

St. STEPHEN'S Faith Formation



Policies, Procedures & Practices

2010-2011

Mission Statement

The Faith Formation program of St. Stephen Parish seeks to provide youth and children with the knowledge, experience, and skills necessary to walk with, learn from, and participate in the mission of Jesus, within a community of disciples. In keeping with their age, they will assume responsibility as vital members of the parish to proclaim God's reign of love by living, sharing, enjoying and nurturing their faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement.....	2
Welcome.....	3
Program Components & Schedules for Grades.....	4
• Goals.....	4
• Program overview.....	4
Sacramental Preparation.....	5
• First Communion.....	5
• First Reconciliation.....	5
Parents' Role.....	6
Student's Role.....	7
Attendance Policy.....	7 & 8
• Attendance.....	7
• Discipline.....	7
Emergency/ Safety Procedures.....	9
• Phone or change address.....	9
• Medical emergency.....	9
• Child abuse.....	9
• Harassment in general.....	9
• Sexual harassment.....	10
• Custody arrangements.....	10
• Privacy statement.....	10
• Field trips.....	10
• Photo release.....	10
Summary of Disaster Plan	10 & 11
Map of the Area	12

Welcome

Dear Parents and Students:

I hope this policy handbook will provide you with useful information about the catechetical ministry for 1-8th grades at St. Stephen's. I would ask you to read and discuss this handbook with your family, and keep a copy of it handy to refer to as needed. Please feel free to address any questions to me. I will be happy to explain or clarify anything.

Yours in faith,

Thu-Ha Rae

Director, Faith Formation

1-8th Grades Faith Formation

Faith Formation 1-8th Grades:

Thu-Ha Rae 415-681-2444 ext.27
thu-ha@saintstephensf.org

Faith Formation Program:

St. Stephen Parish
451 Eucalyptus Drive
San Francisco, CA 94132
415-681-2444. Fax 415-681-7843

Program Components & Schedules for Grades 1-8th

GOALS

The goals of the Faith Formation Program at St. Stephen's are:

- Ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ
- Full participation in the life of the Catholic Church
- To foster community among the students, their families and the parish community.

Program Overview

- Weekly classes are held on Monday afternoon.

Grades 1-8: 4:00-5:15 p.m.

Grade Level Concepts

Grade 1 Jesus; a foundation year before 1st Communion

Grade 2 Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist

Grade 3 Church and Community

Grade 4 The Beatitudes and the Commandments

Grade 5 The Sacraments

Grades 6th, 7th, and 8th

- Content – Old Testament, Jesus, Saints, the Church, Sacraments, Church Year, Catholic values, Nicene Creed, Liturgy planning, and involvement in the life of the parish.
- Worship: Seasonal opportunities to learn and celebrate Eucharistic Liturgies are provided along with prayer services, penance services, and the development of an understanding of liturgical ministries.

- Service: Students identify and reach out to those in need both globally and locally with areas of concern emphasizing hunger, homelessness, refugees, violence, and prejudice.
- Community building includes parent-youth nights, fun nights, and seasonal activities.

Sacramental Preparation

Preparation is a two-year process beginning in the first grade. If your child is beyond first grade and would like to prepare to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, please make arrangements with Thu-Ha Rae.

As part of this preparation, families are required to attend Mass at St. Stephen's church on a regular basis. Parents are expected to participate in their child's education by teaching them certain prayers and stories about the life of Jesus. Children should know these prayers: the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Children's Creed, and an Act of Sorrow.

Clothes for First Communion are:

Boys: Long sleeved white shirt and a long white tie. Dark slacks, socks and dress shoes. Jackets may **not** be worn during the ceremony. If you have trouble locating a long white tie, check with Kaufer's Religious Supplies at 1455 Custer Ave, San Francisco, or with McCoy Church Goods Co. Inc. at 1010 Howard Ave. San Mateo.

Girls: White dress, socks or tights, and shoes. Veils may be worn. Sometimes girls have worn flowers in their hair. Gloves, purses, etc. may **not** be worn during the ceremony.

Pictures:

Formal pictures are usually taken the week before First Holy Communion. Dates and times will be scheduled. Sometimes we also have videos available.

First Reconciliation

Children are prepared to celebrate this sacrament **before** they receive their First Communion.

Confirmation

Preparation for Confirmation is a **three-year program**, grades 6, 7 and 8, for students attending public school. Students who are attending Catholic school and receiving religious instruction on a daily basis may receive the sacrament of Confirmation after attending the Religious Education program for one year (eighth grade).

As part of this preparation, families are required to attend Mass at St. Stephen's church on a regular basis. Those preparing for Confirmation will be expected to do community service, write papers on the saint they have chosen and on church history.

Regular attendance on Monday afternoons is very important. One class builds on another over the three-year period. **Missed sessions can result in delaying receiving the sacrament until the ninth grade.**

Dress code for Confirmation:

Boys: dark slacks, long sleeved white shirt, tie and sweater or jacket and dress shoes. Suits are acceptable, but since this is a growth period for our young people you may choose not to do this.

Girls wear dresses, long or a length that respects modest decorum (mini skirts are not accepted). Care should be taken that the dress has a conservative top. Spaghetti straps for this occasion are not appropriate, so a simple jacket may be necessary. Shoes should be chosen for ease of walking. Makeup and accessories should demonstrate good taste.

Roles

Parents'

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

- Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your family. The Sunday mass schedule at St. Stephen's is as follows:

Saturday 4:30 p.m.

Sunday 8:00 a.m.

9:30 a.m. (family mass)

11:30 a.m.

6:45 p.m.

- Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- Share your faith and what it means with your children.
- Pray with your children and help them learn the traditional prayers of the Church.
- Attend all parent meetings.
- Familiarize yourself with scheduled catechetical sessions and events for children/youth.
- Read and act promptly on all communications from the Faith Formation Office.
- Assure your child's punctual and regular attendance at all sessions.

Student's Role

Children have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the catechetical sessions at St. Stephen's Faith Formation program. 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 work assignments.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures, and discipline policies.
- Share what they have learned and experienced in their catechetical sessions with their parents and families.

Attendance Policy

Absences are to be reported **before** class begins by calling the Faith Formation office at 681-2444 ext.27 or email me at thu-ha@saintstephensf.org . If a child is absent and the absence has not been reported prior to class, the parents will be called to alert them that their child is missing.

After three unexcused absences the student will be dropped from the class roster. Students preparing for the sacrament will be required to make up work missed during absences.

Discipline Policy

Appropriate behavior and common courtesy are presumed and expected at every grade level. Persistent behavior problems will result in the following responses:

1st discipline - Reprimand by teacher.

2nd discipline - Teacher sends child into office for discussion and warning from

Coordinator.

3rd discipline - Teacher sends child to Coordinator and parent will be called for conference.

Dear Parent / Guardian:

The following is the St. Stephen Parish Faith Formation Program Discipline Policy as it pertains to Junior High Students. Please read it carefully with your child, sign & have your child sign the yellow copy and return it to Thu-Ha Rae at the Faith Formation office. All signed policies are **DUE** no later than:

The second class on Monday, Oct. 4, 2010

Class rules are discussed during the first session. The children are usually very respectful but occasionally a problem will arise. Because of this we have a "3 chance" policy regarding misbehavior and class disruption. The chances are applied as follows:

1st discipline - Reprimand by teacher.

2nd discipline - Teacher sends child into office for discussion and warning from Coordinator.

3rd discipline - Teacher sends child to Coordinator and parent will be called for conference.

At the Junior High level, especially as this is preparation time for the sacrament of Confirmation, students are expected to model mature behavior and respect for clergy, staff, teachers and fellow students at all times. Disrespect, misbehavior and class disruption will not be tolerated and in the eight grades, violations may be grounds for re-evaluating a candidate's readiness for the sacrament of Confirmation. If such a situation arises a conference will be arranged between the Pastor, Coordinator, Parent / Guardians and Student to discuss appropriate action.

We have read and we understand the discipline policy for St. Stephen Faith Formation Program.

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Name (please Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Emergency/Safety Procedures

The safety of the students and catechetical staff are of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well being of both students and staff members. In case of emergency/natural disaster the Emergency Procedure Plan will be followed. Fire and earthquake drills are conducted regularly.

In the event of an emergency/natural disaster, catechists and coordinators will remain with the children until either a parent or designated person picks the child up. A checkout system will be provided for parents/guardians to sign out their children.

- A. **PHONE OR ADDRESS CHANGE:** Please notify the Faith Formation office with any change of address or phone number so that emergency cards can be updated.
- B. **MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT/SUDDEN ILLNESS:** In the case of accident or sudden illness, the catechists, coordinator, or a delegate will give appropriate immediate care and notify the parents/guardians. **Emergency cards should be on file**
- C. **CHILD ABUSE:** As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.
- D. **HARASSMENT IN GENERAL:** Catholic teaching and practice affirm the Christian dignity of every person. Harassment is unacceptable conduct that is severe, pervasive, and deliberate. Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment in a ministry environment which is hostile, offensive, or intimidating because of the individual's race, religion, creed, color, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, or sex. Harassment of a youth/adolescent by any other youth/adolescent is prohibited and will not be tolerated. It is the policy of the Archdiocese to provide a ministry environment in which all youths/adolescents are treated with respect and dignity.
- E. **SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual

nature. Examples include, verbal, written, physical, and visual. None will be tolerated.

F. **CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS:** The catechetical staff wishes to cooperate with special custody arrangements of families to the best of their ability.

G. **PRIVACY STATEMENT:** When you register with our catechetical program, your family will be added to the catechetical database. The office of Faith Formation 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.

Field Trips

Individual classes may plan field trips. Permission slips must be signed and returned by each child, and parents volunteering to drive must have adequate insurance as specified by Archdiocesan policy.

Photo Release

We occasionally take pictures of our activities. These photos may be featured in the vestibule of the church or in a bulletin. We are required by law to have your permission to display any photos of your child.

Summary of Disaster Plan

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that there is a 50-50 chance that a great quake will strike California in the next 30 years. The events of September 11, 2001 have created a heightened awareness that we need to be prepared. In case of any disaster, the following plans will be put into effect.

When the quake strikes:

- Get under your table or desk.
- Stand in a strong doorway
- If possible, shield your head with a coat.
- Stay away from windows, mirrors or any glass that might shatter
- Note: for safety, our bookcases have been bolted to the walls.

Evacuation:

Students will evacuate the building with their teacher, walking, and not running and remain with their teacher.

Pick-up site

When teachers determine that it is safe, we will gather in the schoolyard near the Parish Center. Parents will be able to pick their children up at that gate only. In other words, parents should drive into the Stonestown parking lot and park near the Parish Center.

Children/youths will be released only to a person listed on the emergency form. That designated person must be able to show an ID and sign that they have picked up the child/youth.

Should it be necessary to evacuate the premises during a major disaster there is no pre-designated mass casualty care facility. Notification regarding all of these matters will be via the Emergency Broadcasting System.

Supplies

We will maintain a supply of water and snacks in the Parish Center. Supplies will also include flashlights, a battery operated radio and an additional copy of the emergency forms.

Map of the Area

