

Saint Maurice Church

Faith Formation Ministry Family Handbook

2021-2022

John 12:46

'I came into the
world as light, so
that everyone
who believes
in me
might not
remain in
darkness.'



358 Glenbrook Road ♦ Stamford, CT 06906 ♦ 203-324-3434

www.smcglenbrook.org

Saint Maurice Church
Faith Formation Ministry
358 Glenbrook Road Stamford, CT 06906

August 2021

Dear Family:

Welcome to Saint Maurice Faith Formation! The COVID-19 pandemic has required changes in many parts of our lives, including the schedule and format of faith formation classes. Please keep in mind, development is on-going. The adventure we are beginning will call for family input and support to meet the needs of all.

This Faith Formation handbook is designed to offer your family information about the Faith Formation program of Saint Maurice Church. We ask that you review the handbook carefully, paying special attention to the class calendar, and the sections on safety and conduct.

The parish and diocesan policies and procedures described in this handbook are established to help our young parishioners and their families not only to learn about their faith, but also to live it in truth and love. At the end of the handbook, there are important forms to be completed and returned as soon as possible.

You may have heard that parents, through their actions and values, are the most important educators in their children's faith development. In everyday life, the family ..."has a unique privilege: transmitting the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values....It is, indeed, a Christian education more witnessed than taught..." (*Directory for Catechesis*, 2020),

We, the pastoral staff and the catechetical team, look forward to working with you throughout the next year. If you have comments, questions, or concerns, please contact Sandra Kluun at skluun@smcglenbrook.org or call 203-324-3434 extension 707.

Peace!

Fr. James K. Bates
Parochial Administrator

Sandra Kluun
Coordinator of Faith Formation

'In stillness, invite the light that is Christ to fill you.'

Three-minute Retreat, Loyola Press



MISSION STATEMENT

The Faith Formation Ministry of Saint Maurice Church is dedicated to providing creative opportunities for our young parishioners and their families to experience the loving presence of God, through study, prayer and acts of kindness and compassion.

Together, we seek to develop a deep love of God, a clear understanding of our Catholic faith and the relevance of the Gospel in our lives. With Jesus, we will be disciples who love and serve those in need.

FAITH FORMATION BASIC GOALS

The goals of Saint Maurice Faith Formation are to:

- provide an atmosphere where growth in a personal relationship with Christ is encouraged.
- develop classroom opportunities and family workshops that will instruct and enrich the faith of our community.
- extend kindness and respect for all persons through works of service.
- help each individual to develop and achieve his or her God-given potential.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION 2021-2022

The on-going influence of the pandemic, diocesan guidelines, suggestions from the parent survey, the focus on the Year of the Family as announced by Pope Francis, and a much-needed emphasis on Holy Scripture and the Mass, were considered during the planning process. The 2021-2022 program will be a combination of the Mass, family workshops, child-learning sessions, service projects, prayer, and, if necessary, ZOOM follow-ups.

Pre-K through Grade Eight Class Sessions

- ◇ Grades Pre-K, K, and one , will meet on Sundays during the 10:30 a.m. Mass for Opening the Word.
- ◇ Grades two through five will meet on Sundays from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m.
- ◇ Grades six through eight will meet on Tuesdays from 6:30 p.m. until 7:45 p.m.

In general, Saint Maurice Church Faith Formation follows the Stamford Public School schedule. If school is not in session, or if there is early dismissal, then there are no faith

formation classes. If there is a question about classes being held, please check radio stations WEBE 108 or WICC 60, or TV channels eight or twelve.

COMMUNICATION

We will communicate with parents via the parish bulletin and through e-mail. Please be sure we have your current contact information.

MASS ATTENDANCE AND PRAYERS 'BY HEART'

"The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life." (CCC, 2177) Family participation at Mass each week is an essential obligation to proper faith formation. Please plan on attending Mass regularly and guiding your children throughout the Mass.

Our young parishioners are expected to be familiar with specific prayers at each grade level. Parents should pray with their children regularly since learning by heart requires consistent repetition.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Changes in status, especially telephone numbers, e-mail, and home addresses should be reported to the Faith Formation Office.

Baptismal certificates are required for all first grade and new students. If transferring from another parish program or school, verification of attendance is required in the form of a report card, completion certificate, or letter.

TUITION 2021-2022

Financial issues should never keep a child from participating in the faith formation program. In the event that the fee presents a hardship, partial payments or other arrangements can be made. Fees should be paid full by the end of the Faith Formation year in April. Please contact the coordinator at any time to discuss special circumstances.

The 2020-2021 tuition for grades one through eight is:

One child: \$135.00 Two children: \$185.00 Three or more children: \$225.00

An additional sacrament materials fee of \$50.00 is also applied for the First Penance/First Eucharist and the Confirmation programs.

SAFETY ISSUES

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The safety of our children and families is a top priority. Please review the drop off and pick up guidelines carefully. Our procedures are established to reflect the requirements resulting from COVID-19, and may be adjusted if necessary.

- Parents must escort their children to the gathering areas in Doran Hall on Sunday mornings and Tuesday evenings.
- Children should never be dropped off at entrances to the building.
- All children must be accompanied by an adult at all times when class is not in session.
- In the event that children are to be picked up before the end of class, the parents must inform the coordinator in advance, preferably in writing. At early pick up, the parent must go first to the coordinator and sign out the child. The coordinator will go to the classroom and release the child from class. For safety considerations, students will not be allowed to wait alone outside.
- At dismissal times, parents should wait in the designated gathering areas until the dismissal bell rings. Children should remain at their assigned tables until parents complete the sign-out process.
- We are happy to assist parents who are unable to leave their vehicles. Please call us to make arrangements.
- Carpool arrangements are welcome. However, parents must provide the coordinator with a current list of all individuals who are authorized to pick up their children

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT

Students are expected to:

- treat adults and peers with kindness and respect.
- walk slowly and quietly; no running or yelling.
- listen; follow directions.
- share ideas and materials generously.
- ask questions to understand more completely.
- honor Jesus and his Church in word and action.

If a student is continuously disruptive (generally, after three warnings) the student will be sent to the coordinator with an explanation of the behavior. The coordinator will discuss the issue with the student. A plan for conduct adjustment will be agreed upon, and an agreement will be signed by both. The coordinator will also determine if the student should be sent back to class for the remainder of the class period or if parents should be called.

The second time a student is sent to the coordinator, a phone call will be made to the parents by the coordinator. Future action depends on the situation. It may be determined that a meeting with the coordinator, parent and student is needed to discuss the problem.

The student may be allowed to return to class on a trial basis, or he or she may be removed from the classroom as determined by the coordinator and participate in independent study.

SUPERVISION

Every effort is made to ensure the students are safe while on Church property. For example, the door to Doran Hall will be locked 15 minutes after class has begun, and will remain locked until 15 minutes before class ends.

In the event of an accident or medical emergency, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible to enable them to make a decision as to the course of action they wish to take. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to notify the coordinator of any special precautions needed to insure the safety and welfare of their children.

HEALTH AND FAMILY ISSUES

Please note-we do not have a nurse on site. Also, because of the increase in allergies and food restrictions, snacks are not allowed.

Please notify the coordinator if your child has a health issue that may affect his/her learning or routine. We will notify the catechist so he or she is sensitive to any problem that might occur. This should include allergies, hyperactivity, light sensitivity, hearing problems, ADHD and ADD medications, EpiPen, etc.

NOTE: Please help us make this experience enjoyable for your child. Inform the coordinator of any special situations that exist within your family, such as: pending divorce, granted divorce, aged grandparents living with you, health problems of other members of the family that may affect the student emotionally, single parent situations, visitation with absentee parents, or parents' job loss that may cause the child stress or absences, death of a parent or close relative, separation, etc. The coordinator will share the information with the child's catechist as needed. Confidentiality will be respected. In situations of separation or divorce, copies of a custody agreement may be requested.

ATTENDANCE

Regular participation is essential for the student to benefit from the continuity of the curriculum. Please inform the coordinator prior to class time if you know your child will be

absent. The coordinator will attempt to contact parents when the student has excessive absences. A review of excessive absences will be conducted mid-year and at year end. Make-up work will be assigned in order to ensure readiness for the next year's curriculum. Incomplete make-up work may require a repeat of the grade level.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CELL PHONES

Absolutely NO electronic devices/cell phones are allowed during class time, unless a family has received special permission from the coordinator. All such devices will be confiscated and held by the coordinator until a parent retrieves the item. Thank you for your cooperation!

CATECHISTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Saint Maurice Church Faith Formation catechists and volunteers have participated in catechist formation through the diocese, as well as "Protecting All God's Children" training, and undergone a background check. They are members of the parish community who generously give their time and talents.

Please consider volunteering in some way. There are many opportunities available, including volunteering as a classroom or workshop aide, or helping through prayerful support. Please join us.

FAITH FORMATION CURRICULUM

The curriculum of Saint Maurice Church Faith Formation is based on the catechetical guidelines of the Diocese of Bridgeport as well as Church documents on catechesis. Our program will follow the liturgical year using Pflaum Gospel Weeklies. Each lesson presents the Gospel using developmentally appropriate activities and stories. A Catechism handbook - *What the Church Believes and Teaches* - is provided to review and reinforce important teachings. To learn more about your important role as the primary witnesses of the faith, please check out the following website: www.pflaumweeklies.com

Pre-K, Kindergarten, and grade one- *Promise*

Grades two and three- *Good News*

Grades four through six- *Venture*

Each sixth grader also receives a *Bible*.

Grades seven and eight- *Visions*

All informational curriculum is supplemented by formation: Mass, prayer, service projects, and special topic workshops for families. *Please Note: Grades two and eight are sacrament years. Preparation details for the sacraments has not yet been determined.*

HOME PROGRAM

For families who choose to teach religion to their children at home, we offer a home school program that follows diocesan standards for each grade level. Regular Mass attendance is required for participation in the home school program. For more information, please contact the coordinator.

SPECIAL NEEDS

There are children of God who, because of a health or learning issue, may not be able to participate in the regular classes. At this time, we assist families on a case by case basis. If you have any questions regarding this program, please call the coordinator.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROJECTS

Throughout the program year, as part of their introduction to discipleship, students will learn to share their unique personal gifts through Christian service projects. The opportunities include a Thanksgiving food drive, and Advent and Lenten prayer projects.

SACRAMENTS

One of the most important tasks of the Church is to lead people to celebrate the sacraments. Sacramental preparation is a special time not only in the parish, but also in the lives of the families who celebrate. The process of preparing children for the sacraments is a responsibility shared by parents and the parish.

According to the "Guidelines for Sacramental Catechesis" for the Diocese of Bridgeport, sacrament preparation is to be a separate process from regular faith formation classes. To assist their children in sacramental preparation, parents are expected to attend information and workshop sessions. Attendance by at least one parent is mandatory.

Important points for First Penance and First Eucharist for both parochial and public-school children:

- Before entering into immediate preparation for Penance, a child is to have completed one full year in a catechetical program and be currently enrolled in the second year of a regular program.
- The celebration of First Penance precedes First Eucharist.
- Immediate preparation for First Penance and First Eucharist is to be a parish program of at least six hours apart from and in addition to regular ongoing formation.

Important points for Confirmation for both parochial and public-school children:

- A person is to have completed an ongoing parish or school catechetical program for at least two years immediately before entering into the Confirmation preparation program.
- Immediate preparation for Confirmation is to be a parish program of at least six hours apart from and in addition to regular ongoing formation.
- A retreat experience is highly recommended.
- Regular Mass attendance is the right and responsibility of the Confirmation candidate.

SAINT MAURICE CHURCH - NAMES AND NUMBERS

Rev. James K. Bates, Parochial Administrator

203-324-3434 extension 701.

email frbates@smcglenbrook.org

Monica Di Costanzo, parish administrative assistant

203-324-3434; email mdicostanzo@smcglenbrook.org

Sandra Kluun, coordinator of faith formation

203-324-3434 extension 707.

email skluun@smcglenbrook.org

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Saint Maurice Parish is providing distance-based learning through which Religious Education staff will facilitate classes and program activities through Zoom, a third-party platform that parents/guardians, students and/or staff will access via the Internet. Students should not create Zoom accounts and should only join meetings with parental consent from the link provided by their teacher. We are following strict norms in our use of Zoom to keep our students safe, including the following:

- Teacher control of video and audio feed
- Disabling of the “chat” function so students cannot “pass notes” privately to each other
- Required teacher use of the “waiting room” feature to keep intruders out
- Disabling of file transfers through Zoom
- Only posting Zoom links in parent emails
 - Ability to remove participants immediately from any session
- A prohibition on any recordings or screen-captures of students in a Zoom session by participants.
- Classes will not be recorded by the Religious Education program. Students who miss a session or need to review content will be provided with session materials.
- Maintaining Safe Environment protocols including having two VIRTUS trained adults in each session.

This letter seeks consent for your child to utilize Zoom for distance-based religious education program purposes. Please be aware that Zoom collects information about its users and has its own privacy terms and conditions to which members must adhere. Please review Zoom’s privacy terms and conditions carefully before consenting: <http://zoom.us/terms> and <http://zoom.us/privacy>.

Please complete the attached form to record your consent for your child’s participation and use of Zoom. Please return the completed form to Sandra Kluun. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sandra Kluun.

Parent/Guardian Permission

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____, give permission for him/her to participate in distance-based online religious education via Zoom. I understand that my child will be expected to participate in Zoom classes over the internet from home for Religious Education. My child's name will need to appear on the screen during their weekly class. I will ensure that my child is engaged in their online class and have a place appropriate to learn without distractions. I understand that my child will be expected to appear on camera during each Zoom class and be able to respond with the microphone in the group discussion and by the public chat option. If my child uses the camera and microphone features on the Zoom platform, my permission is implied and granted.

Parent/Guardian’s Email Address _____

Parent/Guardian’s Signature _____ Date _____