

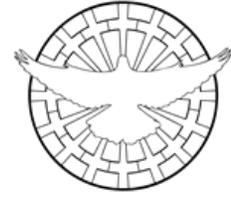
# Holy Spirit Parish

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation



**2020-2021**  
**Family Handbook**

August 1, 2020



Dear Holy Spirit Families:

Welcome back to another year of Faith Formation!

We are beginning a new academic year in unprecedented times, and we all get to embark on this adventure together! Throughout the history of the Church, God has used events and challenges for His purposes. Hopefully, this pandemic will be used to provide many families with more opportunities to grow closer to one another and to Christ.

The family is the Domestic Church, and it is where disciples are first formed. The parish's role is that of a support to our Domestic Churches in their essential responsibility as faith guides and teachers to their children. Weekly Mass is the primary means of parish support. The community comes together to nurture one another and to be nourished by Jesus Christ through his Word and his Body. Mass is the most important part of your child's faith development. For children preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist, weekly Mass is an essential component of their Sacramental preparation. The whole purpose of the initiation Sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion is to prepare your child to join with the parish community in sharing the Eucharist each week. The pandemic has made this responsibility and privilege challenging for everyone, but live-streamed Masses continue to be available, in addition to in-person Mass that is subject to pandemic restrictions. We long for the day when it is safe for all of us to gather again as a parish family.

Faith formation for children in kindergarten through eighth grade will look different this year. Weekly lessons will be completed at home within each child's Domestic Church, and each age group will gather monthly (in-person or virtually) to connect and explore their faith together. For most of the grades, both online and hard-copy resources will be available to all our families, and there will be options as to how much involvement parents wish to have in their child's weekly lessons. The past several months have been overwhelming for many parents, so the parish has tried to provide simple but meaningful options for everyone.

The diocesan office of faith formation is in contact with state and CDC officials, and keeps parishes apprised of any changes that might alter current schedules or programming. Please keep an eye out for emails from our parish faith formation office to stay updated, and kindly ensure that we have your current e-mail address(es) throughout the year.

It is a blessing for me to continue to serve the families of Holy Spirit parish, and a privilege to work with an outstanding group of catechists who have answered "yes" to the Holy Spirit's call to share faith with our children.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have. I look forward to a wonderful year with each of you!!!

In Christ,

Carolyn F. Houston, Director  
Office of Lifelong Faith Formation

# **Holy Spirit Youth Faith Formation Programs & Policies – 2020/2021**

**Classes begin September 13/14 and continue through May 16/17. The availability of each class/session is dependent upon enough registrants enrolled in the class/session, and volunteer catechists to lead them.**

## **Children with Special Needs**

Adaptive materials and catechetical settings will be arranged based on the needs of the child(ren).

## **Kindergarten**

The kindergarten program will consist of guided weekly at-home preparation. On a monthly basis, all kindergarten families will come together to discuss the material covered, and to learn about/experience those things that make us Catholic Christians. Children and adults will meet at the same time, but separately. Meetings will be the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday/Monday of the month, and families will need to choose either the Sunday morning or Monday afternoon class. \*

## **Years/Grades 1 through 6**

Children will be using a Bible-centered Catholic catechetical program that provides printed and online resources for children and parents. Weekly lessons will be completed at home within the child's Domestic Church and reviewed by the child's catechist. Parents will have three options in leading their child's weekly faith formation:

- (1) All digital - Have the child complete all her/his lesson online through the program's virtual classroom (via computer, tablet or smartphone) and follow up with a couple of the suggested family discussion topics/activities. The online lessons are 20 minutes long and require no adult assistance after login (not available for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students), OR
- (2) No digital - Using the provided at-home lesson plans and resource tools for a 45-60-minute lesson, lead her/his child at home without using the virtual classroom, OR
- (3) Hybrid - Lead her/his child in the 45-60-minute weekly lesson with the at-home lesson plans AND have her/him complete the 20-minute virtual classroom assignment (digital lessons unavailable for 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

All options are available to all families. If a family does not have access to the internet and/or a digital device but wishes to participate in the virtual classroom options, they should contact Carolyn Houston.

Completed work will be submitted to children's catechists based on the syllabus that will be provided after registration.

On a monthly basis, all families will come together to discuss the material covered, and to learn about/experience those things that make us Catholic Christians. Children and adults will meet at the same time, but separately. Occasionally, there may be assessments for the children to determine whether they need additional resources to assist them in understanding the presented material. Meetings will be the first or second Sunday/Monday of the month for 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> year scholars, and the third or fourth Sunday/Monday of the month for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars. Families will need to choose either the Sunday morning or Monday afternoon class for their child. \*

For families with children involved in Sacramental preparation (years one and two), there will be supplementary materials to complete, and additional meetings.

## **Grades 7 and 8 – Junior High School Faith Formation & Youth Ministry**

Students will be using a digital eCourse and supplementary materials that focus on what it means to be Catholic. If a family does not have access to the internet and/or an electronic device to complete the eCourse assignments, they

\*class dates are provided on the registration form, and there will be a virtual option for families concerned about covid risk

should contact Carolyn Houston.

On a monthly basis, this group and their parents will come together to discuss the material covered, and to learn about/experience those things that make us Catholic Christians. Students and adults will meet at the same time, but separately. Meetings will be held on the third or fourth Sunday/Monday of the month. Families will need to choose either the Sunday morning or Monday afternoon class for their scholar. \* Adult meetings begin in November.

In addition to their in-person class once a month, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders will meet virtually or for a project/activity during one of the weeks when there is no class scheduled. While parents are always welcome for any faith formation event their attendance at the additional virtual meetings/project/activity will not be expected. A syllabus will be provided after registration.

### **Grades 9-12 - High School Faith Formation & Youth Ministry**

The High school program will consist of weekly “Mass & Meet” classes that will take place in the fall semester at St. Martha from 10am – 11:45am. \* The location and time of class meetings for the spring semester will be decided on by the group/parents in December. Class will include Mass as a group and a snack. Retreat, service and social opportunities on the parish and diocesan levels will be available throughout the year as permitted by pandemic restrictions.

A syllabus will be provided at the first class.

### **Parish Youth Faith Formation Policies**

#### **Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the parish has instituted several safety precautions:**

- Class sizes have been limited to ten children in K-8, and children will be seated six feet apart.
- Children will need to wear their masks during faith formation
- Since there will be no sharing of supplies each K-8 child will have her/his own supplies that stay in the classroom.
- There will be designated doors for entering and exiting the classroom wing during faith formation at both St. Martha and St. Mary’s. At St. Mary's, there will be an "up" and a "down" staircase for faith formation.
- Prior to class, parents are asked to take the temperature of any family member participating in an in-person class.
- Anyone with symptoms like a cough, fever, congestion, runny nose, diarrhea or vomiting, or anyone in quarantine pursuant to state regulations, should not attend any in-person class or gathering at either church.
- Upon entering the classroom, children will need to use hand sanitizer (parents can opt to provide their own).

#### **Additionally, the parish has other general faith formation policies:**

- Weekly attendance at Mass is an essential component of ALL the Faith Formation programs.
- All parents are requested to read through the entire youth Faith Formation Family Handbook, and to return the Parent Acknowledgement Form to the parish office (or to your child’s catechist).
- Attendance – If your child will be absent from a class, please advise the catechist, and make up the missed topic.
- For our children in K-8, a parent must do pick-up unless a signed note is provided before class.
- Children who are preparing for any of the Sacraments are expected to participate in all sessions. Absences should be excused, and missed work made up at home. No more than three absences will be considered acceptable.
- Cancellation – Cancellations due to inclement weather may be posted on WGME, WCSH &/or WMTW cancellation websites & broadcasts.
- Withdrawing – Please advise the parish if you are moving or withdrawing your child from Faith Formation classes.
- To save on parish resources, **e-mail will be the primary means of communication.** Families are requested to update the parish on any address, telephone or e-mail changes throughout the academic year.

\*class dates are provided on the registration form, and there will be a virtual option for families concerned about covid risk

# 2020-2021 Youth Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation Preparation

*“Through the sacraments, our children encounter Jesus who, in His mercy, desires to walk with them throughout their lives. We want this encounter to be a true experience of grace, and one which provides a foundation for a life of faith.” Bishop Robert P. Deeley, June 2015*

**Parents of children in need of Baptismal preparation should contact Carolyn Houston as soon as possible.**

## **1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Year/Grade**

In the Diocese of Portland, children receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist in the second year. Our diocese has implemented a uniform approach to preparing children to receive the sacraments. This approach involves parents as well as the children, and hopes to foster a partnership among parents, faith formation coordinators, and our catechists. This method consists of a two-year preparation period. The first (called Year 1) includes children in first or second grade and will focus on the child and parents' relationship with God and the Church. The second (called Year 2) includes children in second or third grade. It will focus on each of the three sacraments and what children need to know so their hearts are fully prepared to receive them. Children and parents will prepare via weekly lessons within their Domestic Church (family), monthly class meetings, retreat experiences, and using their faith formation text and class handout resources.

There will be an **important parent overview meeting** for all parents of children in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of Sacramental Preparation during the October classes (at the same time as the children's classes) on October 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>.

Dates for the Sacramental Celebrations of Reconciliation and Eucharist-Confirmation will be announced once they have been scheduled.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

For children beginning their preparation as 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders, their preparation will include regular child and parent participation in their respective faith formation program as well as supplemental materials and/or events as facilitated by Mrs. Houston. Please contact Mrs. Houston directly if you have a child in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade beginning Sacramental Preparation.

## **High School**

If you have a child who is in high school and would like to begin preparation for receiving these Sacraments, please contact Carolyn Houston.



## **Circle of Grace** **Safe Environment Program**



*Circle of Grace* aims to equip our children by arming them with essential knowledge and skills grounded in the richness of our faith. This program helps children to understand their own (and others') dignity in mind, body, and spirit.

### ***What is a Circle of Grace?***

The Catholic Church teaches that God has created each of us as unique and special. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created “male and female in God’s image” and that God saw this as “very good”. In that goodness, we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God.

Adults assist children to recognize God’s love by helping them understand that each of us lives and moves in a *Circle of Grace*. You might imagine your own Circle of Grace by putting your arms above your head then circling down in front of your body, including side to side. This circle, front to back, holds who you are in your body and through your senses. It holds your very essence in mind, heart, soul, and sexuality.

### ***Why is it important to help our children understand the Circle of Grace?***

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help children understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others.

Adults, especially parents, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help children understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children recognize when they are safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

### ***How is the Circle of Grace Program different from other protection programs?***

According to research, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen.\* Many protection programs focus on “stranger danger”; however, up to ninety percent (90%) of the time the perpetrator of abuse is known to the child or young person such as a relative or a family friend. *Circle of Grace* goes beyond just protection by helping children and young people understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults.

The November class meeting will be utilized to complete the *Circle of Grace* lessons for K-8<sup>th</sup>. The High School group will also complete Circle of Grace in November.

If you should have any questions or concerns about this diocesan-wide endeavor, please feel free to contact the parish faith formation director, Carolyn Houston.

# Holy Spirit Parish Youth Faith Formation

## 2020/2021 Academic Year Calendar

<p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <p>20 Catechetical Sunday</p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  13 K-2 Sunday Classes begin 9am  13 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  20 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  27 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  28 3-8 Monday classes begin at 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  14 K-2 Monday classes begin at 4:30pm  27 3-8 Sunday Classes begin at 10am</p>	<p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  4 K-2 Sunday Classes 9am  4 Sacramental Prep. Parent Mtg for Year 1 and Year 2 children 9:05am  4 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  18 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  25 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  26 3-8 Monday classes begin at 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  5 K-2 Monday classes at 4:30pm  5 Sacramental Prep. Parent Mtg for Year 1 and Year 2 children 4:35pm  25 3-8 Sunday Classes at 10am</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <p>1 Holy day of obligation – All Saints</p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  1 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  8 K-2 Sunday Classes 9am  8 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  15 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  22 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  23 3-8 Monday classes 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  9 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  22 3-8 Sunday Classes 10am</p>
<p><b>DECEMBER</b></p> <p>8 Holy day of obligation – Immaculate conception of Mary  25 Holy day of obligation - Christmas</p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  6 K-2 Sunday classes 9am  6 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  13 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  20 High school Mass &amp; class 10-11:45am  21 3-8 Monday classes 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  7 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  20 3-8 Sunday classes 10am</p>	<p><b>JANUARY</b></p> <p>1 Holy day of obligation – Solemnity of Mary</p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  10 K-2 Sunday classes 9am  25 3-8 Monday classes 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  11 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  24 3-8 Sunday Classes 10am</p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY</b></p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  7 K-2 Sunday classes 9am  22 3-8 Monday classes 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  8 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  21 3-8 Sunday classes 10am</p>
<p><b>MARCH</b></p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  14 K-2 Sunday classes 9am  29 3-8 Monday classes 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  15 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  28 3-8 Sunday classes 10am</p>	<p><b>APRIL</b></p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  11 K-2 Sunday classes 9am  26 3-8 Monday classes 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  12 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  25 3-8 Sunday classes 10am</p>	<p><b>MAY</b></p> <p>13 Holy day of obligation – Ascension</p> <p><b>St. Martha</b>  2 K-2 Sunday classes 9am  17 3-8 Monday classes begin 4:30pm</p> <p><b>St. Mary</b>  3 K-2 Monday classes 4:30pm  16 3-8 Sunday classes 10am</p>

### Holy Spirit Parish

St. Martha 30 Portland Rd., Kennebunk, ME 04043-0510 (207-985-6252)

St. Mary's 236 Eldridge Rd., Wells, ME 04090 (207-646-1579)

Parish Website

[www.holyspiritme.org](http://www.holyspiritme.org)

Parish Facebook page

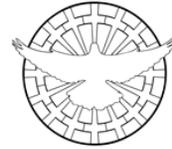
[https://www.facebook.com/holyspiritmaine/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/holyspiritmaine/?ref=br_rs)

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation

Carolyn Houston, Director

Carolyn.Houston@portlanddiocese.org or Churchlady5605@gmail.com

# Parent Acknowledgement Form 2020-2021



This handbook is meant to provide the families of Holy Spirit Parish with helpful information on how our parish intends to assist you with faith formation. The one certainty in life is change, and while we would certainly prefer that the schedule as written in this handbook remains the same, there is the possibility of necessary changes as the academic year progresses. Parents will be notified, by email, if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this booklet.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the parish has instituted several safety precautions:

- Class sizes have been limited to ten children in K-8.
- Children will be seated six feet apart and will need to wear their masks during faith formation.
- Since there will be no sharing of supplies each K-8 child will have her/his own supply bin that will be set out prior to the child's arrival.
- There will be designated doors for entering and exiting the classroom wing during faith formation at both St. Martha and St. Mary's. At St. Mary's, there will be an "up" and a "down" staircase for faith formation.
- Prior to class, parents are asked to take the temperature of any family member participating in the in-person class.
- Anyone with symptoms like a cough, congestion, runny nose, diarrhea or vomiting, or anyone in quarantine pursuant to state regulations, should not attend any class or gathering at either church.
- Upon entering the classroom, children will need to use hand sanitizer (parents can opt to provide their own).

This is to acknowledge that I/we have received the Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation handbook, and the parish pandemic safety protocols. We understand and agree to cooperate with the parish policies.

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Signed (parent) Date

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Signed (parent) Date

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Signed (student) Date

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Signed (student) Date

\*If you have more than two students in your family (☺), please feel free to use the reverse side of this form!

**Please sign this form and return it to the parish office, put it in the collection basket at Mass, or leave it with your child's catechist ☺**