

Registration Form for Faith Formation Program
Office of Religious Education
Our Lady Help of Christians
Resurrection R.C. Church
St Josaphat
716-458-3130

CLASS TIME: Grades 2-Confirmation meet on Saturdays, from 9:30 am-10:30 am at the Faith Formation school building on the Our Lady Help of Christians campus.

TUITION: \$50 per family.

NEW STUDENTS: Any student NOT baptized at Our Lady Help of Christians, Resurrection, or St Josaphat Church must attach a Baptismal Certificate (no copies).

FAMILY NAME & INFORMATION

Last name of Family _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Zip Code _____

Phone number _____

Are you a registered member of one of the three Churches? _____yes _____no

Please list which Church _____

Father's Name _____

Mother's Name _____

If there is an emergency and we cannot reach you, whom should we call?

Name _____ Phone number _____

AGREEMENT

I, _____ the undersigned, understand and agree, on behalf of my family to abide by the guidelines contained in the Office of Religious Education for Our Lady Help of Christians, Resurrection and St Josaphat Guidelines. I am aware that in order for my children to receive First Penance, First Communion or Confirmation, I and my children must attend Mass each and every Sunday and all designated Holy Days of Obligation—which is the *minimal practice* of the Catholic Faith. Furthermore, I am aware that the solemn pledge I made at my child's Baptism obligates me before Almighty God to make sure that my child is attending Faith Formation classes each week. Faith Formation classes are *more important than sports or any other extracurricular activity*. I am aware that a failure to abide by this agreement will result in a delay in receiving the Sacraments, repetition of a grade level or withdrawing from the program.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

TUITION

\$50 _____ = \$ _____

PER FAMILY

TOTAL AMOUNT

TUITION MAY BE PAID FOR IN CASH OR CHECK. Make checks payable to Our Lady Help of Christians. In cases of financial hardship, please go directly to the Pastor. No child will be turned away for lack of funds.

PARISH GUIDELINES

FOR THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THOSE ENROLLED IN THE PARISH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM & FOR HOME-SCHOOLING STUDENTS PREPARING TO RECEIVE FIRST PENANCE, FIRST COMMUNION, OR CONFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION

OUR BASIC EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Faith Formation Program exist to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:20) of your children. By entrusting your children to the Faith Formation Program, you are asking us to assist you in the formation of your child in the Catholic Faith by:

- Teaching our students, the Catholic Faith as God revealed them to us through Christ (The Creed)
- Teaching us how we are to live and act (The Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church)
- How to worship God and grow in union with Him (The Mass and the Holy Sacraments)
- How to have a personal relationship with God and how to talk with Him (Prayer)

What we ask of the parents whose children are enrolled in our Parish program is to foster the Catholic Faith in their kids by:

1. Taking your child to Mass—the source and summit of our Christian life
2. Making sure your child knows how to go to Confession and taking your child to Confession regularly (at least monthly)
3. Help with knowing and memorizing their prayers—at least with the younger children, praying alongside with them until they can recite prayers on their own
4. Bringing your child to Faith Formation classes

THE NEED FOR GUIDELINES

The formation of our young people as disciples involves families whose children attend the local public schools, the area Catholic Schools, and those who home-school their children. We want everyone to be absolutely clear about what we need you as parents to be doing.

To clear any doubt or question about what needs to be done to “make disciples” of your children, the Parish policy for all our Churches under the Office of Religious Education, Faith Formation Program, is set forth in these Guidelines. If you are unwilling to abide by the conditions stated here, you are free to see another way or another program in order to form your children as you see fit.

I. ALL STUDENTS ATTENDING OUR PROGRAM & THEIR FAMILIES MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE PARISH

As of the 2022-2023 school year, we will no longer accept Non-Parishioners into the program. We will make an exception if we are contacted by a Pastor or Director of

Religious Education (DRE) of another parish who needs to set up special arrangements for one of their parishioners. This rule will resolve the problem of families shifting from program to program with no accountability to either their Pastor, the Pastor of this Parish, or any other responsible person like a parish DRE. Special requests may be proposed to the Pastor, who will consider such requests on a case by case basis.

A. **FOR STUDENTS TO BE ENROLLED IN THE PARISH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM**

Here are the Guidelines for students in grades 2-Confirmation. These guidelines are for the protection of all students enrolled in the parish program and for their spiritual progress.

II. **HOME-SCHOOLING FAMILIES**

Families enrolled in Religious Education Programs apart from the Parish, the Pastor upholds their right as the “first teachers of the Faith” to form their children in the Faith as they see fit. These families usually participate in First Penance and First Communion celebrations at other places. The only involvement of the Pastor is signing a Letter of Permission allowing these students to go to Penance or receive their First Communion at these other places. For these families to receive a Letter of Permission from the Pastor, these requirements must be fulfilled **before the Pastor signs a Letter of Permission:**

FOR THOSE MAKING FIRST PENANCE OUTSIDE THE PARISH

The reception of First Penance or making one’s First Communion outside the Parish **requires the consent of the Pastor** for the child to be part of these celebrations. In this case, the policy, including the Pastor’s stipulation that any parent wishing the Pastor’s permission to be part of such a celebration must set up a meeting with the Pastor. The Pastor will examine the child in the presence of the parents or some other responsible adult to determine readiness for First Penance. Preparedness **MUST** include:

1. Your child must know the procedure for going to Confession (Appendix I), including the formula: “Bless me Father for I have sinned...”
2. Your child should have knowledge of what sins to confess (Appendix II)
3. Your child must be able to recite some form of an Act of Contrition that must be memorized, unless the child has some disability that prevents memorization (Appendix III)
4. You and your child should be registered with the Parish and attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days

FOR THOSE MAKING FIRST COMMUNION OUTSIDE OF THE PARISH

Those requesting to make their First Communion at a location other than Our Lady Help of Christians, must meet with the Pastor and be able to fulfill the following requirements:

1. The child and their parents/guardians must be attending Mass weekly and on all required Holy Days
2. Your child must exhibit the **required respect and reverent conduct** at Mass (in line with their level of comprehension) necessary to receive the Sacrament with a **fitting fervor and devotion** as stipulated in **Canon 913:1** of the 1983 Code of Canon Law

3. The child must be able to realize and know that the Bread and Wine placed on the Altar become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the **moment the words of Consecration are pronounced by the Priest**
4. The child must clearly understand that the bread and wine placed on the Altar before the Consecration is just bread and wine; and that as the words of Consecration are spoken by the Priest, they become and remain the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ
5. The child should know about the **Eucharistic fast**—that is, one must not eat food or take any drink, except regular water or medication) for one hour prior to the moment of taking Communion as is mandated by **Canon 919:1** of the 1983 Code of Canon Law
6. Since the discipline of the Church allows Communion to be taken either in the hand or on the tongue, every child **must** know how to receive the Sacred Host on both the tongue and in the hand—even if “traditional” parents prefer that their child is to receive the Lord on the tongue

III. OTHER QUESTIONS & SITUATIONS

These guidelines will address a few other situations that have become more central over the years. These include:

- Safe environment presentations
- Involvement with sports and school activities
- Absenteeism, tardiness and excuses
- Parental complaints about the Catechist, class content, etc.
- Parents withdrawing kids from class without informing the Pastor
- Families leaving the program

A. Safe Environment Presentations

In accordance with the Guidelines established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) resulting from the Dallas Charter, our Faith Formation Program is **required by mandate** of the Diocese of Buffalo to provide an annual safe environment presentation fittingly geared to the innocence and comprehension levels of each age group of children enrolled in the parish program. Each talk strictly avoids any graphic content and anything that would compromise the innocence of your child. The highest standards of “safe environment” practices are in place, including:

- Father Józef, Father Marcin and all Catechists (Religion Teachers) have all undergone criminal background checks. These background checks are repeated regularly
- A Safe Environment Coordinator for the Parish, Mrs. Renée Fortuna, who oversees the compliance of the Parish, Parish staff, Parish volunteers and Catechists with all mandated safe environment protocols
- Fathers and Catechists are required to undergo safe environment training and sign a Code of Conduct Agreement pertaining to the protection of the children entrusted to the Parish programs

- Parents and guardians are advised beforehand when these presentations will be given, and a written permission form to be signed is sent to the parent(s)/guardians of each student
- Parents are free to “opt out” their children from the presentations if they so wish, and after informing the Diocese, we will send a packet home to the parents/guardians to be reviewed and use at their discretion

B. INVOLVEMENT WITH SPORTS & OTHER ACTIVITIES

Parents spiritually damage their children when they treat Religion as something less important than involvement in sports or in extracurricular/school-related activities. Since the Parish Faith Formation Program requires and demands only a minimum amount of time from our families, it is important that parents give as much time and importance to Religious Formation as to other activities. We encourage parents to show the same enthusiasm for the Faith Formation Program, giving it as much attention as they do to sports, sport practices and other extracurricular activities. If a family cannot or will not abide by this, then may need to consider joining a Parish or Religious Education Program that is more suitable to their needs.

1. Conflicts with sport practices or other school activities: requesting “time off” from Faith Formation classes. Parents requesting that their child be excused from classes should contact the DRE in writing, requesting such a leave. The request should be in writing so that there is no doubt that 1. the parent or guardian is actually making the request for “leave,” and 2. for the protection of your child. After receiving your request, we will verify it with you.
2. Before giving permission to be excused from Faith Formation class the Pastor will review each request on a case by case basis, taking under consideration the following factors:
 - Is the student’s family fulfilling the **minimal practice if the Catholic faith**, which is attending Mass weekly and on all required Holy Days?
 - Is the student regularly coming to class or are there a lot of absences?
 - Is the student well behaved in class? Do they participate in class? Is the student doing class work assignments, if there are any? Does the student have a good grasp and knowledge of the material already covered in class?

*Note: If you are not willing to abide by these guidelines, it’s not too late to seek another program or Parish to meet your needs.

C. ABSENCES, TARDINESS AND EXCUSES: PROCEDURES TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD

1. When a child is absent form class, parents should either call the Faith Formation phone number 716-458-3130 and leave a message that your child will be absent that day, or send an email to olhc.faithformation@gmail.com. Failure to do so will mark the child as an **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**. This is to ensure your child’s safety before and after classes.
2. Children arriving late should not be simply dropped off at the doors. All children arriving late should be accompanied by the parent to the Religious Education Resource Center located on the first floor. Students of any grade-level leaving class early should have their parents actually stop by the classroom to pick up their kids. This will ensure that we released your child to a proper supervising adult.

D. **DROPPING OUT OF FAITH FORMATION AFTER FIRST COMMUNION AND REJOINING FOR CONFIRMATION; FAMILIES NOT ATTENDING MASS, ETC.**
Students who “drop out” the Parish Faith Formation program after First Communion, only to return in time for Confirmation classes will be required to undergo a **one year “catch up” class** that will help them get up to date with all the religious education time they lost. The Mass attendance of these students will need to be evaluated, as a requirement to be fulfilled before they are even considered for Confirmation. Students whose families are not Church-goers will never be refused Sacraments, although **they may be delayed** until the Pastor and the Catechists have a reasonable hope the child will be allowed to practice the Faith.

E. **PARENTAL CONCERNS ABOUT CLASS CONTENT**
Parents or guardians with concerns about some aspect of the content of the program are encouraged to share their concerns with the DRE. In the event of a serious concern, a thorough investigation and evaluation will be conducted and the Pastor will decide (if necessary in consultation with Diocesan officials) how the matter should be addressed and what action should be taken. Any inappropriate behavior should be reported to the DRE as soon as possible! Our children’s safety depends on it.

F. **THE WITHDRAWAL OR REMOVING A CHILD FROM CLASSES**
If a parent wishes to remove their child from a specific class or series of classes, they should advise the DRE **in writing** of their intent. Failure to do so may result in expulsion of a student or students from the Parish program. This is necessary for the safety and protection of your children. The Pastor will be advised of the removal of any student from the classes in order to ensure that the student’s removal is actually the desire and action of the parent and not some student playing “hooky” or being victimized. Any parent failing to do this will risk having their children permanently expelled from the program. Your child safety is far too important. We cannot and will not allow or tolerate any form of unsafe condition for your children or any others entrusted to our care.

G. **THOSE WHO ELECT TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM**
Families who elect to withdraw from the Faith Formation program should remain with the new program they have joined. It is not the Parish policy to readmit a family that has left, unless they have moved out of the area and have chosen to return to the Parish.

IV. **ADULTS IN THE BUILDING DURING CLASSES**
The Diocesan Safe Environment Office assures us that parents, guardians, etc. may be in the building during Faith Formation classes, although they must stay in the Religious Education Resource Center (RERC). Any unauthorized person found in or around the classroom area will be asked to return to RERC. Repeated violations of this protocol will result in the person being escorted out of the building and off the property.

V. **CONCLUSION**
Our purpose is to provide a safe, pleasant and effective environment for teaching the Faith. We ask all parents, guardians and students to be familiar with these guidelines. We are

grateful for your attention to these matters and your willingness to comply with them. They are presented here for your child's safety and their advancement in the knowledge and service of God.