



Middle School and High School Faith Formation Handbook 2024-2025

Dear Youth and Families,

Thank you for joining us this year in faith formation and confirmation preparation! We are excited to share this journey with you as we open our hearts and minds to a deeper relationship with God and an active faith life. We echo Bishop Martin's message from the Eucharistic Congress that, "You Belong Here," and look forward to building community with the youth of St. Luke's.

This program helps your family grow in faith by teaching the traditions and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, supported by church documents including *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Sunday (or Vigil) Mass attendance is the most important part of our curriculum. Participating in Holy Mass is the highest form of prayer. By uniting yourself and your family to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, you will be strengthened and renewed each week. As Catholic parents, it is your obligation to model your faith and bring your children to weekly Sunday Mass. We expect families to take this responsibility seriously.

Middle and high school faith formation is a continuum, a journey that does not cease after confirmation. Even as adults, we can never outgrow our need for a deeper knowledge and appreciation of our faith. Like a flame to a match, the grace bestowed in confirmation is ignited when we actively receive and eagerly seek God. This disposition is not *given* to us in the sacrament; it is cultivated and encouraged through the development of personal faith and a hunger for more. Creating an atmosphere in which this disposition can flourish, even in 6th grade, is our primary objective at St. Luke's.

As this transition year in our parish has presented some unique challenges, we are committed to walking with you and moving forward with your best interests in mind. This year will require all of us to work together and be flexible in our expectations. We are thankful for your cooperation and patience as we navigate the upcoming year.

We are blessed to have you with us this year, and we look forward to getting to know each of you!

In Christ,

Katy and Kristen
Co-coordinators for Youth Ministry and Faith Formation

Faith Formation Mission Statements

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.

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

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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 April.

- Monday 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Grade 6 / Confirmation Year 1 & 2
- Tuesday 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Grade 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 our middle and high school faith formation team (Confirmation@stlukecatholicminthill.org) 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 come to class with all necessary materials, complete any assigned work prior to class, follow directions, be respectful of catechists and other students, participate in activities, take care with property that is not their own, 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 accommodations can be made during the class. Disrespectful and/or disruptive behaviors will be communicated to the coordinators and discussed with parents. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and weapons of any kind are not allowed on parish premises or in buildings being used for religious education purposes. Consuming alcohol or using drugs before coming on parish premises is strictly prohibited.

Class Cancellation

In the event of severe weather, loss of power, or other emergency at St. Luke, class may be canceled. 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 will meet in the modular unit (Spirituality Center) behind the church, and confirmation (Years 1 and 2) will meet primarily in the parish hall. 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 large group prayer and catechesis before splitting into smaller discussion groups led by catechists.

Pick-up will be held at the front doors of the parish hall at 7:30pm. 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(ren). 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.

Cell Phone Policy

We understand the need to communicate with your child in cases of emergency and for pick up. However, the use of cell phones, headphones/ear pods, and other electronic devices will not be permitted during class time. These devices, though useful communication tools, distract students from the purpose of class, which is to bring us closer to God and our faith. Students who fail to adhere to this policy and continue to use their devices during class may have their device(s) confiscated by adult volunteers until the end of class, at which time it will be returned to a parent. Multiple violations of this policy will result in prohibiting the student from bringing a cell phone to future classes.

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, and completing the diocese's Safe Environment training course. All these requirements may be completed online at <https://charlotte.cmgconnect.org>. Contact Kathy McKinney, our Safe Environment Coordinator, at kathymckinney@stlukecatholicminthill.org for more information. For more information on the training process, visit: <https://charlottediocese.org/offices/safe-environment/safe-environment-training-instructions/>

Assessments

Beginning this year, all students participating in middle and high school faith formation and confirmation preparation will complete a general knowledge assessment at the beginning and end of each year. Insights gained from these assessments will help us better understand the formation needs of our youth and provide an opportunity to measure growth. Our goal for these assessments is to identify areas in our faith formation continuum that need to be strengthened, provide tailored support for students who may have gaps in their knowledge of the Catholic faith, and ultimately ensure our program is appropriately preparing youth to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation.

To be clear, questions on these assessments are not intended to trick or "grade" students. All assessment responses will be used for developmental and planning purposes only. Students DO NOT have to "pass a test" as proof of their faith formation participation or to celebrate Confirmation.

Contact Information

For questions about our class schedules, curriculum, registration, or volunteering:

Katy De'Ath
Youth Ministry and Faith Formation Co-Coordinator (Grades 6-12)
Katyde_ath@stlukecatholicminthill.org
704-545-1224 ext. 13

Kristen Tarantino
Youth Ministry and Faith Formation Co-Coordinator (Grades 6-12)
Kristentarantino@stlukecatholicminthill.org
704-545-1224 ext. 14

Assignments and student absences can be sent directly to:

Confirmation@stlukecatholicminthill.org

For questions about requirements to become a volunteer or catechist:

Kathy McKinney
Safe environment coordinator, Children's Faith Formation
kathymckinney@stlukecatholicminthill.org
704-545-1224 ext. 12

For questions about Sacrament records at St. Luke:

Katie Blanchette
Faith Formation Secretary
katieblanchette@stlukecatholicminthill.org
704-545-1224 ext. 17

For questions about payment and/or payment plans for faith formation:

Margie Marrocco
margiemarrocco@stlukecatholicminthill.org
704-545-1224 ext. 24