

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
CHRISTIAN FORMATION PROGRAM
ST. ANTHONY THE HERMIT CATHOLIC CHURCH
2011 - 2012**

Philosophy/Mission Statement

As a Catholic parish that is part of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, St. Anthony is committed to providing a Christian Formation program solidly based on the doctrines and principles of our Catholic Faith, and presented through regularly planned classes held throughout the year. The goals are to help the students grow in their spirituality, develop a Christian value system, and achieve a deeper understanding and appreciation for their Catholic faith, with the hope and belief that they will actively practice that faith, and live a life rooted in Christ and His Church.

Parental Responsibility and Involvement

As parents, you are the primary providers to your children, not only in meeting their physical and emotional needs, but also in nourishing their spiritual ones. At their baptism, you promised to raise your children in the Catholic faith. The Christian Formation program is designed to support, nurture and deepen the faith that you as parents are already teaching and modeling for your children at home. We ask that you do not take this responsibility lightly, and to prayerfully reflect on how well you are living out these duties and making faith formation a priority in your family life.

It's important for you as parents to know what lessons your children are learning and to reinforce them at home. For grades 1 through 8, as each chapter in the textbook is completed in class, the pages will be removed and sent home with your child. High school students are expected to bring their textbook to and from class. As parents, you are encouraged to review the chapter information, and to follow up with some questions or a short discussion with your children as to what they learned in class, no matter what grade they are in. Doing so will be very beneficial for both of you.

Admission Policies

Participation in the Christian Formation program is open to age-appropriate students of any family who is a registered and active member of the parish. St. Anthony Parish does not discriminate on admission of students based on race, color, handicap, sex, national origin or ancestry.

Program Policies

1. Registration

- Registration for the upcoming year of Christian Formation starts in June and continues through July 15th.
- Reminder cards about registration are mailed out to all families who had children in last year's program, and who have children going into the first grade in the fall.
- Registration forms can be downloaded from the parish website or picked up during regular office hours in the parish office.
- All registrations are due on or before July 15th. This includes:
 - Completed Registration Form
 - Completed Pledge and Volunteer Form
 - Signed Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form (found at the end of this document)
 - Minimum payment of \$25 for each student at the time of registration.

- There will be an additional \$25 fee imposed for late registrations (received after July 15th). This is to cover the extra administrative costs and time required to process late registrations after the planning and implementation process for the upcoming year has already begun.
- No registrations will be accepted from current parish families after Friday, August 19th 2011. This is the final registration date.
NOTE: The late fee and final registration date do not apply to new families who join the parish after the registration deadline has passed and want to enroll their children in the Christian Formation program.

2. Parental Pledge/Volunteer Form

- As a condition of enrollment, parents must read through and sign the Parental Pledge and Volunteer Form. This requires:
 - Maintaining parish membership and a commitment of time, talent and treasure
 - Providing a Christian home environment
 - Meeting program financial responsibilities
 - Committing to six volunteer hours in support of any parish activity throughout the year

3. Parent/Student Handbook and Acknowledgement Form

- The intent and goals of this document are to more clearly define, in written form, the details of the program, and the responsibilities, expectations, and guidelines for you as parents and your students who are participating in the program.
 - One or both parents, or legal guardian, must sign and return the separate “Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form” indicating you have read and understand the handbook’s contents, and pledging that you and your student(s) will follow its content to the best of your ability.
 - As stated above, this signed form must be turned in at the time of registration.

4. Tuition and Fees

- Grades 1 through 8 tuition: \$100
- Sacramental fees (Reconciliation and Eucharist): \$50
- Grades 9, 10 and 11 tuition: \$100
- Confirmation fee: \$150 (covers weekend retreat and textbook specific to Confirmation preparation)
- Home Schooling for Grades 1 through 8: \$25
- A minimum payment of \$25 for each student for all programs is required at the time of registration
- If not paid in full at the time of registration, remaining tuition and fee payments can be made per the following schedule:
 - Two payment plan (September, January)
 - Four payment plan (September, November, January, March)
 - SCRIP credit accrued from the previous year (June 1st – May 31st) is also accepted towards payment
- A family discount is available to all families who have 3 or more children enrolled in the program. The maximum tuition fee with this discount is \$250. Please note:
 - This discount only applies to tuition, and not to additional program fees
 - This discount is not automatic; if you qualify, you need to check the appropriate box on the registration form indicating that you want the discount

5. Financial Assistance

- Financial assistance to pay tuition and fees is available from the St. Anthony Parish Endowment Fund in either the form of a grant or a no-interest loan. Applications are available in the parish office. Funds available for each year are limited, so it's recommended that applications be made at the time of class registration. A family's financial information as disclosed on the form is seen only by the Pastor and is kept strictly confidential. He reviews the application information and meets with the family to make a determination about fund dispersal.

6. JPR Scholarship

- The JPR Scholarship program is a parish program that awards money to deserving students to help pay for a Catholic high school education. All 8th graders of the parish are eligible. Information about this program and the application process is published in the parish bulletin starting in the month of January. A parish selection committee reviews the application and recommendation information, and interviews the candidates. The award is made based on the program's guidelines and the student who best meets specific requirements. The scholarship recipient is announced at the end of the school year.
- Interested 8th grade Christian Formation students are to contact the Director of Faith Formation for an application or more information about the requirements, application information and timeline.

7. Class Schedule and Attendance

- Classes for grades 1 through 8 meet twice a month on Sunday mornings from September through May, with one additional Sunday class to cover the 21 chapters in the textbook. There are also two evening sessions (one during Advent and during Lent) for both students and parents.
- Classes for grades 9, 10 and 11 meet twice a month on Sundays from September into early April. Time and place are set according to the availability of classroom space and/or by the Catechist and individual class members.
- The class schedule is reviewed and set for each year, based on the number of classes needed to cover all the material, and not to conflict with major holidays.
- Each year a magnetic schedule card (for posting on your refrigerator) is made up listing the day and time for each session of class. These cards are mailed out before the start of classes and are also available in the parish office.
- Regular attendance is expected on the part of all students. After the third absence, the Director of Faith Formation will contact a child's parents or guardian informing them of the three absences and inquire about issues that are preventing regular attendance.

8. Reporting Absences

- Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class and records are maintained for each student, per archdiocesan requirements. **IMPORTANT: If your child is or will be absent on a particular day, it's expected that one of the parents or guardian call the absentee line (262-251-5910 x39) and report the absence either before the class, the day of class, or within two days after the class. Please leave the following information:**
 - Child's name
 - Grade level
 - Date of absence
 - Reason for absence

- Interest in making up the work at home. If so, please leave a call back number for making arrangements to pick up the material either from the Christian Formation Office or from your child's Catechist.

9. Making Up Missed Work Due to Absence

- For grades 1 through 8, parents are encouraged to pick up the chapter pages from their child's Catechist for any missed classes and go through the material at home. The recommended time to do this is the class prior to a known missed class, or the next class after the missed class.
- For grades 9, 10 and 11, students are required to read the chapter material for any missed classes on their own, and to write 1 or 2 paragraphs summarizing what they learned and/or how they can apply it to their lives. Students must submit these written reports to their Catechist at the next class they attend.

10. Tardiness

- Parents and children are expected to plan accordingly in order for students to arrive for class on time. All classes start with prayer, and it's especially disruptive to have a student walk in during that important time, but walking in late at any time is distracting for the Catechist and the rest of the class. Additionally, the student has missed out on the material already presented.
- After the third tardy, Catechists have been instructed to notify the Director of Faith Formation who will then contact the parents asking that the situation be remedied.

11. Leaving Early

- If a child needs to leave class early, the child must present a note from his or her parents or guardian to the Catechist at the start of class stating when and why the child is leaving early. To ensure safety, the parent or guardian must come to the child's classroom for pickup. The Catechist cannot dismiss children or let them leave on their own.

12. Class Cancellation

- In the event of inclement weather, WISN TV (channel 12) will be notified to announce the cancellation of RE classes for a particular day.
- If other circumstances force the cancellation of any one class or all classes for any class day, parents will be notified with as much advance warning as possible. Be advised that some unforeseen events may cancel classes without allowing sufficient time for notification. In such an event, children will not be left unattended, and parents will be called for pick-up.

13. Class Locations

- For the 1st through 8th grade Christian Formation programs, classes are held in the day school or the CFC building. High school classes may be held in the school, CFC, parish administration office, or the home of the Catechist.

14. Class Area Accessibility

- On-site classroom facilities will be open 10 minutes prior to the start of class. Students should not arrive for class earlier than 10 minutes. It's expected that parents or guardians will pick up students within 10 minutes after class ends. Any exceptions to this must be prearranged with the Director of Faith Formation and the child's Catechist. Children cannot be dropped off or left alone when the buildings are closed and no adult supervision is present.

15. Electronic Devices

- The use of electronic devices, such as cell phones (calls, texting, taking photos, etc.), iPods, Blackberries, etc., are not allowed during class time. After the first offense, the child will be warned. After the second offense, the device will be confiscated until the end of class. After the third offense, the device will be taken away and not be returned until the student's parent calls the Catechist or Director of Faith Formation and informs them that their child has been appropriately instructed not to use the device during class. Further offenses may result in a student's expulsion from the program.

16. Curriculum

- Grade School (1–8)
 - Call to Faith series from Our Sunday Visitor Publishers
 - Revelation
 - Trinity
 - Jesus Christ
 - The Church
 - Morality
 - Sacraments
 - Kingdom of God
 - Liturgical Year
 - Catholic Social Teachings
 - Catholic Source Book: Scripture, Creed, Liturgy, Morality, Prayer, Words of Faith Glossary
- High School (9–11)
 - All three grades use 'The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth' from St. Mary's Press Publishers. This textbook parallels the 'Four Pillars' of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and is used throughout the high school program.
 - Grade 9 focuses on 'The Creed,' along with an introduction to the 'Liturgy and Sacraments.'
 - Grade 10 covers each Sacrament in greater depth and all aspects of 'Christian Morality.'
 - Grade 11 first presents the different kinds of 'Christian Prayer,' and then concentrates on preparing for Confirmation using the text 'Receiving the Gift of the Spirit' from Pflaum Publishers.
- Safe Environment lesson
 - In every catechetical year, per Archdiocesan requirements, a safe environment lesson is presented. Students are taught how to keep themselves safe in various situations and made aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors with the intent to prevent child sexual abuse. The Catechists use age-appropriate information as provided by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
- Meeting Archdiocesan expectations
 - The Archdiocese of Milwaukee provides recommended levels of faith formation and understanding for grades 1 through 8 as defined by the following categories:
 - Life Experiences
 - Historical/Creedal/Church
 - Liturgy/Sacrament/Prayer
 - Moral Life
 - Scripture
 - Grade school Catechists are given copies of this information and instructed to present, emphasize, and supplement as needed, the aspects of our curriculum that support the Archdiocesan recommendations.

- Service Hours and Activities
 - For grades 1-8, each year there will be one or two organized service activities that are suitable for children of this age, such as making greeting cards for various groups, as was done last year. These will be planned and started as part of regular classes.
 - For grades 9 and 10, each student will be required to perform a minimum of 10 service hours throughout the year. Any activity that supports either the parish or greater community will be accepted. These could be done as individuals, groups of 2 or more students, or as a whole class with direction and supervision by the Catechist. Additionally, each student must write a reflection about one or more of their service activities. Service record forms, suggested activities, and questions for the written reflection are available under the Christian Formation link on the parish website: www.stanthony-parish.org.
 - For grade 11/Confirmation service requirements, please see section 18 below.

17. Safe Environment Training

- All Christian Formation staff, adult Catechists and Aides, and parent/adult volunteers who have regular contact with children must meet the requirements of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops 'Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People':
 - Attend a 'Safeguarding All of God's Family' safe environment and sexual-abuse awareness training program as sponsored by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee
 - Sign an acknowledgement form that they have read and understand the Archdiocesan 'Code of Ethical Standards for Church Leaders'
 - Sign a release form allowing for a criminal background check before they are allowed to work or help out in the program
 - Receive and read through the quarterly 'Safeguarding All of God's Family' newsletter published by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

18. Sacramental Program

- The Christian Formation program includes preparation and reception of three sacraments each year: 1st Reconciliation, 1st Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Reconciliation and Eucharist are normally received in 2nd grade, but older children (typically in 3rd or 4th grade) who have not yet received are invited to participate as well. Preparation for these sacraments is separate from the regular religious education classes. There is a parental instructional session for each sacrament, with the teaching and preparation for the sacraments done at home between parent and child. Reconciliation is celebrated in early January, and Eucharist is held on a Sunday in May.
- Confirmation is offered for juniors in high school and is celebrated in April or May. Grade 11 religious education classes are geared toward this sacrament. In addition to attending classes, there are other requirements:
 - Selecting a Sponsor and attending a Candidate/Sponsor preparation session
 - Attending a weekend retreat
 - Performing a minimum of 5 parish and 5 community service hours
 - Participating in a 15-minute interview with the Pastor
 - Writing a letter to the Bishop
 - Attending a Confirmation Candidate/Sponsor/Parent reflection session
 - Attending Confirmation rehearsal prior to celebration of the sacrament
 - Attending the Confirmation Mass/Rite
- Juniors who attend a local Catholic high school and want to be confirmed must enroll in the parish Christian Formation grade 11/Confirmation program. Catholic high schools do not offer Confirmation-specific preparation as part of their religious education curriculum

because the Archbishop wants Confirmation done through the parishes with participation by the Candidates from both public and Catholic high schools.

- Juniors who attended public school for grades 9 & 10, and have not been enrolled in the Christian Formation program for one or both of these years, and want to be confirmed, must meet with the Pastor and Director of Faith Formation to discuss their level of faith formation/understanding and arrange a monitored, self-taught program for making up the missed work.
- Students who have not yet received these sacraments, and who fall outside these age groups, are encouraged to enroll in RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) or RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children). There is an active RCIA/RCIC program here at St. Anthony, and those interested should contact the Pastor for more information.

19. USCCB approval of Catechetical textbooks

- The catechetical textbooks used for grades 1-11 have been found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism. These texts have also been given the 'Nihil Obstat' and 'Imprimatur' – official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of Catholic doctrinal or moral error.

20. Special Needs

- As part of the registration process, parents are asked to identify any special learning or physical needs of their child in order for the Christian Formation staff and Catechists to accommodate these needs as appropriate. This information is kept confidential between Administration Staff and the child's Catechist.
- Special provisions may be needed for children with attention-deficit or learning disabilities. If a parent or Catechist initiates a concern about a child, a consultation with the parent(s), and appropriate members of the Catechetical Staff will be scheduled to discuss strategies and plans, and make recommendations that best meet the student's needs.

21. Confidential Family/Student Information

- Beyond the information stated above, Catechists have been instructed that if a student chooses to confide in them with personal information, with the intention of seeking their advice, the Catechist will respect their confidences EXCEPT in cases of life, health and safety. If a student tells a Catechist that he or she is going to harm him or herself, or others, Catechists are obligated by law to reveal that information, even if a promise of confidentiality was given prior to the information being revealed.

22. Behavioral Expectations and Discipline

- Because the Christian Formation program is a formal educational activity provided by the parish, it's expected that students exhibit appropriate classroom behavior and self-discipline. Basic to this is respecting the rights and property of Staff, Catechists, Aides, other volunteers and fellow students, as well as respecting the property where classes are held. Infractions will be handled as follows:
 - The Catechist will ask the student or students to stop the inappropriate behavior or confer individually with a student or students about a specific incident, with the possibility for disciplinary action or making amends.
 - If this proves unsuccessful, or depending upon the severity of the offense, the Catechist will ask the Director of Faith Formation to get involved.
 - The Director will talk to the offending student, and take appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action, asking for reparation to be made, or if need be,

- removing the student from the classroom and calling the student's parents for immediate pick-up.
- Repeated violations may result in a student's expulsion from the program.
 - Parents of an expelled student are entitled to an appeal, which will be made with the Pastor, Director of Faith Formation, and Catechist, if need be. The Pastor reserves the right to make the final decision in the appeal process.

23. Community Relations

- If there is a disagreement between the parents or guardian of a student enrolled in the parish religious education program and an employee or volunteer of the parish, a formal grievance procedure, as defined by Milwaukee Archdiocesan Policy #1312(a) and #1312(b), is to be followed if resolution cannot be achieved through an informal meeting. Step-by-step instructions for that procedure are available from the parish office.

24. Dress Code

- There is no set dress code for attending Christian Formation classes, but it's expected that students follow these general guidelines:
 - Clothes are to be clean and comfortable, and appropriate for the temperature and time of year
 - No T-shirts with words, slogans or pictures that a reasonable person would find offensive
 - Shirts and shoes are required at all times

25. Safety and Security

- Catechists have been instructed to follow the "Crisis Response Procedure Manual" that is available in each classroom of the School and classroom areas in the CFC and parish office.

26. Medical Emergencies

- Catechists have each been issued a basic First Aid kit, along with instructions for handling minor medical emergencies, such as bumps, bruises or small cuts.
- For the grade school classes held on Sunday morning, a nurse volunteer from the parish is available in the school health room.
- When a student is ill, or has a fever of 100° or higher, a parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student. Please do not send your student to class if they have a fever or are vomiting.
- For more serious injuries, EMS (Emergency Medical Services – 911) and parents will be notified as appropriate.

27. School Zone

- Gun Free
 - In furthering the protection of our students, the federal government's Gun Free School Zones Act of 1990 states that is unlawful for any individual to knowingly possess a firearm at a place that the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone. Whoever violates this law shall not be fined more than \$5000, imprisoned for not more than five (5) years, or both.
- Drug Free
 - To promote a healthier environment and conform to surrounding local school board policies, the use of drugs and/or drug products shall be prohibited during class hours in any of the buildings where Christian Formation classes are held. Exceptions are a student's inhaler for asthma and medication sent from home with a note from parents

- or guardian. Students themselves are responsible for taking their own medications. Catechists are not allowed to dispense any type of medication to students. With the length of class being only an hour and ten minutes for grade school, and an hour and a half for high school, students coming with medication from home should be the rare exception.
- Abuse/Neglect
 - The parish has the responsibility under law to report suspected abuse/neglect. The parish takes this responsibility very seriously.
 - Harassment
 - Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to what we hold true as part of our Catholic tradition. Because of this belief, it is vital that St. Anthony Parish maintains learning and working environments free of any form of harassment or intimidation towards individuals, including students. Harassment is defined as a single incident or a pattern of behaviors with the intent or effect of creating a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical or verbal behaviors which can include but are not limited to:
 - Threatening behavior
 - Racial insults
 - Derogatory ethnic slurs
 - Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
 - Sexual comments, jokes or gestures
 - Physical or mental abuse
 - If a child feels he/she has been subjected to harassment, they should contact any adult involved with the Christian Formation program who must immediately report this information to the Director of Faith Formation or the Pastor. An investigation will be conducted immediately. If the allegation is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken which could include but is not limited to:
 - Discussion with the offending child or adult
 - Discussion with the child and the parent/legal guardian
 - Written documentation of the incident
 - Disciplinary sanctions
 - Professional counseling
 - Referral to outside agencies
 - Probation or expulsion
 - Sexual harassment involves sexual contact or the apparent infliction of physical or emotional damage on the student. The appropriate authorities will be notified pursuant to Section 49.981 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

28. Visitation of Classrooms

- Parents are welcome to visit or sit in on any of their child's classes, but as a courtesy to the Catechist and other students, please arrange this prior to the start of class with your child's Catechist.

29. Catechists and other Volunteers

- Parent volunteers are a vital and important part of any Christian Formation program. There is always a need for Catechists, Aides, Substitutes, and other support people that help make for an effective and successful program. Training sessions and teaching materials are provided here at the parish for Catechists, and the Archdiocese offers other Catechetical training events throughout the year.
- The registration materials contain a Volunteer Form detailing the many opportunities that are available for you to serve your parish community. Please remember that a family is

expected to volunteer a minimum of 6 hours per year in support of parish groups and activities.

- As stated above in section 17, all adult volunteers that have contact with children must undergo training and meet the requirements of the “Safeguarding All of God’s Family” program.

30. Athletic Board Policies

- A separate policy has been written explaining player eligibility and class attendance requirements for 5th through 8th grade Christian Formation students who are interested in participating in sports programs sponsored by St. Anthony Parish throughout the school year. A printed copy of this policy is available at the time of registration and is also available on the parish website.
- Other policies specific to St. Anthony sports programs are available and distributed by the Athletic Board.

31. Home Schooling

- Home Schooling for grades 1 through 8 for the entire year is an option. The registration process still needs to be followed. To ensure proper follow-through and accountability for home schooling, sign-off sheets, chapter activity sheets and unit tests will be used and collected on a periodic basis to verify that the work is being done. This is to satisfy archdiocesan requirements for providing accountability on a parish’s religious education programs.
- Home Schooling fees are set to cover the cost of the textbook, separate handout materials, and a small administration fee.

32. Communication

- Keeping the lines of communication open is good and healthy for all involved in the program. Ongoing routine information regarding various aspects of the program as it unfolds will normally be communicated from the Christian Formation Office to families in the form of a written letter. Emails and phone calls will also be used to address more individual concerns or communications.
- Parent contact information must be provided on the registration form. Please notify the Christian Formation Office immediately of any changes in your home, work and cell phone numbers, and home and email addresses. Beyond the usual communications, we must be able to reach a parent or responsible adult in case of an injury, illness or emergency.
- In keeping with the Church’s principle of subsidiarity, problems should be resolved at the lowest level whenever possible. For example, if a parent has a classroom concern, he or she should first contact the Catechist. Of course, depending on the nature of the issue, the Director of Faith Formation could be contacted as well and made part of the discussion. The Director may involve the Pastor if the situation warrants it.
- Parents are welcome to contact the Director of Faith Formation at any time by phone, email, or drop-in visit with comments, questions or concerns regarding any part of the program, whether it has to do with format and content, fees, suggestions for improvements, problem issues, or even expressing likes and dislikes about a particular aspect of the program. We need to know what’s working and what isn’t.
- Many organizations within the parish request that the Christian Formation Office distribute or email flyers to help communicate information about their events and activities. Parents should expect to receive various emails throughout the year or for their children to bring home printed materials that are distributed in class.

Off-Site Activities

The Confirmation retreat, service programs to meet service-hour requirements, or any special project or field trip that are held off-site will require parent permission forms. The details of such trips will be described on the form and distributed to students prior to the trip or activity. These forms must be signed by a parent or legal guardian and returned before a student is allowed to participate in the event.

Faith Formation Committee

The Faith Formation Committee is a parish advisory board to the Director of Faith Formation. The Committee's purpose is to help the Director develop and set program policies, assess and make ongoing improvements to the program to keep it effective and of high quality, and to ensure compliance with Archdiocesan requirements and expectations.

Right to Amend

The Director of Faith Formation retains the right to amend the information contained in this handbook, and parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

2011-2012 Parent/Student Handbook revision date: June 2nd, 2011

Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

As a parent, or legal guardian, with one or more children enrolled in the St. Anthony Christian Formation program, I have read and understand the contents of the 2011 – 2012 Parent/Student Handbook for St. Anthony Parish. My children and I pledge to follow the guidelines, responsibilities and expectations of the handbook to the best of our ability. If at anytime I have questions or concerns, I am to contact the Director of Faith Formation.

Name(s) of child(ren) enrolled in the Christian Formation Program:

To be signed by one or both Parents or Legal Guardian:

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

**Please submit this completed acknowledgement
form to John Hying or Carole McGibany at
the Parish Office**