



2017-2018
Pre K-5th Grade
Faith Formation Handbook



Our Mission:

***Help you form
your children into
Disciples of Christ.***

**This is the mission of all our Faith
Formation activities.**

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843.471.2121 Parish Offices

843.471.2677 Sarah Viancourt,
Director of Faith Formation

843.580.8170 Sarah's Emergency Cell

sarah@clare.church

† Welcome and Congratulations!



You and your family have made the decision to educate and form your child(ren) in the ways of loving, knowing and following our Savior Jesus Christ. You do so through the fullness of the Christian faith, that is, the Catholic Church. As your parish family, we

WE'RE
HERE
FOR YOU

stand with you and by you to encourage, support and love you. We all want to be pleasing to the Lord and accepting of his holy will. Let us all strive to become saints!

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures for our Faith Formation program for grades Pre-K through Fifth. We believe it is clear and instructional. If, at any time, you have questions or concerns, please let us know.

God's many blessings to you and your loved ones!

Father Gregory West, Pastor

Sarah Viancourt, Director of Faith Formation

† Why Are We Here?

In a parish, weekly Faith Formation classes are designed to supplement the teaching of the faith that a parent gives their child in the home and what they learn through attending Mass as a family.

This year we offer Faith Formation classes to students three years old through fifth grade. Any student can attend and is welcome to attend the weekly classes. Because discipleship is a process that isn't learned in a year or two, it is expected of baptized Catholics who attend public, private, or homeschool, to attend weekly, even if the child is not in one of the two years prior to Sacramental Prep. Children who attend Catholic School are welcome to join us in our weekly sessions as well.

† Catechetical Experiences at Saint Clare of Assisi

1. *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* is a Montessori-based religious education program that we are implementing at SCA. In the mid-1950s, it was derived from the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori who was a devout Catholic and dedicated a lifetime to observing the natural development of the child. She emphasized the need for a specially prepared environment and hands-on learning experiences to



aid children's learning. To this day, Montessori schools can be found throughout the world, offering a different type of educational philosophy.

After her death, her methods were perfected and formed into the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. CGS is used worldwide by the Missionaries of Charity, the Dominican Sisters, and thousands of parish communities. As Catholics, we believe that each child has an innate spirituality and a unique relationship with God. The adult should assist the growth of this relationship, but is directed by the Spirit of God within the child. In CGS, we give the child a space of his own (called "The Atrium") where he is encouraged to foster this relationship through the use of hands-on materials. The child is shown how to "work" (setup and manipulate) the materials and then given the opportunity to experience them as long as he wants. In this way, he is not just memorizing information, but truly contemplating the mysteries of our Faith.



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has three levels:

Level I: 3-6 year olds

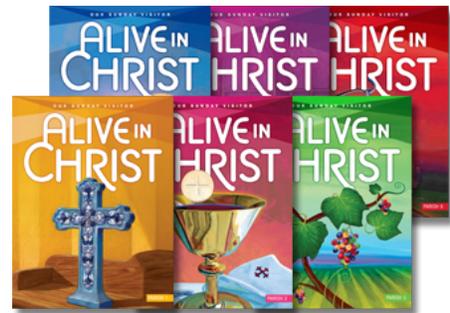
Level II: 6-9 year olds

Level III: 9-12 year olds

We plan to increase the amount of classes and levels offered once our Catechists undergo training this year and space for an Atrium becomes available. **This year we are pleased to offer Level I, and Level II to students who have completed Level I.**

2. Our Sunday Visitor *Alive in Christ* Is used for First Grade through Fifth Grade classes. While the curriculum is book-based, classes include many hands-on activities as well as other activities children learn in the classroom. Our Catechists work hard to incorporate engaging activities and different learning styles into each class through small groups, crafts, skits, games, on-site service opportunities, and occasional guest speakers.

Parents can use the interactive website to bring some of the lessons into the home through assessment quizzes, activities, and games. Visit <http://aliveinchrist.osv.com> to see more.



† Other Special Opportunities

Family Advent and Lent Days: Twice this year, we will offer "Family Days" that are a regular class but will include opportunities for parents to join their children in activities that will help them prepare for the Advent and Lenten seasons. While these are required classes for children, parents are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

Service: Opportunities for service, both in the classroom and outside of it, will be offered each year. A detailed list of this year's opportunities will be given out at the first parent meeting.

† Time and Place

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd will be offered on a weekday in the afternoon. The day and time are pending (as of July 1, 2017), and will be determined by August 1, 2017. It is our great hope to offer it in a location on Daniel Island.

Alive in Christ and First Communion Preparation: All classes (except *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*) are on the second floor of Bishop England High School and, for your convenience, take place between our two Sunday morning Masses. **Classes will begin promptly at 10:10 a.m. and will be dismissed at 11:20 a.m. with the ringing of a bell.**

If a Catechist has not reached the classroom yet when you arrive to drop your child off, please do NOT leave your child alone.

† Registration

Is available online at **clare.church**. Payment is due online at the time of registration. Baptismal Certificates must be on file in the parish office for every child enrolled in Faith Formation. A head shot of each child is required to be uploaded as part of the registration process.

† Tuition

For the 2017-2018 school year, our parish's tuition schedule is:

All non-Catholic school students in weekly classes.....\$50 per student
(except First Communion Year 2)

All non-Catholic school students in First Communion Year 2.....\$75 per student

Catholic school students in First Communion Year 2.....\$25 per student

Payment is required online at the end of the registration process.

† Attendance

Policy Summary

Mass = every weekend and Holy Day of Obligation.
It's what God expects.



Weekly Faith Formation classes = maximum five absences for any reason

Family Faith Formation Sessions for Children preparing for First Communion (both Catholic school and non-Catholic school students) = all three sessions are mandatory

Mass

Weekly participation in Mass and Faith Formation classes is a fundamental and necessary factor in deepening your child's faith and equipping him/her for discipleship. Parents who sign up in our Faith Formation program commit to living this out as a family.

Why? Because it is Christ himself who is fully present in the Eucharist in each Mass. We need the graces we receive from listening to God's Word, coming together as community, and receiving Him in the Eucharist to live as disciples in our world today. Even children, who not yet are old enough to receive First Communion, learn and are prepared for the Sacrament by observing their parents and other adults in Mass. Since the early Church, Christians have realized that faithfulness to the Sunday liturgy is a fundamental part of how we are called to "Keep Holy the Sabbath" day.

Class

Our catechists have only 30 hours per school year to present the Faith in your child(ren)'s classes. Your child(ren) receive 150 hours per subject each year in his or her school. Every hour we have with the children is important!

Things do come up. Children become ill. Families have plans. Therefore, our parish will observe the following attendance policy:

1. Students may miss up to **five classes per year for any reason.**
2. Students who **miss more than five classes per year for any reason will be required to repeat the year.**
3. In case of catastrophic or extraordinary circumstances, kindly contact Sarah Viancourt. **Missing more than five classes on account of sports or other extracurricular activities is not counted as excused.**
4. Parents will be given the chance to opt out of the required "Teaching, Touching Safety" class. Absence from this class is not counted among the five absences.

Now is the time to consider your family's calendar for the year. **When planning any potential absences for the year, the occasional illnesses that come throughout the school year must be accounted for.** In the case of a prolonged illness that causes several absences in a class please contact the Director of Faith Formation at the time of the absences with the note.

It is the responsibility of parents to keep track of their child's absences.



They may check with the Catechist's attendance sheet before or after classes. **However warnings will not be given if a child is getting close in their absences.**

Children arriving up to 10 minutes late are marked as tardy. **Three tardies will equal one absence.** Children arriving more than 10 minutes late will be considered absent.

Does your child need to leave early some Sunday? Early departures require the expressed consent in advance of the Director of Faith Formation, not counting illness.

Caught in traffic? Call Sarah Viancourt at 843.580.8170 so she may alert the catechist. Put this number in your cell phone now!

† Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

Sacraments are tangible encounters with Jesus Christ.

They have extreme importance in the life of a Christian. The Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation) initiate the child into the life of the Church.

The average age of a child to prepare and receive the sacraments are: Infancy for Baptism, and Second Grade for First Communion and First Reconciliation. However this is not the only grade they can be received in. If you have a child that needs to prepare for a Sacrament, please see information below on how to register them.

In order for a child to be prepared for a Sacrament (Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist), that child must attend Faith Formation classes for **one year prior to the year of proximate preparation** for the Sacrament, thus for a total of **two years**. This preparation can be either in a Catholic School, Catholic Homeschooling Program, or in a parish Faith Formation Program setting. Typical ages to receive the Sacraments are Infant for Baptism, Second Grade for First Communion and First Reconciliation, and Eighth Grade for Confirmation.

Catholic School Children

Sacraments are received in the parish and not in the school that they attend. Since much of the Catechetical preparation is done in Catholic schools, students in Catholic schools will only meet a few times per year for Sacrament Preparation instead of weekly. See information below about required meetings.

Older children preparing for First Communion

Students who are in Second Grade (with no prior Faith Formation while in First Grade) sign up for *First Communion Year 1* class.



Students in Third-Fifth Grades sign up for *Sacramental Catch Up Year 1* class.

Students who are in Sixth Grade and above sign up for *Edge* (Grades 6-8) or *Life Teen* (Grades 9-12). Please see the Youth Ministry handbook under *Edge* for more information.

New to our parish? Welcome!

Any child who (1) is new to our parish and (2) has completed one year of preparation in another parish or Catholic School may be admitted to our second year of preparation as long as the parent(s) can provide a letter or email from the previous parish or school certifying the child's satisfactory completion of the first year. Please send the email to Sarah Viancourt at sarah@clare.church.

Special First Communion Requirements

Family Formation Sessions (mandatory)

Family Formation sessions are **mandatory for at least one parent and child to attend**, and are for both Catholic school and non-Catholic school families for the students who are in Sacramental Preparation Year 2 and First Communion Preparation Year 2. They will occur during regular weekly class times and will focus on Formation for parents, the child, and the family as a whole.



There will be three Family Formation Sessions throughout the year, one set specifically for Catholic School families and another for weekly families. **Please consult the Faith Formation calendar (below) to plan for these meetings. Missing a Family Formation session could result in a child's delay of the reception of the Sacrament.**

First Communion Retreat (mandatory)

Our First Communion Retreat will start during children's classes at 10:50 am and will end at 2:00 pm in Bishop England classrooms. The First Communion Retreat is a **mandatory** part of our First Communion prep program for all Catholic school and weekly students. **Each child and one parent is required to attend the retreat. Please put APRIL 29, 2018 on your calendar now. Missing the First Communion retreat could result in a child's delay of the reception of the Sacrament.**

† Older Children Needing Baptism

Welcome! We are glad you have decided to bring your child to be Baptized! All children who are above age seven and in need of Baptism are enrolled in our Rite of Christian Initiation for Children/Teens program. They will participate in the RCIA rites during Masses and will attend Faith Formation classes at the same time as their peers. **See the RCIA sheet for more information.**

All will prepare to be baptized at the Easter Vigil of the first year of preparation and will continue to prepare to receive appropriate Sacraments of Initiation in the second year.

Students who are in Second Grade (with no prior year of Faith Formation) should sign up for First Communion Year 1 class.

Students in Third-Fifth grade (with no prior year of Faith Formation) should sign up for Elementary Sacramental Prep Year 1. If there are not enough students to form a separate class, students will attend their grade's regular class and will have special preparation sessions for Baptism with a Catechist, to be scheduled with the family.



† Class Dismissal

Your children's safety is of the utmost concern to us. Parents are to bring their children to the classroom and to pick them up from the classroom and sign them in and out. Please be on time to pick up your children at the end of class. Do not pick your child up before the bell rings.

Children will be released only to a designated parent or guardian. Parents are to complete the **Child Drop off/Pick up Policy** and list anyone else who will be picking up their child. **Children are not allowed to pick up siblings.**

† Communications

We use the Mailchimp email platform and Remind text system for important updates. Schedules and other important information are posted online at clare.church under Children's Faith Formation.

Please check your email's spam filter if you are not receiving our parish bulletin or Faith Formation emails.

For general Faith Formation text updates, text @clareff to 81010.

For First Communion Year 2 updates, text @fcyr2 to 81010.



† Emergency Closing

If we need to cancel Faith Formation classes for any reason we will send out a text via the program **Remind**. To sign up please text the message **@clareff** to the number **81010**.

† Cell Phones

Students may not bring cell phones to class. If there is an emergency need to reach a student, please call **Sarah Viancourt** at **843.580.8170**. Phones brought to classes will be taken by the catechist and returned at the end of class.



† Teaching, Touching Safety

Every parish in the Diocese of Charleston is required to offer a “Teaching, Touching Safety” class each year to all children. If parents would like to opt out of this class for their child(ren), they must complete and return an opt-out form stating this wish at least one week prior to the scheduled class. Opt out forms will be given out on the first day of class, are available on the parish website, and will be emailed to all registered families. Please see the Faith Formation calendar for this year’s dates for these special classes.

† Expectations of Behavior

Our goals encourage Christian attitudes and growth in self-discipline. We are a community based on the shared acceptance of the message of Jesus Christ. We expect the following from our children:

- Students will be respectful of themselves and others, especially adults. The use of “Yes, Ma’am,” “No, Ma’am,” “Yes, Sir,” and “No, Sir” is expected.
- Students will respect the rights of other students to learn and the Catechist’s responsibility to teach.
- Students will contribute in a positive manner to the classroom learning environment.
- Students will follow the overall class procedures.

If a student displays conduct disruptive to Faith Formation volunteers or another student, **the Catechist will give the student the opportunity to change his/her unacceptable behavior**. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the student will be asked to confer with the Catechist and parents after class.

If the unacceptable behavior continues during another Faith Formation class, the student will talk



with the Director of Faith Formation and a conference will be arranged with the parents. Should the unacceptable behavior continue after the conference, the student will be readmitted to class only with a parent joining them until such time as the unacceptable behavior stops.

† Attire

Students are to maintain a modest appearance. This appearance may be casual, but respectful. Appropriateness of attire will be determined by the Catechist in consultation with the Director of Faith Formation.

† Special Child Custody Situations

It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide copies or documents to the Director of Faith Formation related to child custody and restraining orders, if applicable, and to personally make the Director of Faith Formation and Catechist aware of any unique concerns related thereto.

† Special Needs & Learning Disabilities

We highly encourage you to share with us if your child has a learning disability or special need so we can best help your child learn while they are in our Faith Formation programs. If you would like, please feel free to arrange a meeting with the Director of Faith Formation to discuss how we can help your child excel in their Faith Formation class.

† Role of the Parents in Faith Formation

We cannot teach your children everything they will need to become disciples of Christ alone.

Often in our culture there is can be the thought that the teaching of the faith is mostly the responsibility of the school or parish. However, our faith teaches that parents are the **primary Catechists** to their children. Parents teach not only with their words but often more importantly with their attitudes and actions. Children learn about the world, others, and themselves from the ways their parents approach each of these. Recently, a study conducted by the National Study on Youth and Religion found that **the majority of teenagers named their parents as their number one spiritual influence.**

Saint John Paul II often referred to the family as **“the domestic Church”** because parents provide a child’s first and primary example of faith.



When parents present their children to be baptized, the priest or deacon asks if they understand the great role they have.

“You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?” The parents answer, “Yes.”



This means that parents **promise** to bring their children to Mass each and every weekend as well as every Holy Day. They **promise** to nourish their children in the faith of the Catholic Church through faith formation and the sacraments.

This Baptismal promise also implies that parents will go as a family to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (at least once a year), Catholicism is seen in such a home as a way of life which pervades all moments of one's day rather than an obligation to be fit into one's weekend schedule.

Parents also promise **to be good stewards of this parish**. They will model by their actions and attitudes a sense of joy and charity about sharing their God-given gifts, talents, time and treasure with the parish community and the community at large. Recognizing that everything we have comes from God, parents understand that we are but stewards (caretakers) of these gifts and our ultimate responsibility is to share them with others. Children will naturally learn this joy of sharing as their parents engender in them and model for them the importance of stewardship.

We want to partner with you and support you in this mission you have taken on in bringing up your children in the faith. All that we offer in both Children's and Adult Faith Formation is focused on this goal.

**We are excited to see what
the Lord will do this year in your child's life!**

**And so, from the day we heard,
we have not ceased to pray for you,
asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and
understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,
fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work
and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:9-10**

2017-2018

Children's Faith Formation Calendar (Grades Pre-K to 5th)

@ Bishop England HS, Second Floor Classrooms

Sundays 10:10 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.



CS = Catholic school students

FF = Faith Formation

WK = Weekly non Catholic school students

* = mandatory attendance

FC = First Communion

FR = First Reconciliation

YM = Youth Ministry

** = parental opt-out available (form required)

August 2017

27 All YM and FF Parent Meeting*

30 All YM and FF Parent Meeting*

Pre-K - 5th 6:30 - 7:15 p.m.

6th - 12th 7:30 - 8:15 p.m.

Two dates are offered for your convenience.

Please pick one. Children need not attend

All meetings take place in the BEHS PAC.

September 2017

10 - 17 - 24 Classes

17 FC Family Formation Session 1 CS*

24 FC Family Formation Session 1 WK*

October 2017

1 - 8 - 15 - 22 - 29 Classes

29 FC Family Formation 2 CS*

November 2017

5 - 12 - 19 Classes

5 FC Family Formation Session 2 WK*

26 No Classes - Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2017

3 - 10-17 Classes

17 Family Advent Celebration

24 - 30 No Classes - Christmas Break

January 2018

7 - 14 No regular classes

7 Teaching Touching Safety Class**

14 Teaching Touching Safety Make Up**

21 - 28 Classes

21 FC Family Formation Session 3 CS*

28 FC Family Formation Session 3 WK*

February 2018

4 - 11 - 25 Classes

7 FR (Group 1) - 6:30 p.m.*

10 FR (Group 2) - 10:00 a.m.*

18 No Classes - President's Day

March 2018

4 - 11 - 18- 25 Classes

4 Family Lenten Day

April 2018

15 - 22- 29 Classes

1 No Classes, Easter Sunday

8 No Classes, Spring Retreat

29 First Communion Retreat*

May 2018

6 Last Day of Classes

12 First Communion Mass*