**St. Bernard Faith Formation**



**2023-2024**

**Parent Handbook**

**Our Goal**

The goal of our program is not only to teach the students about Jesus Christ and his Church, but to emphasize the importance of continuously growing in a relationship with him in prayer and the Sacraments—especially the Eucharist.  To be Catholic is much more than just knowing about Catholicism; it should shape our entire lives.

**Protecting God’s Children**

All volunteers who work with students in the faith formation program must complete the safe environment requirements outlined by the Diocese of Green Bay. These requirements include completion of VIRTUS training and a background check. Our volunteers must also sign the Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct.

**Building Security/Emergencies**

In order to better control who is entering and exiting the building during class time, the front school doors are on an automatic locking system. The doors will be open and lock at the following times:

5:45-6:05pm, Open

6:05-7:05pm, Locked

7:05-7:20pm, Open

Catechists have been given instructions on where to take their class in case of an emergency. We will practice these drills with the students later in the fall.

**Communication with Parents/Guardians**

Most of our communication to families will be sent via a Constant Contact email. Please regularly check your junk folder as messages from us may inadvertently land there.

Elementary students will also have a home/school folder. Please check the folder to see what your child is learning and have your child bring it back to class the following week.

Please check the St. Bernard website (under the “Education” tab) for information about our program and sacraments. **stbernardgb.org**

**Attendance**

Attendance is important and all children are encouraged to attend class and arrive on time each week. If your child is sick or there is some other reason why he or she will not be able to attend class, please call or e-mail ahead of time. **The best way to get in touch with us, if it is after 3:00 on Wednesdays, is via email.** If we do not hear from you, your child will have an unexcused absence. Multiple unexcused absences will warrant a call home.

Classes begin at 6:00pm. We understand that schedules can be busy, but please try to have your students to class on time.

**Helpful information to discuss with your child**

**Pick Up-At the end of class-** Parents of 1st-5th graders are to come inside the building to pick up their child at the end of class unless an older sibling will be walking out with them. Parents of children in the primary hallway can stand outside their child’s classroom until the teacher releases them. Parents of children in the intermediate hallway can wait in the main entrance hallway for their child. Students in 6th grade and up can meet their parents in the parking lot as we have done in the past.

**Parking Lot-**Please exercise extreme caution in the parking lot. If you have students who drive, please remind them to watch for younger students as they move through the parking lot.

**Food/Drink-**Out of caution for the students who have food allergies both in our program and in the day school, nothing with any type of nuts may be brought. Students should refrain from bringing snacks or treats to share with the group. Plastic (no glass) water bottles can be brought to class and refilled at the drinking fountains.

**Illness-**If you are not feeling well, please stay home from class. We can send you make-up material to guarantee that you will be caught up with the rest of your class when you return. We would appreciate an email notifying us of the absence.

**Phones**-Catechists have been instructed to collect cell phones from students when they enter the classroom. Cell phones will be held by the catechist until the end of class unless the catechist would like the students to use their phones as part of that night’s curriculum. We understand that many middle and high school students will be bringing their phones to class but just like during the school day, they are not to be used during class unless directed by the catechist.

**Weather**-If Green Bay schools are closed and/or after school activities canceled on Wednesdays because of weather, there will be no Faith Formation class that evening. If bad weather occurs after schools close at their regular times and we decide to cancel classes, you will be notified by an email. We will also post it to the parish website and Facebook and let the local TV stations know.

**Gender Identity-** It is the policy of the Diocese of Green Bay that students and their parents are expected to live virtuous lives guided by Gospel values and the teaching of the Church. Students shall conduct themselves in accord with their biological sex at all times.

**Discipline Policy**

Respectful behavior is expected from all students.

* Going through the desks of the day-school students and messing around with different things in the classroom is unacceptable.
* Acting disrespectfully towards a catechist or other students is also unacceptable.

If a child is acting disrespectfully or disrupting class, he or she will be given a warning. If, after a second warning the behavior persists, the child will be sent out into the hallway to speak with Mrs. Hadzima. Continued inappropriate behavior will result in a phone call to the parents or guardian.

**First Reconciliation and First Communion**

During their 2nd grade year, students will prepare for and receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion. The calendar lists the specific dates of these sacraments. As those times draw near, a signup link will be sent out so that we know what date you are planning to come. More detailed information will be emailed directly to the 2nd grade families.

**Confirmation**

Beginning in spring, our faith formation sophomores will join sophomores from NDA for immediate Confirmation preparation. The preparation focuses on the sacrament itself, Who the Holy Spirit is, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc.  Confirmation will take place in the fall of junior year. More detailed information will be mailed directly to the 10th grade families in January.

**Expectations of Parents**

Parents are the primary educators of the faith for their children and play an essential role in their spiritual formation. Good examples, given by parents, such as going to Mass every Sunday, going to Confession, daily prayer, spiritual reading, attending adult faith formation events, etc. are of great significance. While attending weekly faith formation classes is wonderful, frequent reception of the Eucharist is the single most important thing we can be doing to grow in the spiritual life.

We look forward to a great year of spiritual growth for our students.

If any questions ever arise, please feel free to contact us.

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