

Saint John Bosco Parish

CONYNGHAM, PA



FAITH FORMATION
STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

Welcome

We welcome you and your family to the St. John Bosco Parish Faith Formation program. You have initiated your child into the Catholic faith through the Rite of Baptism. Our goal is a partnership with families to promote growth in the Catholic faith through Word (knowledge of faith), Worship (liturgical life), Community (prayer and belonging), and Service (missionary spirit). (*General Directory for Catechesis, 1998*). Our teachers strive to meet this goal through planned and purposeful classroom lessons, activities, and discussions that reinforce the faith teachings practiced by the family. We support your efforts, and welcome your participation in our program, as together we strengthen our faith community and guide students in their understanding of their faith, and becoming who God is calling them to be!

Communication

Director of Children's Faith Formation: Carla E. Bednar

570-788-1997, Option 6

Email: cabednar@outlook.com

Office Coordinator: Kate Dagostin

Announcements about the Faith Formation program are posted in our weekly bulletin. In the event that your family attends weekly mass at another church, the bulletin may be accessed on our parish website, www.stjohnboscochurch.org. Information is also posted regularly on the Faith Formation page of the parish website, as well as our Facebook page and Twitter.

Notes, announcements, and monthly family calendars will also be sent home with students. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to read all materials brought home, in order to be aware of current Faith Formation information

- No spaghetti straps or sleeveless dresses. Girls must wear a shawl or sweater if their dress does not have sleeves.
- Dresses must be knee length or longer.
- Girls should be able to sit, stand, walk, and kneel comfortably in their dress
- No gloves (the Precious Body may only come in contact with skin. Please leave your gloves at home)
- No backless shoes or heels, flip flops, or sneakers, please

Dress Code for Confirmation

Boys and Girls:

- Hairstyle should be neat and presentable
- Forehead should be free of hair, so that the Bishop may easily anoint each candidate's forehead

Boys:

- Suit or dress pants
- No jeans, cargo, or athletic pants
- Dress shirt
- Tie
- Shoes
- No sneakers or flip flops

Girls:

- Knee length dress/skirt or dress pants
- Tops and dresses must have sleeves- nothing strapless or with spaghetti straps
- If wearing a top/dress without sleeves, a sweater or shawl must be worn
- Shoes or sandals
- No sneakers or flip flops
- No low necklines or cleavage showing

Discipline Procedures

At the beginning of the year, each teacher and his/her students will establish classroom rules and guidelines. As in school, each teacher may use different classroom management techniques in order to guide their students. Verbal redirection and positive reinforcement will be used as a primary means of guiding children's behavior. In the event that a student's behavior becomes disruptive, the Faith Formation director will be notified, and will meet with the teacher and student in order to identify a plan to resolve the situation. In the event that there is a behavior issue that is unable to be resolved in this manner, the student's parent or guardian will be contacted for further collaboration.

Program rules include:

- Respect for one another, property, and materials
- Cell phones should be left at home (or turned off)
- Tobacco/alcohol/drug use is prohibited
- Toys, candy, gum from home should remain at home

Dress Code

All students are expected to dress appropriately for Mass and class. Clothing should reflect reverence for God and for the Church. Students preparing for the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation are expected to adhere to the following guidelines for reception of the sacraments:

Dress Code for First Holy Communion

Boys:

- Dark or white suit with tie
 - Dress pants with jacket, dress shirt and tie may also be worn
- No sneakers or flip flops, please

Girls:

- White dress with veil, or simple hair decoration. (Veils are OPTIONAL).

Role of Parent/Guardian

Excerpt from the Rite of Baptism as an Infant:

Priest: "You have asked that to have your child baptized. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are doing?"
Parents: "Yes."

As your child's primary teacher about their faith, we are honored to join in partnership with you to assist in providing tools, experiences, and guidance that will strengthen their relationship with God and their faith community. We expect that parents and guardians will live a life of faith at home, in order to reinforce and extend what our teachers are offering to our students in class. ***Celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday is the essential part of being Catholic.*** Students are expected to attend Saturday evening or Sunday liturgy with their parent/guardian, in order to fully experience and understand our Catholic faith.

Parents are also invited and encouraged to participate in our program and in our parish ministries and activities. We welcome volunteers as Faith Formation aides, substitute teachers, and leaders in our C.L.O.W. program. There are also many wonderful opportunities within our parish through our various ministries, including Hospitality, Music, Lector, and Extraordinary Ministers of Communion. Our parent Faith Formation group, Families in Faith, will also continue to meet this year during Faith Formation classes. This is a wonderful opportunity to explore your own faith, and participate in faith sharing with other parents and family members.

Curriculum, Textbooks, Websites

Our curriculum encompasses the basic guidelines for religious education outlined by the Diocese of Scranton,

www.diocesofscranton.org, along with instruction and reflection about the missionary needs of the global church, discernment of God's call to vocation, celebrations of the Sunday liturgy, the major feasts of the liturgical year, and respect life issues (*Diocese of Scranton, Elementary Guidelines for Religious Education*). The following textbooks, and their resources, are utilized within our program. We encourage parents/guardians to check out the websites for their child's book, for an overview of the content that will be covered, as well as to take advantage of additional online resources available to families:

Levels 1-6: *We Believe (Sadlier Religion, www.webelieveweb.com)*

Levels 7-8: *We Live Our Faith (Sadlier Religion), www.webelieveweb.com*

Confirmation Preparation: *Decision Point (Dynamic Catholic), www.dynamiccatholic.com/confirmation*

Chastity Program, Level 8: *Theology of the Body for Teens, Middle School Edition (Ascension Press), www.thetheologyofthebody.com*

Arrival and Dismissal Schedule

Faith Formation classes for Levels 1-8 meet on Sunday mornings, immediately following the 9:00 am Mass. A parent or guardian should bring their child directly to the classroom. All students are expected to be in their classrooms by 10:00 am. There may be times that Mass may not be finished by 10:00, and your child's teacher may be in the church. In the event that there is no adult in your child's classroom, please wait with your child until their teacher arrives. If it is necessary for you to leave, please bring your child to the Faith Formation office. All levels dismiss at 11:10 am. Parents are asked not to proceed to their child's classroom until the bell rings at 11:10. At that time, students will be dismissed only to a person identified on the child's registration form as a designated pick up person.

Late Arrival and Early Departure Instructions

Every effort should be made to arrive at class on time, in order for students to experience all parts of the lesson prepared by the teacher. Students arriving late for class must report to the Faith Formation to be signed in prior to going to their classroom. If it is necessary to pick up your child early from class, please notify the Faith Formation director in advance, and proceed to the office when you arrive to pick up your child. Someone from Faith Formation staff will retrieve your child from class.

Attendance and Absences

Sundays are the Lord's Day. Attendance is expected at all weekly classes, as well as weekly Sunday (or Saturday evening) Mass. For Level 8 students, attendance is also expected at all evening Confirmation preparation classes. In the event that your child must be absent from class due to extenuating circumstances, including illness, emergency, or death in the family, it is necessary to contact the Faith Formation office, at 570-788-1997, Option 6, in order to make arrangements to complete any work missed. ***Sunday sports are not an excused absence.*** While much of the work missed may be able to be made up through work in your child's textbook, many of our teachers engage students in activities, discussions, and lessons that may not be able to be replicated at home. ***If a regular and ongoing conflict due to any extracurricular activity will result in your child's repeated absence from class, it may be necessary to explore a Faith Formation program that better suits your family's schedule. If this is the case, and your family is registered at St. John Bosco, please contact Father Ric Polmounter, who will provide a letter granting permission for your child to attend a program in another parish.*** Parents/guardians are always welcome to borrow videos, supplemental resources, and materials in order to ensure that students receive as much of the missed content as possible. ***Because of their religious significance, it is expected that all students, especially students in Levels 2 and 8 (Sacramental years) attend Stations of the Cross at least one time during Lent, and attend Mass on Holy Thursday.***