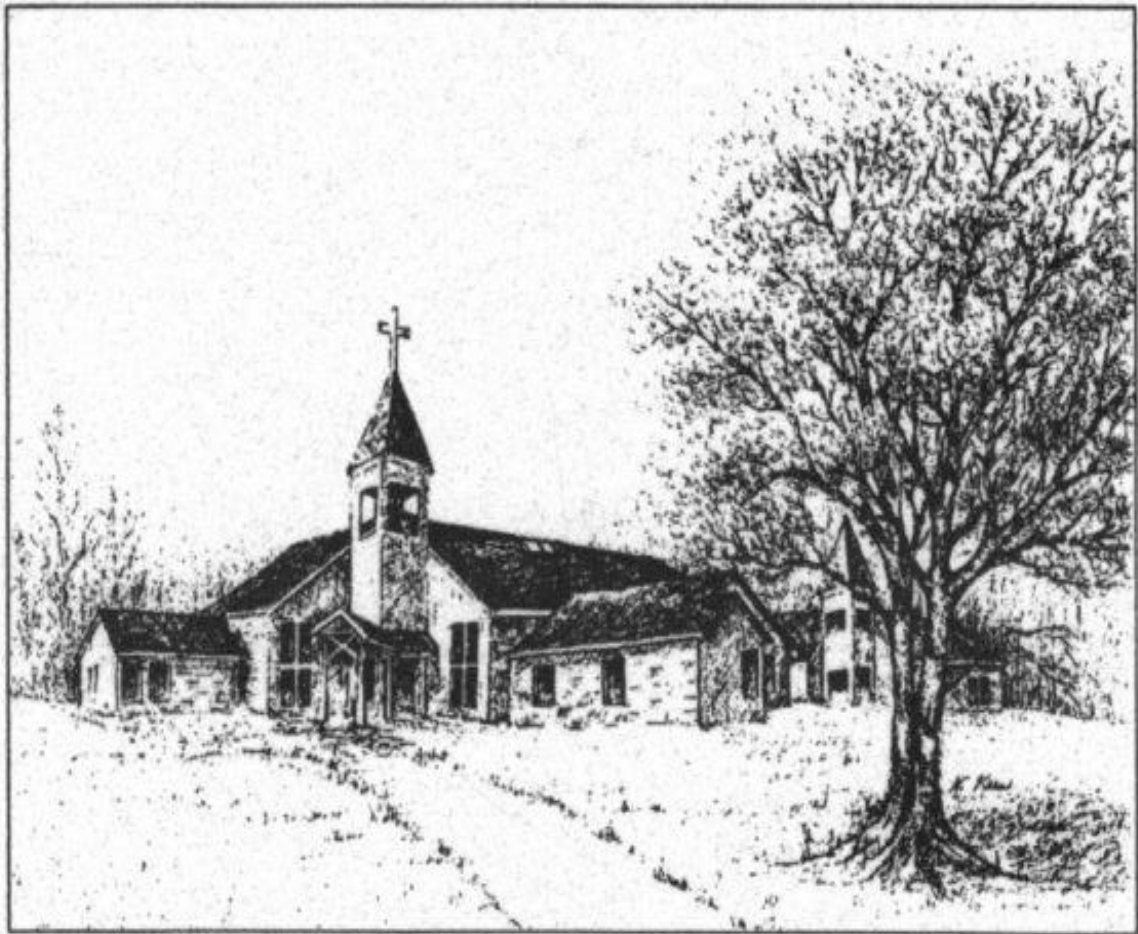


Middle School Faith Formation and Confirmation Handbook 2023-2024



St. Luke Catholic Church

Mint Hill, North Carolina

Dear Faith Formation Parents and Guardians,

As the pastor of St. Luke's Catholic Church, I would like to thank all of our parents for registering their children in our Faith Formation program. Your support is very important to us.

Faith Formation at St. Luke's begins in the first grade and continues up through High School. The important sacraments that your children will receive are First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. First Holy Communion and Confirmation preparation are both two-year programs as required by the Diocese of Charlotte.

We would love for you to enroll your children in every year of Faith Formation beginning in the first grade. Every year is important because what they will learn about their faith will become for them a life-long treasure. You and your family will be able to celebrate important milestones in their lives when they receive Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion and the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.

As the children learn their faith at St. Luke's, you will discover more about your own faith and the beauty of living that faith every day, especially at home. The family is called the "domestic church."

I hope that you will also be willing to help us in Faith Formation by signing up to become a catechist (or teacher) or in another supporting role. There is great joy in being able to be with the children as they learn their prayers and lessons about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Please feel free to approach me about any question or difficulty you may have. I will try my best to help you. God bless you always.

Father Paul Q. Gary

Faith Formation Mission Statements

Diocese of Charlotte

The Mission of the Faith Formation Office is to assist in the implementation of the Bishop's Vision for the Faith Formation Mission of the Diocese of Charlotte. The Faith Formation Office provides programs which transmit the Gospel and so invite people to a personal and intentional faith in Jesus Christ. The programs offer the knowledge of how to practice the Catholic faith with coherent integrity as respecting and responsible citizens of this world and the next.

St Luke Faith Formation

The Faith Formation team, as part of the community of believers will try to bring scripture to life through our living example, by learning, sharing and acting out our Catholic faith. In our ministry to our brothers and sisters of all ages we will nurture one another on our faith journey while deepening our understanding of our Catholic beliefs and traditions.

+++

The fundamental task of catechesis is to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus instructed his disciples, prayed with them, showed them how to live and gave them his mission. Our Catholic faith must be known, celebrated, lived and expressed in prayer and works. All Faith Formation programs follow and adhere to the teachings of the Church, and the doctrines of the Catechisms of the Catholic Church. The team of catechists under the direction of the Director of Religious Education have been guided in spirit and instructed on church doctrine, to assist each child in achieving his or her maximum potential in mind, body, and spirit within a Catholic environment.

Six primary tasks for Catechesis:

Knowledge: Promote the knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Worship: Promote knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and Sacraments.

Moral Life: Promote moral formation in Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Teach the Catholic how to pray with Christ.

Community Life: Prepare the Catholic to live in community and to participate actively in the life mission of the Catholic Church through the parish and diocese.

Service: To promote a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.

- General Directory of Catechesis, National Directory of Catechesis

What does Catechesis look like?

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ."

- General Directory of Catechesis, 80

ST. LUKE FAITH FORMATION

CLASS SCHEDULE

Classes are scheduled from September through the end of March.

- Sunday 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Grades 6 / Confirmation Year 1&2
- Wednesday 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Grades 6 / Confirmation Year 1&2.

ATTENDANCE

All children should attend Faith Formation classes except in the case of illness or family emergency. If a child is currently sick or has had a fever within the last 24 hours, they should not attend class. If your child is sick, please email Katy De'Ath with the reason for the absence so it may be marked as an excused absence. A child in Year 1 or 2 of Confirmation may only have two unexcused absences per year.

BEHAVIOR

Students should follow directions, be respectful of the Catechist and other students, participate in the activities, and treat others as Jesus. If a child has special needs that make it difficult to stay on task, please notify the Faith Formation Coordinators so that accommodation can be made during the class. Disrespectful and/or disruptive behaviors will be communicated to the coordinators and will then be discussed with parents.

CLASS CANCELLATION

In the event of severe weather, loss of power, or other emergency at St. Luke, class may be cancelled. Parents will be notified of cancellation via email (please make sure your email is up to date with the church office), a notice on the Faith Formation website, as well as a text message via Remind. Please be aware that class cancellation may not reflect your child's school closing.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Faith Formation classes for grade 6 and Confirmation Year 1 and 2 will meet in the modular unit (Spirituality Center) behind the church and the faith formation hallway classrooms. Parents should drop off their children at the front doors of the parish hall no sooner than 15 minutes before the start of class. Students and catechists will gather in the parish hall for a group prayer before walking to the classrooms with their respective classes and catechists.

Pick-up is at the front doors of the parish hall at 8:00pm. Do not drive up to the roundabout. Please park in the front parking lot and walk up to the doors to pick up your child. To help us make sure that youth are paired up with an adult before going to the parking lot, parents/guardians are invited to wait inside the brick area of the parish hall no sooner than in the last 5 minutes before class lets out. This will help us dismiss quickly and orderly.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND MODIFICATIONS

If your child has special needs please notify the Faith Formation staff to ensure that we can help in every way possible. Our desire is for your child to be part of the parish and community. We strive to accommodate all God's children and to welcome everyone in the parish community.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a vital role in the Faith Formation program. Without the support of many parents serving as catechists, co-catechists, assistants, or volunteers we would not be able to have this wonderful faith program. Each volunteer must participate in the requirements of the Diocese of Charlotte which include: completing a full background check, reading and adhering to the Code of Ethics and Sexual Misconduct Policy, completing Protecting God's Children course, and ongoing training by reading monthly bulletins from *Virtus*. All these requirements may be completed online at www.virtus.org. Contact Kathy McKinney, our Safe Environment Coordinator, at kathymckinney@stlukechurch.net for more information.

CONFIRMATION: Sacrament of Initiation

"Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute 'the sacraments of Christian initiation,' whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of *baptismal grace*. By the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."

- CCC 1285, Order of Confirmation, Introduction 1 and Code of Canon Law, canon 879]

- The Sacrament of Confirmation is initiatory, completing Baptism.
- The goal of our program is to prepare candidates for an encounter with Jesus that becomes the foundation of lifelong discipleship; a relationship rooted in their identity as sons and daughters of God, filled with the Holy Spirit and equipped for the mission to which God has called them.

St. Luke Church candidates complete a two-year preparation process, per the Diocesan requirements. Candidates typically begin preparing in the seventh grade, First Year Confirmation. The candidates are invited to receive Confirmation at the end of the Second Year. Our curriculum is CHOSEN by Ascension Press, a video series designed specifically for youth preparing for Confirmation.

Requirements

The sacramental preparation process includes self-guided and home formation preparation. Candidates play an active role in their faith journey by personal commitment, inquiry, participation in liturgy, studying of the Word, seeking an understanding of doctrine, bearing witness to God through evangelization, and turning to God in an ongoing prayer relationship.

First Year Confirmandi will:

- Provide documentation of their previous sacramental history (Baptism, Communion)
- Research and select a Saint whose name they will take at Confirmation
- Live their faith in action by volunteering for 5 hours at church and in the community and complete a personal reflection along with the log of hours

Second Year Confirmandi will:

- Complete any remaining tasks from the first year
- Choose a Confirmation Sponsor who will walk with them on their journey with regular interactions and, ideally, present them at the Confirmation Mass
- Write a letter to Bishop Peter Jugis sharing their preparation journey and requesting Confirmation
- Live their faith in action by volunteering for 10 hours at church and in the community and complete a personal reflection along with the log of hours
- Complete a self-assessment and/or a discernment meeting to determine readiness
- Attend a one-day retreat
- Attend a required Penance Service and rehearsal in the spring

Details on all of these responsibilities and events will be communicated to parents and students throughout the faith formation year.

Confirmation Coordinator Contact Information

Katy De'Ath

Youth Evangelization and Catechesis Coordinator
Confirmation | Youth Ministry | Grades 6-12
St. Luke's Catholic Parish
Katyde_ath@stlukecatholicminthill.org
704-545-1224 ext. 13