

PROGRAM POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Families are scheduled to attend one session per month from September through May. (Families of children preparing for sacraments will have additional meetings/workshops.) Please try to stay with your assigned week. However, if you are unable to attend your regularly scheduled session, you may switch to the other session that month.

Arrival: The sessions begin immediately after the 10 am Mass. If you are attending a different Mass, please make every effort to arrive by 10:50. When you arrive, please sign in at the table in the Narthex. List your name as well as the names of all your children in attendance that day.

Dismissal: For safety reasons, parents and children should leave the building together. Students are not to loiter outside the building after the session.

GRADE LEVEL SPECIFICS

Families, regardless of the ages of the children, will all study the same concept, to prepare them to continue the learning at home. Parents are asked to remain in the Church after the 10 am Mass to hear a presentation. This year, we will focus on the key beliefs of our faith found in the Creed which we say at Mass each week.

Students in grades PK/K, 1/2, and 3/4 will meet with Catechists in the lower level of the Church. Through interactive lessons they will explore the elements of the Creed.

Students in grades 5/6 and 7/8 will also meet with Catechists in the lower level of the Church. Through discussion and hand-on-activities they will learn how the statements in the Creed affect their lives. Occasionally, they will remain in the Church for a portion of the time to view a video with their parents.

DISCIPLINE

Parents are asked to remind their children about proper behavior. We have a lot to cover in a short period of time. The fewer times Catechists need to stop and discipline, the better it will be

for all the children. We expect students to show proper respect for self, others and property. Please, no cell phones or other electronic devices.

Students should be suitably attired (no torn clothing; no clothing bearing messages or images contrary to Catholic values; hats and jackets are to be removed upon entering the building.)

No food or beverages are allowed. Please be sure your children eat breakfast before coming to Church. As long as they eat before 9:30 am, they will not break the Communion fast for 10 am Mass.

Severe or continual disruptions warrant a conference between parents, director and the pastor and may result in parents being asked to accompany their son or daughter to class.

If parents wish to initiate a conference with their child's Catechist or the Director of the program, they are asked to call the Religious Ed. office and arrangements will be made.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The diocese requires that all parents receive the Policies/Standards for keeping children safe from sexual exploitation and a brochure that suggests ways to help keep your child safe. Parents are asked to sign a form indicating they received these resources, which are on the FCFF website. We are also required to provide age appropriate instruction to the children, if their schools do not provide it, to enable them to recognize the danger signs that could lead to sexual exploitation. If your child does not receive this instruction at school, we will need your signature for permission to include or exclude your child for this program.

HOMEWORK

A binder of materials is provided to each family. Binders include 2 home lessons to be completed as a family. Homework should be returned by the parents, regardless the ages of the children. Concepts covered in the homework from the previous month will be reviewed during class time. When working with children of varying ages, parents may need to read and explain to younger children. Most times, a simpler exercise is included for PK-1st graders. If your child is very young, you

should still complete the more complicated homework yourself to enhance your own understanding of the faith, so you can pass it on as your child matures.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION

It is important that children continue in the formal faith formation program each year until they receive Confirmation. Families are asked to complete registration forms for the coming year before the end of May. Placement in groups will be done on a first come/first serve basis.

A certificate of Baptism is REQUIRED for all students entering the program for the first time.

In the case of parents who are divorced: By law, we cannot restrict either parent from access to the children's religious education records nor from participating in the Family Centered Faith Formation program, unless we have on file in the office a copy of the custodial section of the divorce decree indicating the courts have mandated this restriction.

Please do not put us, or your children, in an uncomfortable position by making requests we cannot legally consider.

TUITION AND FEES

\$225 per family plus a \$20 resource fee
Sacrament preparation fees

Reconciliation/Eucharist: \$75; Confirmation: \$65
\$50 late fee for returning families (after July 1)

Tuition fees are expected from each family unless special arrangements have been made with the Pastor or Director. No family will be denied entrance into the program for financial reasons.

All families are expected to contribute to the support of the Church through their weekly envelopes. This not only helps to defray the parish subsidy allotted to the Religious Ed. program, but also helps to fulfill the Precept of the Church which requires all Catholics to give of their time, talent and treasure to support the Church.

SACRAMENTS

Children generally receive First Reconciliation and First Communion in Second Grade. Parents are expected to participate in their child's preparation for these sacraments by covering the material in the sacrament textbook and attending the events listed on the front panel of this brochure. Children learn the value of the sacraments long before they begin preparing to receive them. Be sure your children attend Mass weekly and you take them to Reconciliation regularly, once they have received First Reconciliation.

8th graders attend a Confirmation session each month. (See schedule on the front of this brochure.) Parents and/or Sponsors are encouraged to attend some of these sessions. The sessions conclude with a Mass, which all family members are invited to attend.

The diocese requires that children have two consecutive years of religious instruction before receiving the sacraments. Therefore, students coming into FCFF later than the usual time will be required to participate for one year before entering the sacrament preparation program.

FAMILY PROGRESS REPORTS

A record of attendance and homework completion will be kept in a family file. At the end of the year, each family will receive back the homework they turned in and a certificate that documents their participation all year.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Families are expected to perform a minimum of 2 "Works of Mercy" service projects each year and to report on their service experience using the sheets included in their binder. A Service Suggestion booklet is provided in the family binder to assist you in choosing your projects. At least one project should be a Corporal Work of Mercy and at least one should be a Spiritual Work of Mercy, as explained in the Service Suggestion booklet.



St. Francis Xavier Parish
Family Centered Faith Formation - FCFE

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Mrs. Penny Giunta, Director of Religious Ed.
815-609-8077 x205 penny@st-francis-xavier.com

Mrs. Denise Mohler, Assistant to the Director
815-609-8077 x205

Mrs. Kathy Roberts, Sacrament Coordinator
815-609-8077 x201

Ms. Jackie White, Religious Ed. Secretary
815-609-8077 x201 office@st-francis-xavier.com

Parents' Prayer

Dear Lord,
Thank you for the children
You have entrusted to us.
They are so precious!
Watch over and protect them
as they mature
and grow closer to You.
Help them to realize
that You are all they need
to live a fulfilled life
here on earth.
Let Your light shine through us
for them to see
so that they may know
that You are the way,
the truth and
the life.
Thank You, Lord, for allowing us
to partner with You
in nurturing these children. Amen.

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturdays: 4:30 p.m.; Sundays: 8:30 am & 10:00 am

Weekday Mass Schedule

9:15 a.m. (M, T, Th, Fri) and 6:30 p.m. (W)

Holy Days of Obligation in 2018-19

All Saints (11/1), Immaculate Conception (12/8),
Christmas (12/25), Ascension (5/30), Assumption (8/15).
Check bulletin for Mass times.

Confession Schedule

Saturdays: 3:30-4:15 p.m. and by appointment.

Religious Education Office: The office is located in the
lower level of the Church. If the main Church doors are
locked, please ring the bell.

During the school year you can reach the Director of
Religious Education on Mondays and Thursdays from 10-4.
Secretary's hours are Mondays and Thursdays from
8:30-4:30; Fridays 8:30-1. (At other times please leave
an email message and we will get back to you as soon as
possible.)

CALENDAR 2018-19

Family Formation Sessions are after 10 am Mass

Group A = Last Names A-L; Group B = Last Names M-Z

<u>GROUP A</u>	<u>GROUP B</u>
Sept. 16	Sept. 23
Oct. 14	Oct. 21
Nov. 11	Nov. 18
	Dec. 9
Jan. 13	Jan. 20
Feb. 10	Feb. 17
Mar. 10	Mar. 17
	April 7
	May 5

Confirmation Dates (6:30pm): 9/23, 10/21, 11/18, 12/9,
1/13, 2/10, 3/10, 4/7, 5/19, 6/23, 7/28

First Reconciliation/Communion Dates:

Parent-Only Meeting -9/12 6:30 Mass ; meeting (7-8pm)

Reconciliation Parent/Child Retreat - 10/20 (9-11:30am)

First Reconciliation - 11/3 or 11/10 (2 pm)
(sign-up required)

First Communion Parent Child Retreat - 3/9 or 3/16
(9-11:30 am)

First Communion Rehearsal - 4/25 (6:30-7:30 pm)

First Communion - 4/27 (4:30 pm), or
4/28 (8:30 or 10 am)

**Philosophy of Family Centered
Religious Education**

"Those who have given life to children and have
enriched them with the gift of Baptism have the
duty continually to nourish it... In a certain sense,
nothing replaces family catechesis, especially for
its positive and receptive environment, for the
example of adults, and for its first explicit
experience and practice of the faith." (General
Directory for Catechesis, 177-178)

The goal of Family Centered Faith Formation
is to assist parents in passing on the faith to
their children by offering them an opportunity
to increase their own understanding of the faith
and by structuring a program that encourages a
continuing dialogue between parents and their
children.

**In addition to participating in the
Family Centered Faith Formation Program,
what can parents do
to nurture their children's faith?**

- ATTEND MASS TOGETHER. The Mass is
the central worship of our Catholic faith. It
conveys to us the great love of God. Not only
did He redeem us through the death and
resurrection of his Son, but He offers Himself
to us, body, blood, soul and divinity as
nourishment for the journey of life. How can we
refuse this great gift? With this in mind, don't
just attend Mass - actively participate - pray
the words of the prayers and sing the hymns
yourself, and encourage your children to do the
same. Encourage your children to learn the
Mass prayers and responses. We should not
forget that missing weekly Mass for reasons
other than illness, is a mortal sin.

- Encourage reception of the sacrament of
Reconciliation by using the instructional
resources provided and by modeling through
your own example.

- Let your children know that their faith
development is important to you. Set aside a
specific day and time each week to complete the
home lessons together.

- Use the Commandments and the Beatitudes
in making decisions. Help your children learn to
use them in their decision-making, too. Make
your home a place of justice and peace with
consistent and respectful discipline.

- Pray together at home. Encourage prayer
at meals, morning and bedtime. Praying the
traditional prayers of the Catholic faith is the
best method of memorizing them. (A booklet,
"Our Catholic Heritage", is supplied to help.)
But, also pray spontaneously with your children.
Take the opportunities that present themselves
each day in the joyful as well as sad moments.
Pray aloud a word of thanks, or praise, or
petition or apology to the Lord. Let your
children hear those words from your lips as the
automatic response to day-to-day experiences.

- Read the Bible and Catechism at home.
Each family is given a Bible and Catechism and
homework assignments to help you become more
comfortable using them.

- Perform at least two Works of Mercy
service projects with your children each year.
Living our faith is just as important as knowing
it, if not more so. Show your children the joy
that can be derived from following Christ's
example of serving others. A Service Suggestion
booklet is provided to help you with this.

- Attend additional adult religious education
presentations at St. Francis Xavier and other
parishes whenever possible, to continually
advance your own knowledge and practice of the
Catholic faith and to enhance your own spiritual
development.