team including the volunteer catechists is to assist the parents in teaching about our Catholic faith and passing faith on to the children who attend the programs and activities offered.

What can you do, as parents, to pass along to your children our faith in Christ?

- 1) Live your faith as a follower of Christ.
- 2) Read the stories of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) as well as the New Testament (Christian Scriptures). Help your child by relating these stories to your life.
- 3) You can share your own life experiences of how God has been with you through some challenging times in your life as well as the joyful, life-giving moments and how you have responded with a lived faith.
- 4) Attend weekly Sunday (Saturday evening or Sunday) Mass and Holy Days with your family to learn how to live your faith through the stories we share as we progress through the Liturgical year. We also receive Jesus each week in a special way that helps give us strength for the challenges we face.
- 5) Say meal prayers and bed time prayers with your child on a regular basis.
- 6) Say prayers of blessing over your child.
- 7) Say other prayers with your child and as a family.
- 8) Participate in devotional activities together as a family such as saying the Rosary or attending Stations of the Cross.

High School Program Grades 9 – 11

Faith Formation classes for grades 9 – 10 are basically every other week in two-hour sessions on Wednesday evenings from **6:15 - 8:15pm**. The sessions start in late September and go until late April with weeks off for school breaks, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and Easter.

Ninth Grade and Tenth Grade

This year the students of both ninth and tenth grade will use the program *Theology of the Body for Teens, Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life*. This program is based on the teachings of Pope John Paul II and offers a great way for teens to understand their faith and who God created them to be in a way that connects with the issues they are dealing with in their life. To facilitate open discussion, the boys and girls are separated into separate groups. A parent meeting may be scheduled with Deacon Greg to allow parents to hear about the material and ask any questions they might have. The students will each have a student workbook and parents are invited to buy a separate parent guide if they wish to follow along with their son or daughter. We have used the program for two years now and have decided to move it to the freshman year to help the students more as they enter the dating environment of the High School.

Next year the current ninth graders will focus on the message and mission of Jesus relying on the Biblical witness of Christ and a study of the Bible and how Catholics use and understand the Bible in our faith and its central role in our lives. The goals will be to deepen each student's relationship with Christ and help them to understand the importance of the Bible and know how to use the Bible for study, reflection, and prayer.

Confirmation

Confirmation students meet from **6:30 – 8:30pm** on the Wednesday evenings the weeks opposite grades 9 and 10. Students are invited in grade 11 to “come and see” the graces that God has for them in the Sacrament of Confirmation.



During this year, students also meet with their sponsor (who meets the requirements of the Catholic Church) who shares their faith and aids the student in what it means to bring their faith to everyday life experiences. Youth are required to participate in a one-day retreat focusing on the gifts of the Spirit that help them to live the challenges of a disciple in today's world. During this year the students participate in a self-designed service project which is a direct response to one or more of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching. The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation caps off the year of study.

End of Year Retreat

The last Wednesday of April finishes the year with an evening retreat. The retreat starts at 6 pm and includes pizza and beverages. The participants then experience activities and prayer aimed at growing their relationship with God. The retreat is open to all High School age youth 9-12 grade.



Safe Environment Lesson

Each year we are required by the Diocese to have a lesson for the youth that talks on an aspect of Safe Environment/Protecting God's children. The lesson is only meant to be about 15 to 20 minutes long. The parents of each teen have the option to not have their child in the room during this lesson, but they must come into the Parish office and sign a form. These teens will then be allowed to leave the room during that part of the evening's lesson and then be returned when the lesson of Safe Environment/Protecting God's children is completed. They will be asked to go to the main office.

Attendance

Each student is expected to attend each of the faith formation sessions. The sessions usually build on the previous class, so missing a session can leave a student with an incomplete knowledge of the material being covered. Parents will be called if a student is missing from class and has not been excused by the parent calling in.

Arriving late to class also disrupts the class so the student and the parents are asked to make every effort possible to have the students arrive 5 minutes prior to class time so they can be in their seats at the required time.

Confirmation students are required to read the required material and submit a paper on any missed classes.

Ninth and tenth grade students are encouraged to read the material in the book for any missed class sessions.

Students are not allowed to leave the building after their arrival until the end of class unless a parent is picking them up early. Parents should pick the students up in the main office area. Students are also not to enter other parts of the building unless they are supervised by a catechist or coordinator. Students are given a break part way through the night to allow them to use the restroom or get a drink of water. If issues develop during these break times, the break may be cancelled for the next class or the remainder of the year.

Mass Attendance

While class room attendance is important, to fully understand and learn about our faith requires each student to attend weekly "Sunday" Mass. Learning about our Catholic faith is incomplete if this important element is not part of the student's religious faith formation. At Mass we worship and thank God for our blessings. We also receive instruction, strength, and Jesus to live our lives in the joy of Christ.



Discipline policy

Class room discipline is essential for providing an atmosphere for learning about God and our Catholic faith in a safe environment. What we teach is central to whom we are called to be as children of God and it is very important. Disruptive students while showing a lack of respect for the catechist and their fellow students also show a lack of respect for God. The catechists have been asked to warn a disruptive student about their activities and if necessary to have a talk with the student in the hall or during a break. If the disruptive activity continues

the High School Coordinator will talk with the student. If the disruptive activity continues the parents of the student will be called and will have to schedule a meeting with the High School Coordinator to discuss the actions of the student. At the meeting the High School Coordinator and the student's parents will discuss options to correct the discipline issues including removing the student from the class and reassigning them to another class, an alternative learning method, or removing the student from the program.

Students are expected to obey and respect their catechists and to cooperate with them in prayer, discussion and activities in class. Sexual harassment or sexual misconduct will not be tolerated. Faith Formation time is not a time for personal displays of affection between boyfriend/girlfriends. Clothing must be appropriate and contain no references to drug, tobacco, alcohol or sex. Facilities and equipment are to be respected. Desks and locker are not to be opened.

Students are not allowed to leave the building after their arrival until the end of class unless a parent is picking them up early. Parents should pick the student up in the main office area. Students are also not to enter other parts of the building unless they are supervised by a catechist or coordinator. Students are given a break part way through the night to allow them to use the restroom or get a drink of water. If issues develop during these break times, the break may be cancelled for the next class or the remainder of the year.

Parking and dropping-off or picking-up students

Drop off and parking for the High School program is located in the parking lot off Highway S. Confirmation students who drive are especially reminded to use caution when arriving and departing class since middle school students also use the facility that evening and may be in the parking lot waiting for class to start or to be picked up.

Students should be dropped-off between 15 and 5 minutes prior to class starting. High School students should wait in the hallway unless the catechist gives the ok for them to be in the class room. Confirmation students may gather in the Church hall up to 20 minutes prior to class starting.

Students typically will be dismissed at the time indicated for class to end (8:15pm for grade 9 and 10 and 8:30pm for Confirmation class.) Some classes may end a few minutes early in which case the students should quietly leave the building so as not to disrupt other classes. On occasion the classes may go late; usually this means that class disruptions have made it hard for the catechist to finish the required material on time.

Food and Drinks

Knowing that some students come directly from sports practice, food and drink are allowed in class as long as it does not disrupt the class. It should be viewed

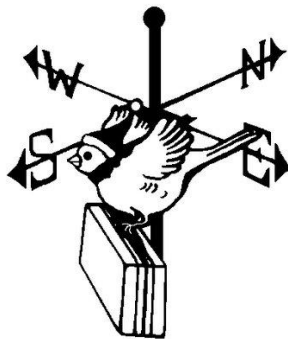
as a privilege and not a right. On occasion the catechists or other students may bring in a treat to share with the class.

Cell Phone Policy

Students are permitted to have a cell phone on their person. However, the cell phone is required to be turned “Off” during class. If a student is found texting, making a call, or receiving one, the phone will be taken away; the catechist may return the phone at the end of class or give the phone to a faith formation coordinator who will require the parent to come in and retrieve the cell phone.

Session Cancellation

Whenever the Freedom School District is not in session---for snow days, teacher convention, or vacation---we will not meet for Faith Formation. If the weather produces threatening/dangerous conditions later in the day, Please check with WHBY 1150 AM **Channels 2 and 5 or WIXX (101.1) and WNCY (100.3)**



Health or Special Learning Issues

If your child has a health issue that we should be aware of (diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, medication, etc), please share this information with us. Please provide written instruction about how to deal with an emergency specific to your child's needs.

If your child has special learning issue such as ADD, ADHD, Dyslexia, etc., please make us aware of it and any special strategies that your child responds to and are helpful to him. Any insights will help our team work as effectively as possible with your child.

Valley Area Special Needs Religious Education---VASNRE

Religious Education program for students with special needs is offered every other Saturday morning, October to April, at Holy Spirit Parish---Kimberly campus. If you have a child who may learn better in this environment than in our traditional classroom setting, call Holy Spirit at 788-7640.

Tuition and Fees

It is true that it takes a “village” to raise a child; the entire faith community of St. Nicholas contributes to the faith formation of children through financial support. Tuition and fees paid by parents cover only about **40%** of the actual cost per child for faith formation. As a matter of justice and good stewardship, parents/guardians are asked to pay tuition and fees that support the faith formation of their child/ren. The other 60% of the cost is paid through the generosity of parish members and Faith Formation families in their weekly giving at Mass. We also ask faith formation families and all families of the parish give a stewardship amount of 2.5% to 5% of their income to assist in keeping the parish community doors open.

Tuition for *each* child, Grades 9 - 11: \$120

Sacramental Preparation Fees

Confirmation Preparation/Retreat fee: \$60 (please pay prior to retreat)

Opportunity to Offset Tuition

St. Nicholas has a wonderful way to help families with Faith Formation tuition, which is described below:

St. Nicholas has a SCRIP program, which allows parents and others (grandparents, too!) to purchase different increments (\$20, \$25, \$50, \$100, etc . . .) of SCRIP, which looks like a gift card to various businesses, and it is used just like you would use cash or a gift card. When purchasing Scrip, select Faith Formation and a percentage of the cost of the SCRIP will be used toward your Faith Formation tuition—half of the percentage allocated will be used toward tuition credit and the other half will go toward Faith Formation and Youth Ministry. For example, if you purchased \$100 worth of groceries at Woodman’s using SCRIP (which allows for 5% credit), you will receive your \$100 worth of groceries with \$2.50 going toward your tuition and \$2.50 going to Youth Ministry. Several St. Nicholas families used SCRIP and cover all of the faith formation tuition for their children with the proceeds from SCRIP.

Tuition Assistance

St. Nicholas offers a tuition assistance program for all those who are in financial need. Contact Sandy in the faith formation office for the assistance form. The form is then filled out by the family and returned to Fr. Dave for review and approval. If approved part or all of the faith formation fees will be paid by the parish.