

Office of Faith Formation ~ Epiphany of Our Lord & St. Sebastian Parishes
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2017-2018 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

*“Parents have the unique responsibility for the education of their children; **they are the first educators or catechists.** They teach by their witness of the Faith, through their values and attitudes, by their Christian example of love for Christ and his church. When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to raise their children in the practice of the Faith...”* (National Directory for Catechesis 234-235)

With the firm belief that parents are the first educators of children in the Faith, the Faith Formation Program of Epiphany of Our Lord and St. Sebastian welcomes all families! Our program is available to help nurture and grow the love of God and neighbor that parents have already begun. We gladly welcome parent visitors to our classrooms and events. Our program has policies and procedures to support a positive environment for the growth of all!

SAFETY

The safety of the children in our program is of utmost importance. Therefore:

1. **ALL** catechists, leaders, and volunteers associated with this program **WILL** have taken the VIRTUS course and have **ALL** Clearances in accordance with the Diocese of Greensburg Code of Pastoral Conduct to include Criminal Clearance, Child Abuse Clearance, FBI Fingerprint/Affidavit, Pastoral Code of Conduct, and Mandated Reporter Training.
2. **Children are not to be left unattended at ANY time. This includes in classrooms, the school building, and parking lots.**
3. **Parents/Guardians are to walk children into and out of the school building during pick up and drop off.**
4. Entry and exit of the building is to be made **ONLY** through the doors to the social hall. Other exits are to be utilized only in emergency situations.

Just as there are safety restrictions at your child’s school, there are safety rules in place here. Our #1 priority is the safety your children when you leave them in our care. Please respect these policies.

NEW FOR PARENTS!!

Parents! Please do not feel that you have to leave the building during faith formation. If you would like to stay, please feel free to make yourself comfortable in our social hall. You can take time to catch up with one another, or have some quiet time to yourself. Tables and chairs will be set up each Monday night for your convenience.

ATTENDANCE & REGISTRATION

All children who are not enrolled in a Catholic School are expected to be enrolled in a parish faith formation program. As per the Diocese of Greensburg, "Parish faith formation programs are required to provide at least 30 annual classroom hours for catechesis." One way this requirement can be met is by enrolling children and ensuring their regular attendance in our Monday evening program. Registration forms can be found at the parish office, parish website, and in the church vestibules. This program exceeds the required 30 annual classroom hours; still attendance at every session is strongly encouraged. If a child is to miss a class, parents/guardians are expected to get the missed work from their child's catechist. **Also, in the event that your child will have a planned absence, please contact his/her catechist so that appropriate classroom plans can be prepared.**

Pre-registration for classes IS REQUIRED. No student will be admitted to a class until a registration form is on file PRIOR to the first time that student attends.

PROGRAM DATES & TIMES

Our program essentially follows the Belle Vernon Area School District calendar. Classes are Monday nights from 6:15 PM to 7:30 PM, beginning the Monday after Catechetical Sunday, and continuing until early May. Program schedules can be obtained at registration or on your parish website.

CANCELLATIONS

The Parish Minister has sole responsibility to cancel our program. Our policy is that when Belle Vernon Area School District is cancelled, our program will also be cancelled. Cancellation of classes will always be announced via www.rainedout.net, via Channel 4 WTAE, and Channel 2 KDKA. The Parish Minister will post this information and will also post a door sign. In general, if there is a doubt in the safety of transporting children, please stay home.

VOLUNTEERS

Parents and Volunteers are welcome and NEEDED! To volunteer for our program background checks and clearances ARE REQUIRED. The following are necessary: VIRTUS Training, PA State Criminal Record Check, and PA State Child Abuse Clearances, FBI Fingerprinting or Affidavit, and Mandated Reporter Training in accordance with the Diocese of Greensburg Code of Pastoral Conduct. These clearances are FREE for volunteers, and it can all be done online.

Please contact the Faith Formation Office if you would like to volunteer! Many hands make light work.

BEHAVIOR

In order for all involved to have a positive experience of our Faith Formation Program, discipline and respect must be utilized by every person. Parent support is absolutely necessary to maintain a healthy, loving environment to grow and learn in our Faith. The following are guidelines to help students maintain a positive experience:

Respect and courtesy toward classmates and catechists is required.

While in hallways, classrooms, and the church, students will be quiet and orderly.

Students are responsible to bring their book, folder, and assignments to every class.

Materials that belong to students of St. Sebastian Regional School are NEVER to be touched or used without express permission from a catechist. This includes papers, pencils, projects, and anything in a desk or locker.

Cell phone use is not permitted during class time. Catechists WILL collect phones at the start of each class and return them at the end of class.

Students who choose not to comply with classroom and program rules will face the following consequences:

After three separate corrections in their regular classroom, students will be not be permitted to attend the next scheduled class and will be required to make up any missed material.

After two mandatory missed classes, a meeting will be scheduled with child, parent, pastor, and the Formation Coordinator to discuss further options for catechesis.

MASS ATTENDANCE

With the many demands of today's daily life, we understand that Mass attendance can seem like one additional chore. However, much of what is discussed and taught in your child's faith formation class is centered around the Sunday liturgy. In the many ways you are working to raise healthy and happy children, Mass attendance could be one of those ways. If there is anything we can do to help you feel more comfortable and welcome, please don't hesitate to contact our office. We would like to encourage your family to worship with us on a regular basis.

Epiphany of Our Lord, Monessen Mass Times:

(all masses now at the Chapel Site: 44 Pennsylvania Blvd., Monessen)

Saturday 4 PM

Sunday 8:30 AM or 10:30 AM

St. Sebastian, Belle Vernon Mass Times:

Saturday 4:30 PM

Sunday 9 AM or 11 AM