

*Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish
46 Stone Street
Danbury, Connecticut 06810*

**FAITH FORMATION
HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS**



Then the children were brought to him that he may lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

~Matthew 19:13-14



Dear Faith Formation Family,

Faith formation is a life-long process. During this process, each person grows toward a mature understanding of their faith. A deepened relationship with God is nurtured through this process. The work which is begun at Baptism is then enriched and deepened through Christian formation in the home and through a formal process within the local parish community. The aim of this process, called catechesis, is to nurture people in Christian discipleship.

Our Mission of Catechesis at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church is to:

- Support the religious formation which occurs in the home
- Foster enthusiasm to live the Catholic Faith
- Give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Encourage meaningful participation in the communal, sacramental and liturgical life of the Parish

Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children ... Their participation in the life of the parish – above all in the Sunday Eucharist – their willingness to evangelize and serve others, and the parish also provides preparation for sacraments and assists parents in preparing their child for those all important moments on the faith journey - the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, as well other sacraments and special events.

Sacred Heart of Jesus is blessed with a wonderful group of catechists to help you as well. One of the important tools needed in this lofty endeavor is a good textbook to be used in classes. We are excited about the new textbook series we will be using this year – Sadlier Publishing's *We Believe with Project Disciple* for Grades K through Grade 6, and *We Live Our Faith* for Grades 7 & 8. We encourage you to visit Sadlier's Website www.webelieveweb.com to take a look at our new books. You will also find links for parents with games, activities, and other resources to do with your child at home.

With our faith formation classes and activities, we aim to assist the parents of our parish in bringing their children up as disciples of Jesus Christ who know and love him.

Please contact us at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

In Christ's Name,

Deacon John Esterheld

Carol Bates

Co-Directors of Faith Formation



Catechetical Staff

Catechists:

Kindergarten	Janice McNamara
Grade One	Nancy Bertrand
Grade Two	Janet Gaetano
Grade Three	Pat Saviano
Grade Four	Geraldine Lancey
Grade Five	Joe Kieras
Grade Six	Bill Hagan
Grade Seven	Scott Bertrand
Grade Eight	Karen Cerno

Catechist Aides & Substitutes:

Patricia Sghia
Anabela Signorelli

Liturgy of the Word for Children:

Melissa Barbagallo
Ruth Doran
Mike Talarico

Lord, you told us that laborers for the vineyard would be few and that we should pray to the Lord of the Harvest in the hope that many would respond. You have answered our prayers by sending us catechists for your vineyard.

Bless these men and women who have responded to your call to the ministry of catechesis. May they be filled with zeal for your Church, with care for those they catechize, and with love for your Word of Life. Let your Spirit come upon them so that your Word may echo through their teaching and through the witness of their lives. Through our catechists, may the members of our parish whom they teach be transformed into witnesses of your Word. And may these catechists receive the blessing your Son promised to all who labor in the vineyard. Amen.

Registration – Families wishing to register their children for Faith Formation classes are asked to register as members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.

Note: A copy of your child’s baptismal certificate is needed for new registrants.

Sacraments – The Sacraments of **First Reconciliation & First Eucharist** are celebrated by children in Grade Two. Parent meetings, special workshops and retreat experiences take place throughout the school year. First Reconciliation takes place during Lent at our Parish Reconciliation Service and First Eucharist is celebrated in May. (See the Faith Formation Calendar included in this handbook for dates and details).

Confirmation is celebrated by young people in Grade Eight. There are parent meetings, workshops, activities, and retreats scheduled for the Confirmation candidates as well as a group of assignments to be completed before the celebration of the Sacrament. Mrs. Karen Cerno is the 8th grade catechist and Confirmation Coordinator.

Student Attendance and Arrival System – Regular attendance at Faith Formation is important for ongoing spiritual growth. Students are asked to arrive at the school gym promptly by 9:00am. We will begin our session with a prayer and announcements. The students will then go to class with their catechists.

Student Dismissal System - Children are dismissed from the gym at 10:15am. For the safety of our children, parents are asked to park their cars in a legal parking place* and pick up their child in the gym. Children in Grades Kindergarten to Grade Six will not be allowed to leave the building without an adult. If your child needs to be released early from class please tell Carol or the catechist before class. For the safety of our children, please do not allow the children to sit on the stage or play on the steps.

***Parents: Please do not park your car in the road in front of the school when dropping off or picking up your child.**

Student Code of Conduct in the Classroom

Respect:

- † Listen to and follow the instructions of the catechist.
- † Be kind to fellow classmates. Bullying or unkind actions will not be tolerated.
- † Respect other students' belongings.
- † Help keep the classroom neat and assist with clean up after projects.
- † Do not leave the room without the catechist's permission.
- † Use of the bathroom during class is limited; prepare for class by using the bathroom at home, or just prior to entering the classroom.

Discipline:

- † **First Offense:** Student will be warned by the Catechist and reminded of the Student Code of Conduct.
- † **Second Offense:** Student will be sent to Carol Bates, Co-Director of Faith Formation, to discuss behavior and will be asked to go back to class and apologize to the catechist and the class.
- † **Third Offense:** If unacceptable behavior continues, the student will be sent to Carol Bates, and parents will be called.

Emergency Closings - In the event of inclement weather (or other emergency) which would necessitate the cancellation of classes, catechists will receive a phone call on Sunday morning. Notice of closings will also be on WFSB-TV, WTNH-TV, and WLAD AM Radio.

Faith Formation Calendar – Along with regular classes, meetings and workshops, we have many special events planned for this year. Please take a look at the Faith Formation Calendar and Schedule of Special Events. We’ve added a new event called “While You Wait...” We will be offering coffee and some simple adult faith formation for parents during your child’s class time.



Sacred Heart of Jesus Office of Faith Formation

46 Stone Street * Danbury, CT 06810

Phone: 203-743-0689 * Fax: 748-9168

Email: sh_dre@snet.net * Website: www.sacredhrtchurch.org

Co-Directors:

Deacon John Esterheld Phone: 203-743-5337

Carol Bates Phone: 203-791-8707 (Home) 203-313-0811 (Cell)

Email: sh_dre@snet.net