

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## General Information

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*Policies apply to all age groups unless otherwise noted.*

### Mass Attendance

Mass attendance is an essential and central part of passing on the faith. St. Monica's Faith Formation Program complements, but does not replace, your child's participation at the Sunday Liturgy with their family.

### Safety

The safety of your children is very important to us. To ensure their safety, we ask the following:

- **All K-5 parents—not siblings—are required to park their cars and escort children to and from the classroom, at the beginning and end of class.**
- Park ONLY in designated parking spaces; respect handicap and reserved parking spaces, such as fire lane and staff parking.
- Children should arrive no earlier than ten minutes before the beginning of class.
- Do not leave a child in a classroom without a catechist present.
- Pick up your children PROMPTLY at dismissal time.



### Class Attendance

Every effort should be made to have your child attend class. Absences should be due only to illness or family emergency. In the instance of a child having more than one custodial home, please contact the Faith Formation Office so that we may better serve your family's needs.

- Parents should communicate absences to their child's grade coordinator.
- If your child misses more than four classes, he or she will be at risk of an incomplete on his/her record for the year.
- Parents of elementary students (grades K-5) are responsible for obtaining the lesson for a missed class. They should help the child complete the lesson and return it to the catechist.

### Conduct

Students are expected to participate in class activities and discussions. Life as a Christian is a commitment to live by the example of Jesus Christ. This includes accepting responsibility for conduct and actions, along with the commitment to respect and serve others.

### Discipline

The catechist will handle normal discipline issues. If a problem becomes persistent, the student will be sent to the appropriate Director or Coordinator. A continuing problem may necessitate a call to the parents. A parent may be requested to attend class with a child in extreme cases and, ultimately, removal from the program may be necessary. Disciplinary infractions include, but are not limited to: abusive language, fighting, vandalism, stealing, disrespect to the catechist or other students, and leaving the building during class time.

### *Weather*

If Gwinnett County Schools are closed for severe or inclement weather, classes will not be held. Go to [www.saintmonicas.com](http://www.saintmonicas.com) for cancellation information.

### *Special Needs*

Our goal is to provide a positive, affirming atmosphere in which all students can learn and grow in their faith. Please let us know if your child has any medical conditions or learning or physical needs that may affect his/her learning experience.

## **Safe Environment Training for Students**

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The Archdiocese of Atlanta requires *students* in parish faith formation programs to view a Safe Environment Training called *Virtus – Protecting God’s Children*. We encourage parents and other interested adults to visit [archatl.com/ministries-services/safe-environment/parent-information/](http://archatl.com/ministries-services/safe-environment/parent-information/) to learn more about the training program.

On the scheduled day of training, students will watch a short video and complete age-appropriate activities to reinforce the message. The training date is as follows:

- Grades 1-5 5:30 pm and 6:30 pm (during class) on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, in Narthex
- Grades 6-12 6:00 pm on Wednesday, September 25, 2019, in Narthex

Recognizing the role of parents as the primary educators of their children, the Archdiocese of Atlanta requests that parents share this material with their children. Please discuss these safety issues with your child in a way that suits your child’s age and level of development.

If you feel this material is inappropriate for your children, you may choose to opt out of the training. Children whose families opt out will do other work on the scheduled day of training.

If your child has not opted out and does not attend class that day, he or she will be considered absent.

Parents are encouraged to attend as well. For more information, please contact your child’s grade coordinator.

# FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS

## Kindergarten Curriculum

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Children age five (by September 1st of the current year) and older are encouraged to participate in Faith Formation classes. Although formal religious instruction is not required at this age, the program seeks to foster devotion in the hearts of the children and provides an initial positive experience of Catholic living and worship. Some children may experience difficulty adapting to group situations; consider your child and your family's situation before making this commitment.

The Kindergarten faith formation program uses the Image of God curricula. The Image of God curriculum from Ignatius Press is divided into four units and contains twenty-four chapters. Some chapters focus on the core teachings of the Catholic faith that are foundational to Catholic life; other chapters are devoted to Bible stories.



## Elementary Curriculum (Grades 1-5)

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### *Faith and Life*

Elementary Faith Formation classes use Ignatius Press's *Faith and Life* series for first through fifth grade and for the Home Study program.

The doctrine taught in grades one through five is drawn from the four pillars of faith (Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer) as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These important elements of Catholic belief are woven throughout each grade level and are also taught as separate strands in each grade. This balanced approach ensures that children will come to know, love, and live the rich heritage of the faith we are proud to profess in Christ Jesus. Lessons are presented developmentally to help your child recognize that what we believe, how we worship, how we live, and how we pray make a difference in our lives.

The Sacred Scriptures are the heart of Catholic Christian life. Through the Bible, God's Word nourishes and revitalizes our life of faith. For that reason, Scripture is included in every chapter of our curriculum. Scripture is also taught as a separate strand throughout the program. Through these Scripture chapters, your child will grow in his or her knowledge and love of God's Word.

### *Prayers*

Prayer is essential for every Christian, adults as well as children, for it is through prayer that we, as people of faith, deepen our relationships with Jesus Christ.

As parents, it is your responsibility to share and nurture a prayer life with your children. Encourage your family to set aside specific time for talking to the Lord. Since imitation is the best way to learn to pray, no matter what age, share many forms of prayer with your family. Some of the many forms of prayer available to us include Sunday Liturgy, traditional and spontaneous prayer, meditation, *lectio divina*, and journaling.

Additionally, the importance of memorization cannot be understated. Memorizing prayers gives us a treasure chest that can be opened and explored at any time, for they are carried within our hearts and minds. As such, we ask all children—and adults—to be familiar with and know the traditional prayers of our faith listed below at age-appropriate levels.

Pre-K	<i>Sign of the Cross, Grace Before Meals</i> , age-appropriate familiarization with Sunday Mass
Kindergarten	All of the above plus <i>Hail Mary</i> and <i>Our Father</i>
Grade One	All of the above plus <i>Glory Be</i> , <i>St. Monica Parish Prayer</i> , and actual participation at <i>Sunday Mass</i>
Grade Two	All of the above plus <i>Act of Contrition</i> , as well as reading and learning appropriate Mass parts
Grade Three	All of the above plus the <i>Rosary</i>
Grade Four	All of the above plus <i>Nicene Creed</i>
Grade Five	All of the above plus <i>Stations of the Cross</i>

### *The Home Study Program*

Families who cannot make the above session times or who would like to undertake their children's faith formation themselves may choose the Home Study Program option. Families who so choose must be committed to spending weekly time in preparation for and in discussion with their child for the "in home" sessions.

#### Grades 1-8

- Home Study students use the Ignatius Press Faith and Life curriculum. Families are provided with a parent/teacher book (which must be returned), a student text, and an activity book.
- Students must study all chapters, complete the chapter reviews and unit tests, and submit all scores 80% and above (retake lower scores until a score of 80% or better is achieved).

### First Reconciliation & First Communion

Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion is a separate module from the weekly Faith Formation classes.

Parents of eligible children must listen to three online conferences on the Eucharist and attend three scheduled parent meetings. To accommodate busy schedules, we offer each meeting three times. These meetings are designed to help parents renew their own sense of faith and commitment to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, as well as to distribute the necessary materials and provide practical advice about preparing their children for the Sacraments. Please reserve these dates on your calendar; there are no make up meetings. See the calendar on the next page for dates and times.

The child must complete the books and material at home with the parent, attend the First Reconciliation/First Communion retreat *with a parent*, and attend the assigned rehearsal for First Communion. The retreat and rehearsal are essential for the children's preparation and help reduce any stress that the children may be experiencing.

A copy of the child's Baptismal certificate must be provided upon registration. Your child cannot receive the Sacraments until this is turned in.



*To be eligible to receive First Communion this year,*

**Children must:**

- Be registered, active members of the parish.
- Attend Sunday Mass every week and on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Be in second grade or above. (If your child is in 8th grade or above with no religious education background, refer to the Christian Initiation information on page 30.)
- Have satisfactorily completed the previous year of Faith Formation. New parishioners should submit transfer records to the Faith Formation office upon registration.
- Be currently registered to attend **one** of the following:
  - St. Monica's Faith Formation classes or Faith Formation Home Study **OR**
  - Catholic School *or* Home School. Home school must be in an accredited home school program and approved by the Director of First Reconciliation and First Communion.
    - Please note: there is a \$50.00 materials fee for those not registered in our Saint Monica Faith Formation program.
- Complete Sacramental prep workbooks at home, with parents, and Mass reflection sheets.
- Attend First Reconciliation/First Communion Retreat with a parent or guardian.
- Attend rehearsal for First Communion Mass.

**Parent(s) must:**

- Register their children for Faith Formation class.
- Register their children for First Reconciliation and First Communion.
- Submit a copy of the child's Baptismal certificate.
- Listen to three presentations on the Real Presence of the Eucharist. (Links sent via email.)
- Attend one general information meeting.
- Attend one meeting for First Reconciliation.
- Attend one meeting for First Eucharist.
- Attend First Reconciliation/First Communion Retreat with their child.

For more information, contact Cyndy Furguele at [CyndyF@saintmonicas.com](mailto:CyndyF@saintmonicas.com) or 678-584-9947 ext. 126.

## Registration

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*Please be sure that you are a registered parishioner at St. Monica's before registering for Faith Formation classes. If you are new to St. Monica's and your children have attended classes at another parish, please submit a letter from your former parish verifying their attendance.*

### ***How to Register for Classes (K through High School)***

Registration for all classes is ONLINE only!

1. Read this Policy update thoroughly.
2. Complete the current year's Faith Formation registration form for Elementary (grades K-5), Middle School (grades 6-8), or High School (grades 9-12).
  - a. For grades K-8: go to [www.saintmonicas.com](http://www.saintmonicas.com) and follow the links to Faith Formation.
  - b. For high school: go to [stmyouth.com](http://stmyouth.com).
3. Calendars for all grades are available on the websites, on the counter in the lobby of the Faith Formation building, and in this booklet.

### ***Registration Fee for Faith Formation***

	Payment received:	
	BY 7/31	AFTER 7/31
<b><i>Grades K-8</i></b>		
Child of Catechist or Core Team member	\$40.00 per child	\$40.00 per child
1, 2, or 3 children/youth	\$80.00 per child	\$100.00 per child
4 or more children/youth	\$300.00 total	\$350.00 total
<b><i>Grades 9-12</i></b>		
Already Confirmed	\$50.00 per youth	\$50.00 per youth
If in Year 1 or Year 2 of Confirmation preparation	\$80.00 per youth	\$100.00 per youth
<b><i>First Reconciliation and First Communion Materials Fee</i></b>		
Children enrolled in a Saint Monica Faith Formation program	N/A	
Children not enrolled in a Saint Monica Faith Formation program		\$50.00

### ***Notes***

- All registrations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
  - You will be contacted if we are unable to accommodate your first choice.
  - Every effort is made to schedule siblings in the same session.
- Class lists will be posted the weekend before class begins.
- Registration forms received after August 1st may not be processed in time for the first class of the semester.