

Our Lady of Hope Parish

2016/2017 Faith Formation Handbook

Families and Catechists

Welcome! I am so glad you are part of our Family of Faith. Here are the general policies and guidelines for our program. If you ever have any issues please call or email me anytime.

Mission: Faith Formation strives to strengthen the life and mission of Our Lady of Hope Parish by welcoming and offering all ages and generations a variety of ways to:

- Grow in relationship with God,
- Grow in relationship with His Church & Parish Community and
- To live their Catholic Christian Faith as Disciples of Jesus Christ.

Sacramental Guidelines

Families of children preparing for sacraments must be registered parishioners to celebrate their sacrament at Our Lady of Hope Parish.

Reconciliation and Eucharist

Diocesan policy requires that students be registered in a program for formal instruction for one full year and be in their second year of catechesis before they can become eligible to start the preparation process to celebrate First Reconciliation (confession) and First Holy Eucharist (communion).

Confirmation

Diocesan policy dictates to enter into the sacramental process to prepare for Confirmation an eligible candidate must have completed 4 years of consecutive formal religious instruction in the Catholic Church.

Sacramental Preparation

For parents with children preparing for a sacrament it is critical that they attend Sacramental Preparation Meetings and Sacramental Retreats as requested. This will assist the parents in the responsibility of preparing their children for the sacraments. Parents will attend a meeting and a retreat (only if required) for: Penance/Reconciliation, First Eucharist (Communion) and Confirmation.

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Conduct & Attire that Fosters Faith

Children will come to sessions with a pencil/pen, textbook and folder. They will come with the full intention of sharing their faith questions/concerns and come with any completed homework in hand.

If your child forgets to bring his or her book, we have others available. If your child has lost the book, the replacement cost is \$20.00.

Electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, etc.) are not permitted to be used anytime during sessions whether a child is in the classroom or restroom. Children are not to text or snap chat during sessions. Taking pictures during class of other students is strictly prohibited. The parents of any student who fails to heed warnings about using his or her phone will be contacted by the Director of Faith Formation to arrive at a plan of action agreed upon by both the parents and the director.

Children will respect all property. In the event that a child acts with intent and causes damage, payment is required for any needed repair or replacement.

Children are to behave in a Christ-like manner by not bullying, rough housing, chewing gum, using profanity or being disrespectful towards others.

Clothing is casual attire that is appropriate and in keeping with Christian values. Clothing is to be free of inappropriate or offensive language and imagery.

Children will abide by the arrival and dismissal procedures specific to their location.

At no time is a child ever allowed at dismissal to leave the premises on his or her own and walk home. A parent or authorized adult is required to sign out the children.

Substance Abuse Policy – Substance abuse is defined as the: possession of, use of, or trafficking in, of any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance, which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, injection or percutaneous means. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance will be immediately removed from the program and the matter will be turned over to the parents and local authorities.

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Discipline Policy - Children have the right to a safe, caring environment. Therefore our faith sessions should be characterized by genuine Christian care, mutual respect and honesty. All children are to be respectful and cooperative with other students as well as with the Catechist. The normal procedures for addressing overly disruptive or unfitting conduct will be:

1. Verbal correction by the catechist, 2. Removal of the child(ren) to the Faith Formation Coordinators. 3. Notification to the parents by the Director to determine how together we can address the specific concern in a manner that will best benefit the child and reduce if not eliminate any disruptive behavior.

Arrival and Dismissal

Depending on which faith formation option you chose, you will follow the procedure specific to that location.

For Weekly Sessions at Our Lady of Hope Parish Center (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Sessions)

- Arrival: Students 1st to 7th arrive and go directly to their session room.
- Dismissal: Parents can gather in the lobby. When the bell sounds parents can proceed to the classroom and sign out their children.

For Sunday Sojourners Sessions at Our Lady of Hope Church (St. Agnes)

- Arrival: Children will get dropped off at St. Agnes Church. They will meet in their appropriate room or meet in the worship space for important meetings as directed.

Children are to go to their section in an orderly fashion respectful that God is present in the Church and that they are in his Holy House.

Note: The Sunday sessions include attendance at the 6:00 Evening Mass.

- Dismissal: For the families that attend the 6:00 Mass, we encourage the children to sit with their families. Parents would sign them out prior to the Mass.
- Upon the conclusion of Mass, parents arriving to pick up their children must come inside the worship space to sign them out.

Sunday Sessions for St. Bart's at Our Lady of Hope Parish Center

- Arrival: Children arrive directly to the classroom escorted by their parent.
- Dismissal: Parents come directly to the classroom for their children.

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Summer Sessions at Our Lady of Hope Parish Center

- Arrival: Children report directly to the gym and sit at the table designated for their level.
- Dismissal: Children are dismissed from the gym and parents or an approved adult authorized by the child's parents (written notice) must sign them out.
- Children in the Summer Session (Son Seekers) are required to attend Six Parish Events and do a reflection on the event they have attended. Please send in the forms as each one in completed. You can drop them off at the parish office marked "Faith Formation".

Early Dismissal

- Early dismissal: If you must pick up your child early, you will go directly to the class to sign out your child. For safety reasons children are never dismissed to the parking lot to await their ride. Children must be signed out.

Designated Persons for Pick Up

- Designated Person: If you made arrangements to car pool and have someone other than you pick up your child(ren) please inform us "in advance" and in writing. Please advise your designated person that they are required to sign out your child.

Attendance and Absences

Consistent attendance is vitally important for learning. If you need to report your child absent, please call or email as directed below. The material covered in the missed session is expected to be completed and turned in to the catechist. We do track attendance and in the event that we have a concern, we will contact you to see how we may be of assistance in getting the required faith lessons completed.

We need to be certain that you are aware when your child does not show for a class which is why we require a telephone call or email.

Calling your child out:

To notify us and call a child out for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Sessions:

Call (856) 228-4920 on Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesday.

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To notify us and call a child out for any of our Sunday Sessions:

Call (856) 228-4920 or email: religiousoffice@ourladyofhopenj.org

St. Bart's families in addition to the above number and email, may contact Mrs. Forte directly at the contact information she provides at the start of the year.

Summer Programs: Attendance at all 5 days of the Son Seekers is fully expected!!! In the event of a family emergency or serious illness please call (856) 228-4920.

Bad Weather Cancellations

If we have an emergency closing due to bad weather, our snow number **1147** will be advertised on:

KYW New Radio 1060AM or www.kyw1060.com

CBS 3 Television

CW 57 Televisions

Or call (215) 925-1060

Or call Our Lady of Hope Parish at (856) 227-0555 for the latest on closings.

Check Your Computer!

Please check your emails frequently during questionable weather. Also check your spam folder or junk folder because due to the number of emails we send they often get directed into these folders. We send emails often to remind you of upcoming events and meetings. For the most current information please check out our webpage ourladyofhopenj.org and click 'Faith Formation'.

EMERGENCY FORM & PERMISSION SHEET – If you have not completed and submitted a new form for this year, please complete and return the emergency and permission sheet attached to this guide.

*Have a year filled with many blessings!
Should you have any questions we are always happy to hear from you.
The Office of Faith Formation.*