



St. Bart's Faith Formation Handbook/Overview

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Program Goals

Our goal is to create a program of lifelong faith formation that is centered in and flows out of the events of church life. It embraces all ages and generations, promotes faith growth at home and promotes participation in the church community.

By providing a welcoming climate and an array of activities, St. Bartholomew Faith Formation invites and empowers 1st through high school grade children and their families to more fully understand and live Catholic values and faith. Through on-going development, these children strengthen their personal relationship with Christ, become active members of the community, and share in Christ's mission to be a light to the world.

The first catechists in any child's life are the family members with whom he or she lives. The staff and volunteers at St. Bart's are here to assist you, the parents, who are the primary teachers of your children.

Faith Formation Classes

Faith Formation classes meet once a week and begin in mid-September and end mid-May. Confirmation II is on a different schedule and meets 6 - 7 times during the school year.

Elementary Faith Formation (EFF) is for kids in grades 1 - 5. We offer classes on either Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons from 4 - 5:15 p.m. in various classrooms in our Parish Center.

Kids are grouped into their "faith" age; not necessarily the same as their grade in school. Every class has a lead catechist and at least one assistant catechist.

Middle School Faith Formation (MFF) is for kids in grades 6 - 7. We offer two different days/times for the middle school: either Tuesdays at 4 - 5:15 p.m. or Wednesdays from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Our goal is to empower young people to more fully understand and live Catholic values and faith. Our youth will strengthen their personal relationship with Christ,



become active members of the community, and share in Christ's mission to be a light to the world through several service projects completed throughout the year.

Confirmation I is offered to students in 8th Grade (or older) who are ready to explore preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The class is focused on growing the student's knowledge of the faith and is offered weekly on Wednesdays from 7 - 8:15 p.m.

St. Bart's Confirmation program is a two-year program. Students must have taken Confirmation I before enrolling in Confirmation II, regardless of age or grade. *Exceptions are made for students who have attended Catholic school.*

Confirmation II is for all students entering 9th grade (or older) who have completed Confirmation I. Over the course of one school year, students attend seven two-hour classes, two half-day retreats and an off-site retreat (all typically scheduled on Sundays) prior to the Rite of Confirmation.

Sacramental Preparation

First Holy Communion: Children over the age of seven who have been baptized, accompanied by their families, may take the next step in the Initiation process and prepare for First Eucharist.

Typically, the children are enrolled in the parish Faith Formation program for two years, and receive the Sacraments during the Easter season of their second year of preparation. Three family workshops are required the year the child will receive the sacrament. These are offered from September through March for children and parents together.

First Reconciliation (confession): Children are prepared to celebrate this sacrament before they receive their First Eucharist. All parents are expected to assist in the sacramental preparation of their children and to attend the parent meetings for this purpose.



RCIA Adapted for Children: For older children (ages 7-14) who need preparation for the sacraments of Baptism and/or Eucharist and Reconciliation, we offer special classes as part of our faith formation program. Unbaptized children who complete this process will receive the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass.

Role of Parents

The first catechists in any child's life are the family members with whom he or she lives. The staff and volunteers at St. Bart's are here to assist you, the parents, who are the primary teachers of your children.

We do ask that parents prioritize St. Bart's EFF/MFF/Confirmation classes accordingly and make every attempt to promote good attendance both at weekly classes and at monthly Family masses. This also means staying abreast of news/programs offered at St. Bart's by reading our monthly Faith Formation newsletter, occasionally checking our Web page and reading the weekly church bulletin.

Change of Address/Phone: Please notify the Faith Formation office of any change of address or phone number (work or home) immediately so that the faith formation staff will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your child.

If you ever have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to email/call Rachael Smit @ rachael@barts.org or 347-0701 ext. 215.

Child Expectations

Children also have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the Faith Formation sessions at St. Bart's. They are expected to:

- Be respectful of the catechist and other children.
- Listen carefully, follow directions and participate in the session activities.
- Complete any home assignments.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures.



- Share what they have learned and experienced in their Faith Formation sessions with their parents and families.

Parents will be notified in the case of on-going inappropriate behavior.

Catechist Information

At St. Bart's all of our catechists are volunteers who are committed to share their love of God, their faith and their time with children and young people of the parish. Catechists help children/youth build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the word, building a sense of community, leading prayer and worship, encouraging loving service to others, and setting the example of their own lives.

"Catechists are people who keep the memory of God alive; they keep it alive in themselves and they receive it in other's." - Pope Francis

At St. Bart's it takes 30 volunteers to successfully run our program - 15 lead catechists and 15 assistants. *We are always in need of new catechists.* We offer expert guidance, training and support throughout the year.

If you would like to help or have a question or concern regarding a catechist, please contact Rachael Smit at racheael@barts.org or 347-0701 ext.215

Logistical Information

Late Arrivals: If your child will be late to class, please walk them into the Parish Auditorium if there is "gathering", if arriving later than 4:20 p.m., please escort them to their classroom.



Early Dismissal: If your child must leave class before the usual dismissal time, the adult must meet the child **at the classroom** before leaving. Children will only be released to parents, guardians or persons annotated on the child's emergency card. *No child will be released to meet an adult in the parking lot.*

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures: Children should be dropped off in front of the stairs at the lower parking lot. For the safety of the children **DO NOT DRIVE INTO THE UPPER PARKING LOT FOR DROP-OFF.**

Supervision is provided up to 10 minutes before and after the Faith Formation session. Children should not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before their session.

At the end of the session children will wait at the stairs for their parents to pick them up. Children should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after being dismissed*.

Park your car in the lower parking lot and meet your children at the stairs. Children should not walk across the parking lot by themselves. This is for the safety of your children.

*If you know you will be late picking up your child, please call the office at 650-347-0701 and ask to speak to Rachael or Joanie. If we don't hear from you, we will be calling you! Please pick-up your child in the Faith Formation Office.

Nut-Free Policy

For the safety of our students we are implementing a NUT FREE POLICY. Please do not bring **any** snacks/food/potluck items that contain nuts or that were processed at a facility where cross-contamination could have taken place. Thank you!

Safety Procedures

The safety of the students and Faith Formation staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and wellbeing of both students and staff members.

In the case of an emergency/natural disaster, catechists, coordinators and the director will remain with the children until either a parent or designated person picks the children up.



Medical Emergency/Accident/Sudden Sickness: In the case of accident or sudden sickness, the Faith Formation Director, coordinator or her delegate will give appropriate immediate care and notify the parents/guardians.

Dangerous Materials: Faith Formation Director/assistants or designated persons have the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of the participants of the Faith Formation program. This includes the right to inspect property of individuals suspected of possessing drugs, weapons and other illegal materials. If such materials are found, parents or guardians and/or appropriate authorities will be notified.

Child Abuse: As “child care custodians” Faith Formation Directors/assistants and catechists are required by state law to report evidence of apparent non accidental injury, suspected neglect, or child abuse to the proper authorities.

Child Protection: St. Bart’s is committed to the protection and safety of all children entrusted to its care. During all scheduled parish activities/programs, at least two adults are required to be present. As mandated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, teachers and any adults who work with children, volunteer or paid, are required to be background checked and follow the **Archdiocesan Policies and Procedures Regarding Child Abuse and Harassment** and participate in the Child Protection Workshop **Virtus Online**. As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

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