

# **ELEMENTARY FAITH FORMATION**

**Kindergarten through Grade 5**

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of their children.*

Kindergarten through Grade 5 is based on the premise that the family's influence is vital to the faith formation of the child. Parents are the foremost faith teachers of their children and are strongly encouraged to actively participate in their children's faith formation program.

### **KINDERGARTEN :**

***Class times:* Tuesday 4:45-6:00 P.M.**

**Wednesday 4:45 – 6:00 P.M. or 6:30 – 7:45 P.M.**

The Kindergarten program is for children age 5 by September 1. The text used for Kindergarten is Stories of God's Love: Kindergarten, published by RCL Benziger. This text is a program that follows the guidelines for Preschool and Kindergarten materials developed by the Catechism Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This program provides learning about God through Scripture, stories, activities and music relevant to the children's age.

### **GRADES 1-5:**

***Class times:* Sunday 3:30 - 5:00 P.M.**

**Tuesday 4:45 - 6:00 P.M.**

**Wednesday 4:45 - 6:00 P.M. or 6:30 -7:45 P.M.**

The text used for Grade 1-5 is Be My Disciples, published by RCL Benziger. This text is correlated with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and has been approved by the Bishops Ad Hoc committee to oversee the use of the catechism. The Be My Disciple program provides a balance between doctrine, scripture, and the liturgical year, and builds year to year relevant to the children's ages.

## **REGISTRATION:**

A family is to be registered in the parish to participate in Elementary Faith Formation sessions and the sacrament preparation programs.

Registration for Faith Formation is ongoing. Classes are limited in size; therefore, room assignments are on a first-come basis. Class placement is dependent upon the number of volunteer catechists (teachers) who step forward to teach. Without enough catechists, we may not be able to form a class, which will result in the family being moved to the home-based FF program. No confirmation letters will be sent indicating that your child is registered. Friend requests (one only) are not guaranteed. **Class lists are posted online in mid-September.**

No child will be denied religious education because of financial need, however, you must contact the faith formation office with your request for assistance.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT:**

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The faith of parents profoundly impacts their children and there is no substitute for parental involvement in their children's' faith formation. Parents are gifted with the privilege and the responsibility to nurture the faith life of their children received in Sacrament of Baptism. Parents are encouraged to become acquainted with their children's catechists. The success of the Faith Formation Program depends on the *cooperative* effort of parents, students, and catechists.

As a way to involve parents, we ask **all** parents to participate in their child's Faith Formation session. Catechists will have sign-up sheets available for parents to come into the class to read the week's Gospel. We will also send home family faith sharing activities and service opportunities in your child's take-home folder. Please look for these resources.

In addition, opportunities for family activities are scheduled during the year. Please check the bulletin or take-home folder for information.

## **CATECHISTS:**

Our Catechists are confirmed parishioners who come forward to share their faith with our students. Their reward comes from the goodness of their hearts. They are excellent examples as stewards of their time and talents to our community. Our volunteer catechists deserve our continuous support and encouragement!

At the same time, Catechists are encouraged to participate in training offered by the parish and the Archdiocese in a continual effort to enrich their personal faith life and our Faith Formation Program. A steady growth of the parish and frequent transfer of parishioners leave us with a continuous need for additional catechists; please consider volunteering to be a Catechist by contacting the Faith Formation Office.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

All children are expected to be consistent in attending CFF. Attendance is taken and recorded in the parish office. Kindergarten attendance is not recorded.

Children should be in their rooms five minutes prior to, but not earlier than ten minutes before class. Habitual tardiness is a disservice to the catechists and other children. **Parents must accompany their child to the classroom door and make sure the catechist is aware your child is there. Students cannot be dropped off in the parking lots, driveways, or in the hallways.**

After three *consecutive* absences, a phone call will be made to the parent to inquire about continued involvement in the program. If involvement in the program will not continue, we can then place a child from the waiting list. If, after four *consecutive* absences there is no response from the parent, it will be assumed that the child will not return to the program. However, a child will *not* be removed from the attendance rolls until contact is made with the parent. No refund will be issued, as the textbook and necessary supplies have already been purchased.

## **FOR THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN**

**Parents may not remain in the hallway of the PAC during FF. All adults who are in contact with our children must be VIRTUS trained.**

**Parents are invited to:**

- Get involved in your child's session. (VIRTUS is required of adults volunteering with children)
- Outdoor benches and prayer garden areas can be used.
- Occasionally, the Family Center will be opened for the parents to help with special projects. Children **will not be allowed** to run and play in the Family Center during these times. If these rules are not followed you will be asked to wait elsewhere.
- Please remember the Adoration Chapel is open until 7 PM on Tuesdays. Keep in mind, this is a time of quiet individual prayer and not conducive for young children.
- *No one is allowed on the Child's Play playground equipment.*

Fire Exits and emergency routes are clearly marked by a map in each of the classrooms and in the hallways. Please make note of the signage. The catechists will be trained at the workshop in the fall for evacuations in case of an emergency.

**CLASS CANCELLATION:**

In case of inclement weather, our sessions will follow the same procedure as Katy ISD; i.e.: if Katy ISD is closed due to bad weather, Epiphany Faith Formation sessions will be cancelled. At times, the FF schedule may need to be altered to accommodate previously unplanned events such as a parish mission. We appreciate your understanding if unforeseen schedule changes take place. Check our website: [www.epiphanycatholic.org](http://www.epiphanycatholic.org) for cancellations.

**CONDUCT:**

We believe that it is important to help the children understand what it means to be a part of a Catholic Christian Community. We expect the children to be respectful in words and actions to one another as well as to their catechists and other adults. Our goal in enforcing good conduct is to be respectful and considerate of each person in our program; both adults and children.

The children will be told what sort of behavior is expected during the session time. Should a child exhibit inappropriate behavior, they will be given a warning, respectfully, from the catechist or co-catechist. If the child continues to exhibit inappropriate behavior following three warnings, the child will be taken to the CFF office. The on-site coordinator will help them name the behavior and the child will be given quiet time away from the class.

When a child is sent to the office, a brief form with the child's name and an explanation of the incident will be filled out by the coordinator and kept on file. After a child is sent to the office the second time, the parent is notified by the coordinator, and a positive approach to solving the problem is discussed with the parent.

When a child is engaged in fighting or destructive behavior, the parent will be notified at the first offense.

### **DISMISSAL:**

*The parking lot is an extremely active place and is **dangerous** at arrival and departure times. In order to ensure the safety of the children, we have developed a **TRAFFIC FLOW** procedure. This Traffic Flow has been designed with the best interests and safety of all children in mind.*

**Your cooperation in this matter is imperative.**

### **METHOD OF RELEASE**

**Parents are required to fill out a Method of Release and Emergency Contact Form (provided on the first session day) .** This form will provide the catechist with pertinent information. Include on this form *current* cell phone number, home phone, emergency phone numbers, and name of someone other than a parent who may pick up your child (including an older student who will be meeting a younger sibling at their classroom). These forms will be kept in the catechists' folder and copies of these forms will be kept in the Faith Formation office for the entire year.

**All elementary grade children (K-Grade 5) must be walked to their classrooms. Elementary aged children are not allowed outside the buildings or to wander the church premises without an adult.**

**A child's safety is ultimately the responsibility of the parent.**

### **FOOD POLICY:**

In keeping with our parish policy, there will be **no food in the classrooms**. This policy takes into consideration: keeping the classroom clean; the time of day faith formation is offered; the increasing number of children sensitive to sugar and those allergic to nuts, food additives, etc. We encourage parents to give their child/children a snack prior to arriving at Faith Formation sessions.

If you have any concerns or questions about our Food Policy, please call our Faith Formation office to discuss.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY:**

Cell phones and other electronic devices are a distraction during class. These devices should be left at home. Adults, including catechists, are asked to turn off all electronic devices during sessions or large group events. Faith Formation Catechists may hold all devices until the end of class if a youth is found using such a device.

**CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Our religious education program welcomes children with special needs. With the parents' guidance and request, children will be individually considered as to the best way to educate the child about God and our faith. If your child has special needs for religious education, please call the FF office to discuss what is best for your child. *A Place for All* is offered on Sunday afternoons from 3:30-5:00 P. M. You may read about this program on our website at [www.epiphanycatholic.org](http://www.epiphanycatholic.org) under the Faith Formation Tab/Elementary/A Place for ALL.

**HOME-BASED FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM:**

A home-based faith formation program is available for children Pre-K-5th grade who are not enrolled in the regular weekly FF program. Contact the Faith Formation office for information.

**CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:**

Another faith formation opportunity for children in grades 1-5 is Children's Liturgy of the Word. It takes place on selected Sundays during the 9:45 A.M. and 11:30 A.M. Masses. See the bulletin for the CLW schedule.

Children are dismissed from the Sunday Mass prior to the Scripture readings and the readings are proclaimed to them from a children's lectionary. A homily/

reflection is given to help them understand the readings on their level. Following the Prayers to the Faithful, they re-enter the church and continue the community celebration of the Eucharist with their parents. All children in grades 1-5 are invited. No advance registration is necessary.

Children's Liturgy of the Word is not celebrated on a fifth Sunday of the month.

**WEBSITE:**

Please refer to our website: [www.epiphanycatholic.org](http://www.epiphanycatholic.org) for all pertinent information. Contact the Faith Formation Office by calling 281-578-8271.



**Sacred and Safe:** *(Please note: Sacred and Safe is presently being transformed into “Circle of Grace.” This new program will replace Sacred and Safe as this year progresses.)*

In compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Cardinal DiNardo is directing that every parish in the Archdiocese implement Sacred & Safe, a program which provides faith-based safe environment lessons for children and youth in Kindergarten through the 12th grade. An annual program will involve an ongoing endeavor to provide one grade-specific lesson each year to help children and youth develop the skills to protect themselves from sexual abuse. These complete lesson plans for grades K-12 are located on the Archdiocesan Website at <http://www.archgh.org/sacredandsafe/>.

An essential parent component will complement the grade-specific lessons. During the Elementary Open House, a parent meeting will be held in the Family Center to explain this program to the parents of students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. At this time, the parents will have the option to decide if their child/children will be present for the lesson. The lesson will be presented to the children during a FF session. (Note: Open House and age specific Sacred and Safe lesson on listed on the Faith Formation Calendar). The lesson will be conducted by one of the on-site coordinators for Elementary FF using the lesson plans provided by the Sacred and Safe Program. These lessons will be presented to each grade level at one time. (For example: all Kindergarten classes will be given the lesson using a double classroom; all 1st graders will be in the Family Center, etc.) **Catechists are required to remain with the students during the Sacred and Safe presentation and parents are welcome to attend.**