

# ST. JAMES FAITH FORMATION



## PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

### *St. James Religious Education Mission Statement*

The mission of the St. James Faith Formation program is to provide a process whereby children encounter God's loving presence; to encourage them to pursue a faith journey by gaining knowledge through the Bible, liturgy, sacraments, traditional and spontaneous prayer; to cultivate religious education and values in family life; to foster a spirit of community and service to others; and to instill pride in being a Catholic pursuing a lively, celebrated, challenged faith.

**Fr. Josh Brown, Pastor**  
**Meghan Marlow and Ana Lagna Faith Formation Coordinator**

# Parent Handbook

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The staff of St. James is committed to providing a safe environment for all children in our program, in accordance with the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Revised.” (November, 2002). We have taken steps to follow the guidelines outlined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to create a safe environment for each and every child in our program.



Anyone who works with the children in our program is required to attend Safe Environment training. Each person will also have a background check through our diocese. Each catechist is provided with a policy guide manual and is required to sign a code of conduct.

Please discuss the “Know the Rules” on the back of the yearly calendar that is being sent home on the first day of class.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Faith Formation program is offered on Wednesdays beginning in September. The classes last 60 minutes and every grade level is offered at the following times 4:30-5:30 and 6:15-7:15p.m. Classes are for children ages four through 5th grade. A calendar for the upcoming year will be sent home with each child at the time of the first Faith Formation Session.

Please check your child’s folder and the bulletin for changes that may occur with the calendar.

Children who are older than second grade and have not received the sacraments will go through separate classes, as well as the Faith Formation program for preparation. Parents need to call the Faith Formation office at St. James to make arrangements for their child’s preparation.

## SAFETY ISSUES

We ask that parents park in the stalls provided. Traffic is a major concern at Faith Formation, especially before and after the 4:30 time since this is when we contend with the Kearney Catholic traffic.

**CHILDREN IN GRADES PRE, KINDERGARTEN, FIRST AND SECOND MUST BE ESCORTED TO AND FROM THE MEETING PLACE BY EITHER AN ADULT OR A RESPONSIBLE SIBLING.** Children will meet in the foyer to begin sessions to ensure that children are not unattended. We also ask that all children be respectful of others in their words and actions.



## CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

In the event of a storm, the first place to turn to will be the local radio stations after 2:30 p.m. The coordinator will inform the news stations. We will also use Evangelus to let catechists and parents know. If one time is cancelled, **ALL CLASSES WILL BE CANCELLED.** Please remember, it is the parents’ discretion whether they will send their child to Faith Formation during inclement weather.



## DISCIPLINE

Our program works because of many volunteers that come each week, freely giving of their time. The volunteer catechist should not have to tolerate behavior that is not acceptable. If a problem occurs, the catechist relates the situation to the coordinator. If the situation is not resolved, the coordinator will call the parents to help solve the discipline problem.

We will not allow inappropriate language or actions at any time. We ask that parents talk to their children about rules and safety guidelines. In the green folder that is being sent home, there will be a "Know the Rules" sheet for your reference.



## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken and turned in after each class. Absences will be noted. The program coordinator will text the parents to open communication about the reason. We especially want good attendance in the sessions of sacrament preparation. We are always pleased with the attendance of our classes and appreciative when we receive communication informing us when a child is going to be absent due to illness or travel. Please take this commitment seriously and make Wednesday attendance a part of your child's routine.

Parents may be required to attend informative meetings, especially regarding sacramental preparation. Thank you in advance for cooperating with these requests.

## TUITION

A fee of \$50 is charged per child to the family with the exception of the third child in the family; then the fee is \$25 and the fourth or any other additional child's fee will be waived. No family should exceed \$125. If there is a hardship in paying the tuition, please call and discuss the situation with the coordinator.



## SUPPLIES

All supplies are furnished by the Faith Formation program. Any donations of crayons, pencils, etc. are greatly appreciated.

## Curriculum

The Sacramental Preparation/2nd grade curriculum uses *Spirit of Truth* by Sophia Institute. This text has been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.C.C.B.). Other grades will follow a 3 year lesson cycle so that all grades are learning the same topic to enable family conversations. Throughout the year, your child will be bringing home a homework page. There is no penalty if not finished, but this can be turned in to enter for a prize. This is just meant to be a positive incentive to talk about faith and think about faith at home. Please take some time to view this with your child.

## HEALTH

Should your child have a fever or vomited in the past 24 hours, it is best he/she stays home to limit exposure and promote wellness.

It would be very helpful to inform the coordinator if your child has any health problems; for example, food allergies, behavioral challenges, learning requirements, physical limitations, etc. Also, please communicate with us if your child has other concerns that would be helpful for the catechist to know.



## FOOD & DRINK

We appreciate the cooperation from our parents that no food or drink be brought into the school for individuals. We try to monitor the food and drinks in the classroom to keep rooms as clean as possible. Food for the class in celebration is lovely; we ask that you discuss this with the teacher in order to be aware of allergy concerns.



## COMMUNICATION

Please check your child's folder every week as we send home many notes throughout the year. Also, please check the church bulletin for various notices and information. We do our very best to communicate important dates to keep our families aware of what is taking place. Please keep the yearly calendar as a reference throughout the year.

**E-MAIL & Texting Through Evangelus** or contact Meghan Marlow at 402-490-1163 or Ana Laguna at 308-293-4743 or email [elemff@stjameschurchkearney.org](mailto:elemff@stjameschurchkearney.org).

**It is very important that we obtain your email address and cell phone number, if at all possible.**

We would like to obtain e-mail addresses and cell numbers of our families. This will help us better communicate with our families, especially in the instance of an emergency cancellation, etc. Please email the church office at [Elemff@stjameschurchkearney.org](mailto:Elemff@stjameschurchkearney.org) with your email address and cell number if you did not give it to us at registration or if it has changed.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

At the time of your child's baptism, you made a commitment to raise your child in the practice of the faith. Thank you for the steps you are taking by bringing your child to Faith Formation. It is also of the greatest importance that you pray with your child, talk of faith traditions, and that you bring your child to Mass each week. We are there to guide you and assist in their walk of faith, but you are your child's primary catechist.