

Faith Formation Family Handbook 2013-2014

St. Bartholomew Catholic Church
San Mateo, CA

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WELCOME

Dear Families,

The Faith Formation staff hopes this handbook will provide you with valuable information about St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Program, Elementary Faith Formation (EFF), Middle School Faith Formation (MFF), Pre-School Co-op, Faithful Families, as well as our sacramental preparation process for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. It is important that you read it and discuss it with your children and youth. After you have done so, please sign and return the HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT to the Faith Formation Office with your registration materials.

We ask you to keep this handbook in a convenient place and refer to it as needed. We welcome any questions you have and look forward to serving you and your family.

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE INFORMATION

Office Hours: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Monday-Thursday

Phone: (650) 347-0701

Fax: (650) 347-2427

VISION

St. Bartholomew believes that the Faith Formation ministry is a share in Jesus' own mission of proclaiming the Reign of God. Faith Formation is the activity which enables faith to become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction, especially sharing God's Word in Scripture and sharing the tradition of the Catholic Church. Faith Formation is a life-long process for each individual as well as the work of the entire Catholic Christian community.

The Church teaches that the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of the children rests first and foremost with the parents. Parents may share this responsibility with others, but do not relinquish it.

The church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the ministry of Faith Formation. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that those being catechized (children, youth, and adults) can understand. Catechists must do more than merely teach about faith. They 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.

Our catechists are all volunteers, from many walks of life. They are people who have answered a call to minister to our children and youth and who have prepared themselves in a variety of ways to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is important enough to share.

The Faith Formation process seeks to open young people to the goodness and beauty of God, reflected in the world and to experience this within the Catholic Christian community. It seeks to help them grow further in their understanding of our unity in Christ and the many gifts of the Holy Spirit.

GOALS

The goals of Faith Formation at St. Bartholomew are:

- Ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ
- Full participation in the life of the Catholic Church

PARENT'S ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The catechists are eager to work with parents to help them fulfill this responsibility and ask each parent's cooperation in the following ways:

- ✦ Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your children.
 - ✦ Saturday – 5:00 p.m.
 - ✦ Sunday - 8:00, 9:30 11:15 am and 5:30 pm
- ✦ Because there are only 26 sessions of Faith Formation, it must be a priority in the activity life of each child.
- ✦ Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- ✦ Share your faith and its importance to you with your children.
- ✦ Pray with your children and help them memorize the traditional prayers of the Church.
- ✦ Attend all parent meetings.
- ✦ Familiarize yourself with scheduled Faith Formation sessions and events for your children.
- ✦ Read and act promptly on all communications from the Faith Formation Office.
- ✦ Assure the child's punctual and regular attendance at all sessions.

CHILD'S ROLE

Children also have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the Faith Formation sessions at St. Bartholomew. 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, and discipline policies.
- ✦ Share what they have learned and experienced in their Faith Formation sessions with their parents and families.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

St. Bartholomew welcomes all children and youth, baptized or not, to participate in the Faith Formation program.

AGES 4-5: St. Bartholomew offers Faith Formation for early childhood on Sunday mornings during the 9:30 a.m. Masses from September through May.

GRADES 1-5: Faith Formation is offered two different times during the week from September through May: Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 – 5:15 and Wednesday afternoons from 4:00 – 5:15

GRADE 6-8: Faith Formation is offered two different times during the week from September through May: Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 – 5:15 and Wednesday evenings from 7:00 - 8:15

FAITHFULL FAMILIES: A monthly family meeting for families with children in 3rd through 5th grade. Groups begin with prayer, eat a pot luck dinner, receive instruction, and leave with at-home activities to continue growing in faith together.

FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES is provided in regular or specialized religious instruction, particularly with regard to preparation for the sacraments.

GRADE LEVEL MATERIALS

In order to provide a complete Faith Formation appropriate to children, St. Bartholomew uses the following Faith Formation series:

Early Childhood and Grades 1-5 – RCL/Benzinger

Grade 6, 7, 8 – Unique-to-St.-Bartholomew topics and activities

A calendar of all program dates is sent to parents in June and is available on the Faith Formation page of the website.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The first step in the sacramental preparation process is a meeting with the Director or a member of the Faith Formation staff.

FIRST EUCHARIST: Preparation is a two-year process that may begin in first grade or whenever the family starts Faith Formation. 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.

CONFIRMATION is a two year program, beginning in 8th grade.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS adapted for children is a process for children ages 7-14, who are not yet baptized, who have been baptized in another Christian tradition but wish to become Catholic, and older baptized Catholic children, ages 9-14, who have not been catechized (instructed) or received their First Communion. For some children the process may take a year and others may take two, three years or as long as they need.

Unbaptized children who complete this process will receive the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass. Those children baptized in another Christian church will be received into the Church, confirmed and receive First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil or the parish Confirmation Mass. Older baptized Catholic children will receive First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass and be confirmed with the Confirmation class in 9th grade. The Church believes very strongly in the unity of these three sacraments of initiation. Periodically there will be sessions designed for the children and their parents. Full parent participation is required.

INFANT BAPTISM: Baptism is celebrated upon completion of the Parent Baptism Preparation Program. Contact the Parish Office at 347-0701 for information.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A. REGISTRATION

All families currently registered in faith formation programs will be mailed confirmation packets in the summer for the following year. Newcomers to the program are asked to call the Faith Formation Office about registration information.

B. FEES

One child per family—\$300

Two children per family—\$400

Three or more children per family—\$500

Anyone who, because of financial difficulties, cannot afford to pay these fees should feel free to make arrangements with the parish. **Everyone is entitled to Faith Formation regardless of their ability to pay the registration fee.**

C. BAPTISMAL INFORMATION

A baptismal certificate is required for all children who are preparing to celebrate Reconciliation and Eucharist or Confirmation or who are being registered for the first time.

D. 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.

E. MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM

Each child must have medical information on file in the office. Failure to submit the medical information form within the first two weeks of Faith Formation sessions will prevent your child from continuing. Please see that the information listed is kept accurate at all times.

F. CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

The primary responsibility for seeing that custody arrangements are carried out rests with the parents. The Faith Formation staff wishes to cooperate with special custody arrangements of families to the best of their ability. Parents are asked to meet with and submit in writing detailed information regarding such arrangements to the Parish Faith Formation Leader.

G. CONFIDENTIALITY

When you register in our Faith Formation program, your family will be added to the Faith Formation data base. The Faith Formation Office will not release any information about you or your family to an individual or special interest group inside or outside the parish without your permission.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

A. BY CAR

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.

Procedures for drop off and pick up:

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.

B. BY FOOT OR BICYCLE

Parents should establish with their children a safe route to and from the parish. Children and youth riding bicycles must walk their bicycles on parish grounds and use the marked cross walk to leave and enter. Bicycles are to be parked in the auditorium. Parents are advised that children and youth riding bicycles to and from parish grounds are required by state law to wear helmets.

Roller blades or skateboards are not permitted on parish grounds.

ATTENDANCE

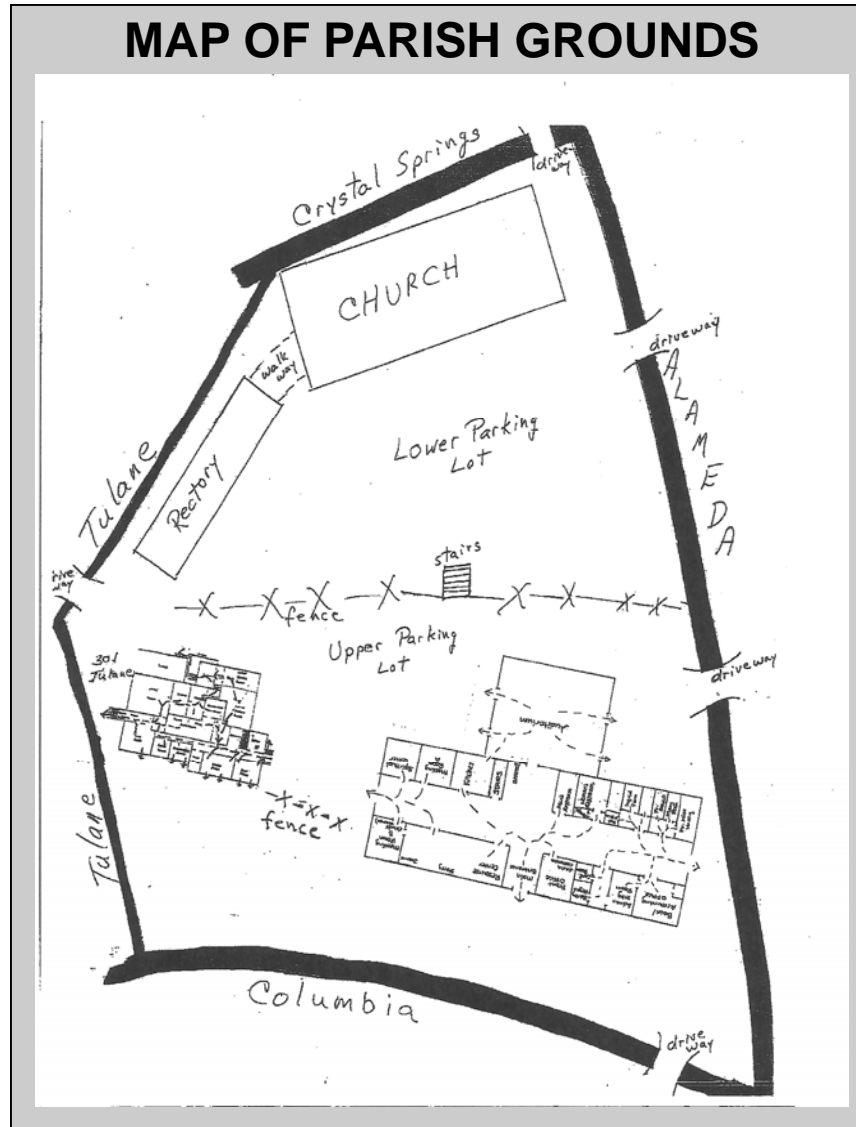
A. ABSENCES

Promptness and attendance at every class is important for the sake of continued understanding and for development of faith in our children. If it is necessary that your child miss a session, make a phone call to the office. Parents will receive a phone call after two missed sessions. If your child cannot attend on a regular basis, please call and discuss the situation with the director of the program.

B. EARLY RELEASE

If your child must leave the session before the usual dismissal time, a dated written request or authorization signed by the parent or guardian is required. 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. The adult must meet the child **at the classroom** before leaving.

MAP OF PARISH GROUNDS



C. VISITORS

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child's Faith Formation session after registering in the office. If your child would like to bring a friend to class, please contact the Faith Formation office to obtain a visitor information card. All children who are visitors must have a completed visitor information card before being allowed to visit classrooms.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Parents and Faith Formation staff work in partnership in helping children grow in faith, therefore good communication is essential. If a parent wishes to talk with a catechist they may do so after class. Parents may also call or visit the Faith Formation Office if they wish to talk with the director. The phone number is 650-347-0701.

The office will communicate regularly via email.

CODE OF CONDUCT

One of the catechist's first concerns is to maintain an atmosphere in which the children and youth can form a community, share faith, and enjoy an optimum learning environment. As part of a Catholic Christian learning environment children and youth are expected to:

- Behave respectfully and courteously toward all catechists, adults, and other children and youth.
- Participate positively and be attentive in the Faith Formation session.
- Respect parish property and the property of others.

Parents/guardians will be called if their child/youth repeatedly disrupts the class session. The Parish Faith Formation Leader, in collaboration with the pastor, is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations which may include dismissal from Faith Formation.

COMPUTER LAB

We now have a computer lab with 15 stations that will be used for interactive instruction as well as Archdiocesan-mandated safety training. Advanced notification of Safety training will be given providing families the opportunity to "opt-out." The Computer Lab Contract must be signed and returned before participation. The contract is at the end of this handbook.

EMERGENCY AND 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 well-being of both students and staff members. In the case of emergency/natural disaster the Emergency Procedure Plan will be followed. Fire and earthquake drills are conducted regularly.

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. A sign-out sheet will be provided for parents to sign out their child.

A. 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.

B. DANGEROUS MATERIALS

Faith Formation Directors/Coordinators 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.

C. GANGS

The parish Faith Formation program is a gang-free environment. No evidence of gangs or gang-related activities will be tolerated. Persons participating in any gang or gang-related activities while on parish property or in conjunction with program-related activities will be subject to immediate disciplinary action.

D. CHILD ABUSE

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

E. CHILD PROTECTION

St. Bartholomew 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 **Shield the Vulnerable**. As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to proper authorities.

F. HARASSMENT

St. Bartholomew believes in the sanctity, value and integrity of all persons: we are all created in God's image and are of inestimable value. Any form of harassment is completely contrary to this belief and St. Bartholomew Church is committed to providing an environment free of harassment.

G. PARTIES AND TREATS

Catechists are encouraged to limit parties and treats during class time unless it serves a Faith Formation purpose. Parents bringing in a treat or snack for your child's group, special activity, or retreats, please check with your child's catechist for any allergies before sending treats.

If your child has allergies, or other dietary restrictions, parents are encouraged to send a snack along with your child and to let your child's teacher know of special dietary restrictions.

H. CHILD AND PARENT SAFETY WORKSHOP:

In compliance with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter to work for the protection and safety of children and youth, the "TALKING ABOUT TOUCHING" Program is being offered in all schools and parishes throughout the Archdiocese of San Francisco. This workshop is offered for those children in **Grades 1-3**. This training will help your child learn and build safety skills to help them and your family stay safe. The **TALKING ABOUT TOUCHING** curriculum teaches children simple rules to guide them toward safe decision making in a variety of situations, teaching them:

- The definition of a safe touch and how to respond to unwanted touch.
- Standing up for safety in an assertive manner.
- Asking for help in uncomfortable and possibly dangerous situations.

For **grades 4-8** online training is provided through Law Room at their website <http://www.shieldthevulnerable.org/> and during EFF/MFF in our computer lab. Parents will be notified of the dates for training during EFF/MFF and can "opt-out" of class training and do so at home.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND COMPUTER USAGE

The staff of St. Bartholomew Faith Formation believes strongly in the educational value of technology. We recognize that electronic services have the potential to support the curriculum and student learning and want these resources available to all students.

The Internet is an electronic super highway connecting millions of computers worldwide. From these connected computers students can obtain and exchange information, both massive in quantity and as diverse in quality as is the human experience. Because of the quantity and quality of information our resources bring to St. Bartholomew Faith Formation, it is impossible to predict with certainty what students might locate.

The staff of St. Bartholomew Faith Formation will make every effort to protect students and teachers from any misuse or abuses as a result of their experience with the information service but asks that the following user rules be discussed with your child. As a user of this service, you and your child must sign and will be expected to abide by these rules concerning proper network etiquette. Your signatures will indicate acknowledgment and understanding of these standards. **Without a signed form your child will not be allowed to use electronic resources in the St. Bartholomew computer lab.**

Unacceptable Uses of the Internet and E-mail at St. Bartholomew Faith Formation

- Never send or encourage others to send abusive messages.
- Users are representatives of St. Bartholomew Faith Formation; therefore, they should never swear, use discriminatory, harassing or inappropriate language on the network.
- Never view or download obscene or x-rated material at parish or at home.
- Users are bound by law not to send derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disabilities and religion.
- Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or any other agencies or networks that are connected to other systems. Never move, alter, delete, or trash files that are not yours. Never move, alter, delete, or trash icons or applications from the desktop or hard drive. Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt its use by other users. Any vandalism will result in the loss of computer services, disciplinary action, and legal referral.

- Never transmit (locate, access, or exchange) any material in violation of any United States or California regulation. Do not use network facilities for commercial activities or any other use that would violate the policies of St. Bartholomew Faith Formation concerning student conduct, and/or which would violate the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

CONTRACT is found on page 15-16 and must be signed and returned.

RIGHT TO AMEND

The Parish Faith Formation Leaders and the Pastor of St. Bartholomew have the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

This parent/student handbook has been approved by Fr. Michael Healy, Pastor, and the Parish Faith Formation Leaders.

Please return the **acknowledgment and computer lab contract** on pages 15-16 to the Faith Formation office.

Fax: 650-347-2429

Mail: 6000 Columbia Drive, San Mateo 94402

or scan and return to stbarts@barts.org.

NOTE: without the Computer Lab Contract and Handbook Acknowledgment on file children will not be able to begin in the fall.

COMPUTER LAB CONTRACT

Student

I understand and will abide by the provisions and conditions of this contract. I understand that my use of electronic resources at St. Bartholomew and my network account is to be used for educational purposes only. I understand that any violation of the aforementioned provisions on pages 15-16 may result in disciplinary action, the revoking of my user account, and any appropriate legal action. I will not hold my catechist or St. Bartholomew parish responsible or legally liable for materials distributed or acquired from the network. I also agree to report any misuse of the Internet or the network to my catechist.

I have read and reviewed the St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Electronic Resources and Computer Usage Agreement and fully intend to comply with its content. I understand that my privilege to use the parish's electronic facilities **will be revoked at any time should I violate this agreement.**

Parent/Guardian

As the parent/guardian of the student listed below, I have read this contract and understand that the use of electronic resources including the Internet is designed for educational purposes only. I will not hold the catechist or the parish responsible or legally liable for materials distributed to or acquired from the network by my child. I also agree to report any misuse of information system to the catechist.

I have read the St. Bartholomew Faith Formation Electronic Resources and Computer Lab Usage Agreement. I realize and accept that should my child violate this agreement, the privilege to use network services, including the Internet and computer lab facilities, will be terminated. I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in the parish setting.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We have read the handbook, understand its contents, and will support the Faith Formation of our family.

Sign below for both the Computer Lab Contract and Handbook Acknowledgement.

Student _____
Print Name Signature Date

Student _____
Print Name Signature Date

Student _____
Print Name Signature Date

Student _____
Print Name Signature Date

Student _____
Print Name Signature Date

Student _____
Print Name Signature Date

Parent _____
Print Name Signature Date

Parent _____
Print Name Signature Date