

St. Jude Faith Formation Handbook

FAITH IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY



Focusing on Augustinian Core Values

The New Lenox area and St. Jude parish have been placed under the care of St. Augustine. Our priests, the priests and brothers at Providence Catholic High School as well as the Augustinian nuns at the monastery have all been here in New Lenox for many years. St. Augustine has truly staked his claim here! An Augustinian community is rooted in the core values of:

Truth, Unity and Love.

Truth (Veritas): We are rooted in the truth about ourselves as children of God through our Christian baptism, we are aware that God is the source of all truth. With faith and reason, like two great wings, we fly to Truth. St. Augustine insists that we are to “teach the truth in love.”

Unity (Unitas): The Christian understanding of being one with one another is based on our common origin in creation by God and re-creation in Christ. The relationships within the community are nourished by the oneness of Christ with each of us and His presence in the community. To be in unity with each other is an eagerness to serve the common good with respect for one another.

Love (Caritas): The great commandment of Christ is to love God and to love neighbor. Caritas is “active friendship” that encompasses both love of God and neighbor. It is when the head and heart move into action, often with sacrifice, for the good of another or a community. Love is willing or wanting the good of all others, embracing the notion that God is love as both contemplative and active.

Please review this handbook before registering; once you have registered, complete the electronic acknowledgment form on our website.



FAITH FORMATION CONTACT **INFORMATION**

Director of Faith Formation Curriculum and Programming
Jen Lehardt 815-463-4266 jlehardt@stjudes.org

Faith Formation Coordinator
Berni Kacor 815-463-4262 bkacor@stjudes.org

Faith Formation Programming Assistant
Ashley Stephens 815-463-4291 amstephens@stjudes.org

FAITH FORMATION EXPLAINED...

Faith Formation Defined: Faith Formation is the *lifelong* process of our communal journey of coming to God; knowing Him, loving Him and being in union with Him. The Catholic Community of St. Jude envisions this journey as a way to promote knowledge of our shared faith, nurture our intimate relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and fulfill our baptismal call as disciples of Jesus Christ. St. Jude balances our program to teach what it means to be Catholic, to teach what one should **know** about the Catholic faith and prepare each person to **live** the Sacramental life of the Catholic Church. It is through encountering Jesus that our children will recognize and follow Him; therefore, this requires an intentional journey, rather than a series of tasks. We honor and respect you as parents and the primary catechists and teachers in your home while collaborating with you to help guide this foundational and necessary journey.

Primary Source of Faith Formation: The parent/guardian and home life provide the primary source of Faith Formation for an individual. The faith experience in one's home will impact one's participation in religious faith-building far more than any catechetical program. A home experience focused on knowing, loving and serving God through the Mass, Scripture, prayer and service is essential to seek lifelong spiritual growth.

Required Parent Formation Sessions

Parents are required to attend an orientation session for their elementary students on either **Wednesday, September 2nd** or **Wednesday, September 9th**; and the orientation session with their students in Confirmation Preparation on either **Sunday, September 27th** or **Monday, September 28th**.

Formational Parent Sessions are designed to ignite and inspire your heart which creates a hunger to learn more about our rich Catholic Faith. When we are inspired and intrigued, we talk about what we've learned, causing a ripple effect of faith in our homes, families, friends, work environments and beyond. THIS is our life's work! To help everyone else know our Lord and lead them on the path to eternal life with Him. If we are not doing that in some way, we miss the mark.

But we are not expected to do this alone!

"I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."
They did Him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising

God. - Luke 24:49, 52-53

Our required parent sessions will be outside of our children's Faith Formation sessions, on separate occasions or during a parish event. Each session will be about an hour and a half and must be attended in person by at least one parent. Details for these sessions will be shared as they are planned. Often times, babysitting will be offered if it doesn't make sense to have children attend the session.

Upcoming formational parent sessions will be **Friday, September 25th**; **Wednesday, October 14th**; or **Tuesday, October 27th** (choose 1 of these 3 dates). More parent sessions to come as they are scheduled.

Weekend Masses Available to Attend

Saturday 5pm

Sunday 7am, 9am & 11am

Families Living Faith: Grades 1-6 In-Person Sessions (FLF)

In our Families Living Faith (FLF) program, children in Grades 1-6 come together at St. Jude for an hour and a half class sessions according to the schedule below. In these sessions, students are introduced to a new unit of study by catechists in age-appropriate classrooms. Parents will be given a Continue the Conversation sheet after each class - ways to continue the conversation on the lessons taught by their catechist. Other family and parent sessions that build on the curriculum and Sacramental preparation will be scheduled throughout the year to supplement our spiritual growth.

These additional sessions will be communicated as we can schedule them. Families sign up for one of the following session days/times and attend that session throughout the year.

****In-person catechesis is essential to form our children in faith and to give them a sense of family life in our community. All sessions MUST be attended or made up in person. In any Sacramental Prep year, missing more than 2 sessions without attending another class will result in your student re-taking the year and receiving their Sacrament one year later.**

Missing 2 sessions is 29% of the curriculum year. What would happen if an athlete missed 29% of the practices during a season?

Please notify our team if your child needs to schedule a make-up session. We are very happy to help.**

Doctor's notes may be requested with absences.

****TENTATIVE DATES FOR THE 2026-27 CURRICULUM YEAR ONLY**

Sunday A 10:15 am

September 13
October 4
November 1
January 10
February 7
March 7
April 11

Tuesday A 5:30 pm

September 22
October 6
November 3
January 5
February 16
March 9
April 13

Wednesday A 5:30 pm

September 23
October 7
November 4
January 6
February 17
March 11
April 14

Sunday B 10:15 am

September 27
October 18
November 8
January 24
February 21
March 14
April 18

Tuesday B 6:00 pm

September 29
October 20
November 10
January 12
February 23
March 16
April 20

Wednesday B 6:00 pm

September 30
October 21
November 11
January 13
February 24
March 17
April 21

Sacramental Preparation
At least one parent is expected to participate in Sacramental Preparation sessions with their child. Other Sacramental preparation sessions will be scheduled during the curriculum year.

First Reconciliation Family Preparation Sessions
Wednesday, December 2nd OR
Wednesday, December 9th
6:00 pm

First Reconciliation Services
Wednesday, January 20th OR
Wednesday, January 27th
6:00 pm

First Eucharist Family Preparation Retreats
Saturday, April 10th OR April 17th
time TBD

First Eucharist Mass dates are
Saturday, May 8th OR May 15th
First Eucharist Practice dates are
Wednesday, May 5th OR 12th
times and dates to be assigned.

Families Living Faith Procedures

Session Arrival

Cars will enter the St. Jude campus using Third Avenue to avoid traffic and congestion when Masses or events take place in the Church. Please be careful of people walking and other cars. Park your car in the west parking lot and walk your children to **Door #6 no earlier** than 5 minutes before class starts. You may walk your children into the upstairs hallway or gym. Your children will then walk to their classrooms or, if their catechist is late, stay in the gym until their catechist arrives. After drop-off at door #6, please exit via Third Avenue. Do not use Second Avenue.

As a reminder, parent sessions will be communicated to you when scheduled. Locations of these meetings will be given at that time.

Dismissal

Cars will enter and exit the St. Jude campus using Third Avenue. Parents are expected to come in for their children; do not let them walk out to the car by themselves.

On Sundays: park in the west parking lot and go to door #6 of the school building. Doors will open at 11:45 am, no sooner. Your children will be in the gym waiting for you.

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays: park in the main church parking lot and enter through the main church doors. Each class will remain together and grade numbers will be marked on the pews to help you find your child.

The doors of the Church will open at 7:00 pm for A sessions and 7:30 pm for B sessions.

During this pick-up procedure, it will be important to remain quiet and respectful in the worship space being in the presence of God. There may also be others engaged in prayer at this time and/or choir practice in progress.

Session Supplies

Children should bring a folder, pencil, glue stick, scissors, crayons and markers in a backpack or bag to each Faith Formation class session. Children will receive their textbook on the first day of class and should bring it as well as all of their supplies with them each time we meet. All other materials or supplies needed for the class session will be provided. Please be sure to check your child's folder at home as there will be a Continue the Conversation to continue sheet along with the activity they completed in class.

Forgotten Items, Late Arrivals and Early Dismissal

Doors to the building will be locked during Faith Formation class sessions. Parents bringing any forgotten items should drop them off at door #7 by ringing the doorbell. Late arrivals and early dismissals must also use door #7. If you will be picking up your child early, please contact the Faith Formation office in advance and send a written note with your child to be given to their catechist or office staff in the hallway upon arrival.

Illness

We encourage children who do not feel well to stay home to recuperate. If a child becomes ill during session (fever, cough, headache, stomachache or verbally communicate that they are not feeling well), we will contact a parent/guardian immediately.

Absence/Missed Monthly Session

If your child misses a class session, an email will be sent out explaining make-up options. If you know that your child will be absent from a session, please inform the Faith Formation office in advance. To report an absence, please call the absentee line of the Faith Formation workroom at 815-463-4261.

Parent Expectation

Parents are expected to continue the conversation at home, use any parent resources provided, pray with their children every day, attend Mass as a family every week in-person and guide them in the Sacramental life of the Church. You may view parent resources on the Faith Formation page at stjude.org. These materials may be updated periodically. Parents are also asked to help their child complete the monthly unit review as this is your time for catechesis and review at home. Parents will be required to attend other curriculum workshops with their children along with parent meetings scheduled throughout the year and other events here at St. Jude. All required meeting dates will be communicated through newsletters, email and the website.

Family Expectation

Outside of your child's attendance for our class sessions and parents working with their children on completing the lessons within the workbook, families are expected to attend Mass every weekend in-person and complete monthly Family Catholic Mass reflections – submitted online - for a total of seven during the Faith Formation year. Also, families must participate in Explore 4 events/activities at St. Jude and complete Explore 4 reflections - submitted online - for a total of four during the Faith Formation year. These are explained on pages 17-18 in this handbook.

Progress Reports

Midway throughout the course of the Faith Formation year, progress reports will be available upon request for each elementary-aged child. This progress report will inform parents of child attendance and the number of completed Unit Reviews as well as Mass and Explore Four reflections submitted. In any Sacramental Prep year, if your child misses more than 2 required sessions as outlined previously, you will be notified that the year will need to be re-taken and their Sacraments will be conferred at a later time.

Unit Reviews

Catechists hand out Continue the Conversation sheets at the end of every session. These sheets will outline ways to continue the conversation at home along with assigned prayers for your family to pray each day. As primary catechists and teachers at home, parents must continue talking about the topics on the sheets, experiences at Mass each week, the Sacraments and complete the unit reviews. Workbook unit reviews will be checked in at the following month's in-person class session. Families are expected to complete all 7 Unit Reviews in order to move on to the next year.

Communication with Families

To more effectively communicate with parents/guardians, we will primarily be communicating information by email, using Flocknote. Please be sure you are not unsubscribed from Flocknote or you will not be kept updated.

Children with Special Needs

The Faith Formation team asks parents to provide information of any physical, emotional or behavioral conditions of each student on the registration forms or as they arise throughout the year. This information helps our staff to best minister to your child. We do have a catechist with special education training to consult with about children with special needs.

Please contact the Faith Formation office for more information.

Switch of Class Assignment for In-Person Sessions

One permanent class change may be requested prior to the start of Faith Formation sessions in September. A second request or a request after sessions begin may result in a \$25 processing fee.

Dress Code

All clothing must be clean, modest and appropriate. We do visit the Church often! Those who choose to ignore our dress policy will receive a notice to be signed by the parents.

- Clothing which displays obscene phrases or immoral and illegal behavior may not be worn.
- Occult (satanic/devil worship) clothing or related symbols may not be worn.
- Clothing or accessories which promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco or violence may not be worn.
- Uniform equipment is not allowed on premises (i.e. shoulder, knee, chin pads or shoes with cleats).
- Hats and sunglasses must be removed upon entry to any building for scheduled class sessions and events.

Electronic Devices

Students are not allowed to use electronic devices (including cell phones) during Faith Formation sessions. All electronic devices being used will be confiscated and brought to Faith Formation staff for parent pick-up. *Note:* It is our preference that students do not bring cell phones to class. If a parent desires a child to have a cell phone, the cell phone must be kept out of sight and silenced.

Behavior/ Discipline

Disciplinary situations and child behavior cannot be discussed with anyone except the Director of the program or the Pastor. **Procedure for disciplinary action will be as follows:**

1st Offense: Student will receive a verbal warning from the catechist.

2nd Offense: Student will be sent to the Faith Formation workroom to speak with the Director of the program. If they understand what they did wrong and are willing to apologize, they may return to the classroom.

3rd Offense: If the student needs to be sent to the office a second time, a parent will be called to discuss their child's misbehavior. The student will be suspended until further notice.

4th Offense: Parents will find alternative means of Faith Formation for their child.

Procedure to Resolve a Problem or Concern

If a parent has a problem or concern, the parent is asked to contact the Director of Faith Formation. The Director will discuss the issue with the related parties and if necessary bring it to the attention of the Pastor.

Food Policy

It is the responsibility of the Faith Formation staff and catechists to make certain that children with food allergies are safe at our program. **To ensure the safety of our students, please refrain from sending your child with food during class time.**

If food is necessary due to a medical condition, please contact the Faith Formation office.

Drug/Alcohol Policy

No possession or use of drugs or alcohol on St. Jude property will be tolerated. Anyone in violation of this policy will be asked to leave immediately. Law enforcement will be called if necessary.

Weapons Policy

In order to protect the adults and children attending sessions, weapons of any kind will not be allowed on the St. Jude property. Threats will be taken very seriously. Law enforcement will be called if safety is compromised.

Families Called to Table: Grades 1-6 Home Learning (FCT)

This program is not offered for students in any Sacramental Prep years. While we highly recommend that children attend Faith Formation in person to begin the foundational aspects of community and fellowship here at St. Jude, we understand that families may have special circumstances.

Families Called to Table (FCT) is a homeschool Faith Formation program in which families receive curriculum support including children's workbooks, lesson plans and online support for parents and youth. Parents are expected to teach all three chapters of the unit at home and help children complete and turn in the unit review each month. Families will have access to grade-level video lessons that will aid in teaching the first chapter of each unit. Families in FCT are expected to do the following along with teaching all lessons at home:

***Turn in 7 Unit Reviews from the workbook via email (preferred) or online as an eAssessment.**

***Weekly Mass Attendance in-person with 7 Monthly Family Catholic Mass Reflections (See page 17)**

***4 Life of the Parish Events "Explore 4" Reflections (See pages 17-18)**

Unit Reviews

Parents will teach all three chapters of the unit at home and complete the monthly unit review. Children may complete the paper unit reviews in their workbook and parents can send us scans or pictures of the completed pages. Children may also complete the unit review as an eAssessment (links can be found on the Faith Formation page at stjudes.org). Unit reviews are due on a set day during the following month. Unit Reviews are checked for completion, not accuracy.

Families are expected to complete all 7 Unit Reviews.

Families Called to Table Procedures

Parent Expectation

Parents are expected to teach all three chapters of each unit at home using the provided parent resources. You can view these resources on the Faith Formation page at stjudes.org. This page will be updated periodically. Parents are also asked to help their child complete the monthly unit review.

All parents are required to attend any orientations, parent sessions or meetings as well as St. Jude Faith Formation special events communicated to families throughout the year. These dates will be sent by newsletter and email invitations as they are scheduled.

Family Expectation

Outside of parents working with their children on completing the lessons within the workbook, families are expected to attend Mass every week in-person and complete monthly Family Catholic Mass reflections - submitted online - for a total of seven during the Faith Formation year. Also, families must participate in Explore 4 events/activities at St. Jude and complete Explore 4 reflections - submitted - online for a total of four during the Faith Formation year. These reflections are explained on pages 17-18 in this handbook.

Communication with Families

To more effectively communicate with parents/guardians, we will primarily be communicating information by email, using Flocknote. Please be sure you are not unsubscribed from Flocknote or you will not be kept updated.

Progress Reports

Midway throughout the course of the Faith Formation year, progress reports will be available upon request for each elementary-aged child. This progress report will inform parents of attendance and the number of completed Unit Reviews as well as Mass and Explore Four reflections submitted.

Children's Liturgy of the Word - CLOW

Children (1st - 3rd grade) are invited to Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) when available. We would like to bring back CLOW and are in need of homilists, readers and angels. Below is a short explanation of each role. If you want to volunteer, please contact our Faith Formation team at 815-463-4260.

Reader (lector): The readers will read the scripture readings of the day out loud to the children.

Homilist: The homilist provides the children with a short, age-appropriate explanation of the readings.

Angels: Teens or adults assist children in walking to and from the Church.

Switching to Families Living Faith (In-person learning)

If your family is part of the Families Called to Table program and you would like to switch to the in-person Families Living Faith Program, please contact the Faith Formation office two weeks prior to your desired in-person session. Please note that as the year progresses, space at in-person classes will be limited and we cannot guarantee placement at your desired in-person session.

First Reconciliation & First Eucharist Preparation

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are typically received in a child's second consecutive year of family Faith Formation. Children as young as seven years old are considered to have reached the age of reason and are eligible to receive First Reconciliation and First Eucharist as long as they have received 2 consecutive years of in-person formation. In the younger grades, children receive two years of religious instruction with additional preparation for the Sacraments in the second year. Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in our parish takes its form in our class sessions, family sessions in the Church and family instruction outside of the regular Faith Formation sessions. This is a faith journey for the whole family as we renew our understanding of and commitment to the gifts of grace we receive in the Sacraments. Following family Sacramental preparation sessions, activity materials may be sent home with the families to help parents continue Sacramental preparation at home. Attending Mass each week in-person and continuing the conversation of our faith and the Sacraments that Jesus instituted for us will ensure a well-rounded formation that ensures a strong foundation for their entire lives.

There will be a preparation session for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Children will then have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament in the weeks that follow that session. There will be a family retreat and family practice in preparation for First Eucharist. The dates for the reception of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be assigned (see page 4 for tentative dates).

Children who begin in our program at higher grade levels and are in need of Baptism, First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be ministered to in a pastoral manner and on an individual basis. Two years of formal instruction and preparation are still required to meet diocesan expectations and help our children reach a better understanding and belief of our faith and the Catholic Church.

* First Reconciliation and First Eucharist dates are assigned and will be communicated during the year.

The First Eucharist practice sessions will be held on the Wednesdays prior to the First Eucharist Liturgies. Students will be assigned a practice that corresponds to their assigned First Eucharist date and time. Beginning in our February session, we will begin to practice receiving unconsecrated hosts every time we meet. Assigned First Eucharist Liturgies and practice dates will be emailed to families in December and posted on the St. Jude Faith Formation page of our website (www.stjudes.org).

All Sacrament dates are subject to change and some of the dates may not be used. More information will be given as the dates come closer.

Confirmation Preparation **(Junior High and High School)**

Our goals for Confirmation Preparation are to:

Meet students and their families where they are and lift them to a better understanding of what it means to be Catholic by living the Sacramental life of the Church, handed down by the apostles, that has proven to deepen our faith and love for God.

Learn and actively engage in the three Augustinian core values of spirituality: truth, unity and love, while practicing a contemplative and active role in the Church. Truth means pursuing God through seeking truth with faith and reason. Unity refers to union with God and others through community. Love means union with God through loving God and others.

Empower families to develop Catholic faith habits of Mass, gratitude, prayer, Scripture, Sacraments and service.

Catechists journey with students as they develop and deepen a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer, Mass, Scripture, Catechism and faith sharing.

Cornerstones of Confirmation Preparation

1. Growing in Faith: Catechists will continually model how Catholics rely on God's strength and grace to get through life's challenges. Through discussions with parents, sponsors and catechists, students will be encouraged to bring Jesus into every arena of their life and develop habits of faith practices: the Mass, prayer, Scripture, Sacraments and service.
2. Participation and Transformation: "As fire transforms into itself everything it touches, so the Holy Spirit transforms into the divine life whatever is subjected to His power." (CCC 1127) Intentionally participating in the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation along with sharing in the Sacramental life of the Church through Mass each week, the Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation allow the Holy Spirit to transform your teen to take on the mission that God is calling them to in their individual lives.
3. Community and Service: Confirmation Preparation gatherings will provide teens an opportunity to develop trusting and genuine friendships. Teens can be themselves and share their questions, doubts, thoughts and ideas with us so that we can help guide and lead them to the Truth, Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus calls us to adopt an attitude of service and as Christian stewards, we share our time, talent and treasure with others in need. Teens will look for ways to serve their family, parish and community while creating a transformative habit of sharing God's love to others.

Weekend Masses Available to Attend

Saturday 5pm

Sunday 7am, 9am & 11am

Sacramental Preparation Policy

Parents must play a leading role in the formation of their children from Baptism through their entire lives. This is a promise made to God by parents and godparents during the Sacrament of Baptism.

The preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is also done with the cooperation of the Faith Formation Team and the clergy of St. Jude Parish. For a teen to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, they must be a baptized Catholic, must have received their First Reconciliation, and they must receive **at least 2 consecutive years** of formation and preparation in accordance with the Diocese of Joliet.

Expectations

****In-person catechesis is essential to form our children in faith and to give them a sense of family life in our community. All sessions MUST be attended or made up in person. In any Sacramental Prep year, missing more than 2 sessions without attending another class will result in your student re-taking the year and receiving their Sacrament one year later. Missing 2 sessions is 18% of the curriculum year.**

What would happen if an athlete missed 18% of the practices during a season?

Please notify our team if your child needs to schedule a make-up session. We are very happy to help.**

Doctor's notes may be requested with absences.

As Catholics, we are called by God to always grow in knowledge about God and our faith, to intentionally participate in Mass every week in-person, to deepen our relationship with Him through prayer and Scripture and to come together at various events as the Body of Christ in community with one another. Being a part of anything means practicing - all sports teams, musicians, singers and dancers must practice! All coaches have expectations for growth and improvement. Know that you and your families are part of the Body of Christ which is so much bigger than what the world can offer.

Let's strive to please our Lord in all we do...as a practicing team!

Students in their first and second year of formation for Confirmation must attend our Small Group Sessions with their assigned catechist(s) AND the Large Group sessions with a parent or sponsor, as outlined in the schedule.

- Large Group Gatherings are to be attended with a parent or their chosen Confirmation sponsor as outlined on the Year 1 and Year 2 schedules. These sessions qualify for Explore 4 opportunities when a reflection is submitted online.
- Reconciliation Services are scheduled in Advent and in Lent. All Teens are to take advantage of God's mercy and grace throughout the year. These dates will be on your schedule and attended with a parent.
- 1 Night of the Parish Mission must be attended with parent or sponsor.
- Stewardship/Service Projects are to be completed during **each year** of formation:
 - Service must be done for Family, for the Parish and for the Community (**totaling 20 hours EACH year**) See page 12.
- Each student must reflect on their service throughout the year and submit 1 **Stewardship Reflection Page AND Stewardship Log** listing all service projects signed by the organizers for each service project.
- Mass must be attended in-person every weekend. 7 Family Mass Reflections are required to be submitted online at stjudes.org. (See page 17)
- 4 "Explore 4" Reflections must be submitted online at stjudes.org. Choose from any parish community event or speaker, or any large group sessions attended with a parent or sponsor. (See pages 17-18)

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is an integral part of a teen's life-long faith journey. This journey must be made when the person is ready to make the commitment, not necessarily at a certain age. Please talk with your teen and use the Signs of Readiness form to help determine if your child is ready for the commitment.

Remember, teens NEED their parents to participate with them as you play a vital role in their journey and their spiritual health.

Service and Stewardship Opportunities

Year 1 and Year 2 of Preparation

Jesus calls us to adopt an attitude of service and as Christian stewards we share our time, talent, and treasure with others in need. Teens are expected to participate in a minimum of 6 stewardship projects (*totaling a minimum of 20 hours of unpaid service*): two that serve their family, two that serve St. Jude parish and two that serve the community. Each teen is expected to complete 20 unpaid service hours each year, fill out the projects completed on the service log and have the stewardship log signed by the supervising adult when completed. The Reflection Page is found on the back of the Stewardship Log and must be completed by the teen. Both the Stewardship Log and Reflection page are to be submitted to our office by emailing to jlehardt@stjudes.org by the first week in April.

A Stewardship log and reflection page is emailed to each family and handed out at orientation.

Ideas to Serve Your Family:

- Help clean for a relative, friend or neighbor.
- Tutor a younger sibling/neighbor.
- Help a relative, friend or neighbor move.
- Take care of someone's home or pet while they are away.
- Shovel driveway or do yard work for someone.
- Babysit without being paid monetarily.
- Help take care of a someone who is sick.
- Any other projects or tasks for family members that are done without pay.

Ideas to Serve the Parish:

- Baking for various parish events will be coordinated by Jen Lehardt. Watch for emails.
- Church spring cleaning days will be designated before Easter. Jen Lehardt will contact families for this opportunity.
- Meal Angels: Make and deliver a meal to a St. Jude family [email: mealangels@gmail.com]
- Volunteer as an ongoing teen aide for elementary Faith Formation classes.
- Grocery shop and deliver non-perishable food items to our St. Jude food pantry. Drop off all items in shopping carts found in the small kitchenette in the west narthex.
- As more opportunities become available, we will email you.

Ideas to Serve the Community:

- Rake N Run in November.
- Making and delivering Valentines for the local Nursing Homes.
- Sharefest: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c054aada92ba4f94-sharefest2> .
- Feed My Starving Children service opportunities during Christmas and Spring breaks.
- Clean up trash in your neighborhood, parks and trails.
- Projects that come up for those in need within our community. These are communicated to families through email.

Year 1 Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation Requirements

****In-person catechesis is essential to form our children in faith and to give them a sense of family life in our community. All sessions MUST be attended or made up in person. In any Sacramental Prep year, missing more than 2 sessions without attending another class will result in your student re-taking the year and receiving their Sacrament one year later. Missing 2 sessions is 18% of the curriculum year. What would happen if an athlete missed 18% of the practices during a season?**

Please notify our team if your child needs to schedule a make-up session. We are very happy to help.**
Doctor's notes may be requested with absences.

St. Jude Parish has adopted the Chosen curriculum from Ascension Press for our two year Confirmation Preparation program. This is a premier curriculum used in many parishes to enhance your students' understanding of our Catholic faith. We will be scheduling parent sessions throughout the year using material from Chosen, Presence, The Search and Symbolon, along with other Catholic resources such as Ascension Press, Augustine Institute, Formed.org and Word on Fire. We also offer the Hallow app at no cost to give you a resource to pray as a family at home.

In addition to attending on the dates listed on the schedule below, each Year 1 student will be given a Continue the Conversation sheet to talk with you about at home, complete 20 service hour requirements, discern their patron saint with a written saint report and choose a Confirmation sponsor (who is an active and practicing Catholic) who will submit an online commitment form. Parents or sponsors of Year 1 students are expected to attend all large group gatherings and workshops with their student as well as attend required Parent Sessions scheduled throughout the year.

These sessions will encompass prayer, presentations and speakers that will empower and inspire your faith while preparing you as the primary catechist in your home. Please see the Year 1 Schedule below. Determine your student's required attendance based on the day you registered for (Sunday or Monday).

Confirmation Preparation 2026-2027 <u>YEAR ONE TENTATIVE SCHEDULE</u>
--

<p style="text-align: center;">SUNDAY SESSIONS 4:30 – 6:00 pm UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED</p> <p>September 27: Orientation (w/parent)</p> <p>October 4: SMALL GROUP Session 1 October 18: SMALL GROUP Session 2</p> <p>November 1: SMALL GROUP Session 3 November 15: LARGE GROUP Session (w/parent or sponsor)</p> <p>December 6: SMALL GROUP Session 4 Wednesday, December 16: Advent Reconciliation 7:00 pm</p> <p>January 24: Prayer Workshop (w/parent or sponsor)</p> <p>Saturday, February 6: Small Group Retreat 9:00 am-Noon February 7: SMALL GROUP Session 5 February/March: Parish Mission (date/time TBD) Friday, February 26 or March 12: Stations of the Cross Workshop (w/parent or sponsor) 7:30-9:00 pm</p> <p>March 7: SMALL GROUP Session 6</p> <p>Wednesday, March 17: Lenten Reconciliation 7:00pm</p> <p>April 11: SMALL GROUP session 7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MONDAY SESSIONS 6:30 - 8:00 pm UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED</p> <p>September 28: Orientation (w/parent)</p> <p>October 5: SMALL GROUP Session 1 October 19: SMALL GROUP Session 2</p> <p>November 2: SMALL GROUP Session 3 Sunday, Nov 15: LARGE GROUP Session 4:30-6:00 pm (w/parent or sponsor)</p> <p>December 7: SMALL GROUP Session 4 Wednesday, December 16: Advent Reconciliation 7:00 pm</p> <p>January 25: Prayer Workshop (w/parent or sponsor)</p> <p>Saturday, February 6: Small Group Retreat 9:00 am-Noon February 8: SMALL GROUP Session 5 February/March: Parish Mission (date/time TBD) Friday, February 26 or March 12: Stations of the Cross Workshop (w/parent or sponsor) 7:30-9:00 pm</p> <p>March 1: SMALL GROUP Session 6</p> <p>Wednesday, March 17: Lenten Reconciliation 7:00pm</p> <p>April 5: SMALL GROUP session 7</p>
--	--

Service Opportunities

- Saturday, November 14 Rake N Run 8am-Noon
- Making Valentines for Nursing Homes for Small Groups to deliver February 1-14
- Aide during Elementary class sessions
- St. Jude Food Drives
- Baking for St. Jude special events
- Other opportunities will be communicated by email throughout the year

Year 1 Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation **Curriculum Requirements Continued...**

Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor

- A Confirmation Candidate is someone seeking to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church. Every candidate searching for a closer relationship with our Lord needs a sponsor who is a mentor that will lead them in their spiritual life and guide them to the Way, the Truth and the Life. Their sponsor will walk with them on this journey, have meaningful discussions with your teen about the faith, attend any of our large group sessions and Mass in-person with your teen as well as any event we have here at St. Jude.
- This is a big decision for every Candidate, especially in the world we find ourselves in today. Please pray with your student, asking the Holy Spirit to guide them to the right person to take on this important role. Also pray for their sponsor, even if not chosen yet!

The requirements in choosing a sponsor:

- A sponsor must be an active and practicing Catholic who is already Confirmed in the Catholic Church. He or she must be striving to be faithful to the Catholic Church and want to guide your teen to an understanding of the truths found in our faith. We will support sponsors with a sponsor guide that will be supplied to them. We will invite sponsors to all events and parent sessions as well.
- The sponsor may be male or female but **cannot** be a parent.
- Sponsors must be at least 16 years old.
- The sponsor must complete the sponsor form online by [clicking here](#).

Choosing a Confirmation Saint and Writing a Saint Report

- Another significant decision for your candidate! The Holy Spirit will play an integral role in choosing the saint that will journey alongside your teen throughout the rest of their life, praying for them and spiritually guiding them. This decision needs to be made with prayer and research. Saints are real life heroes who know what it's like to be us! Reading about their lives is fascinating! Please encourage your teen to begin researching and learning about saints right away. Use resources like [formed.org](#), [catholic.org](#) and [saintsresource.com](#).
- A written report on the Confirmation Saint they choose will be due the first week of April. This is not something to be rushed through but thoughtful and well written, meeting the requirements below:
 - The Saint Report must be typed, at least one page (double-spaced) with 3-4 paragraphs, written in full sentences. Please proofread with a parent or sponsor.
 - Please submit the report as an attachment in a PDF or Word Document to saintreports@stjudes.org by April.
 - The report must include the following:
 - A summary of the life of the saint. This should be 1-2 paragraphs. Write about the most impactful stories of their life; what was exciting or what was most influential? Give examples of their virtues and how they were able to persevere through the hard times or overcame their challenges. How did God work in their lives?
 - What are the reasons for choosing this saint or how they made themselves known to you? Why do you connect or relate to the saint?
 - How could you live more like this saint? How have they impressed you? How would you ask them to pray for you?
- All sources (websites, books, etc.) must be typed in the footnotes of the report.

Year 2 Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation Requirements

**In-person catechesis is essential to form our children in faith and to give them a sense of family life in our community. All sessions MUST be attended or made up in person. In any Sacramental Prep year, missing more than 2 sessions without attending another class will result in your student re-taking the year and receiving their Sacrament one year later. Missing 2 sessions is 18% of the curriculum year. What would happen if an athlete missed 18% of the practices during a season?

Please notify our team if your child needs to schedule a make-up session. We are very happy to help.**
Doctor's notes may be requested with absences.

St. Jude Parish has adopted the Chosen curriculum from Ascension Press for our two year Confirmation Preparation program. This is a premier curriculum used in many parishes to enhance your students' understanding of our Catholic faith. We will be scheduling parent sessions throughout the year using material from Chosen, Presence, The Search and Symbolon, along with other Catholic resources such as Ascension Press, Augustine Institute, Formed.org and Word on Fire. We also offer the Hallow app at no cost to give you a resource to pray as a family at home.

In addition to attending on the dates listed on the schedule below, each student will be given a Continue the Conversation sheet to talk with you about at home, complete 20 service hour requirements, attend one Confirmation Retreat from the list below, ask for their patron saint's (who they had already chosen in Year 1) intercession throughout their journey, cultivate a close, faith filled relationship with their chosen Confirmation sponsor, and begin to contemplate and pray intentionally about receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation and becoming a fully initiated Catholic. They will then write a letter to the pastor of St. Jude parish to ask for permission to be Confirmed here at St. Jude. What is expected in this letter will be explained and is due in March of the second year of preparation. Parents or sponsors of Year 2 students are expected to attend all large group gatherings and workshops with their student as well as attend required Parent Sessions scheduled throughout the year. These sessions will encompass presentations and speakers that will empower and inspire your faith while preparing you as the primary catechist in your home. Please see the Year 2 Schedule below. Determine your student's required attendance based on the day you registered for (Sunday or Monday).

Confirmation Preparation 2026-2027 *YEAR TWO TENTATIVE SCHEDULE*

SUNDAY SESSIONS 4:30 – 6:00 pm **UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

September 27: **Orientation** (w/parent)
 October 4: SMALL GROUP Session 1
 October 18: SMALL GROUP Session 2
 November 1: SMALL GROUP Session 3
 November 15: **LARGE GROUP Session** (w/parent or sponsor)
 December 6: SMALL GROUP Session 4
Wednesday, December 16: Advent Reconciliation 7:00 pm
 January 24: **Prayer Workshop** (w/parent or sponsor)
 February 7: SMALL GROUP Session 5
 February/March: Parish Mission (date/time TBD)
Friday, February 26 or March 12: Stations of the Cross Workshop (w/parent or sponsor) 7:30-9:00 pm
 March 7: SMALL GROUP Session 6
Wednesday, March 17: Lenten Reconciliation 7:00pm
 April 11: SMALL GROUP session 7

MONDAY SESSIONS 6:30 - 8:00 pm **UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

September 28: **Orientation** (w/parent)
 October 5: SMALL GROUP Session 1
 October 19: SMALL GROUP Session 2
 November 2: SMALL GROUP Session 3
Sunday, Nov 15: LARGE GROUP Session 4:30-6:00 pm (w/parent or sponsor)
 December 7: SMALL GROUP Session 4
Wednesday, December 16: Advent Reconciliation 7:00 pm
 January 25: **Prayer Workshop** (w/parent or sponsor)
 February 8: SMALL GROUP Session 5
 February/March: Parish Mission (date/time TBD)
Friday, February 26 or March 12: Stations of the Cross Workshop (w/parent or sponsor) 7:30-9:00 pm
 March 1: SMALL GROUP Session 6
Wednesday, March 17: Lenten Reconciliation 7:00pm
 April 5: SMALL GROUP session 7

Confirmation Retreats **One retreat is required for each student during this year.** **Visit stjudes.org to sign up.** **Space is limited.**

- Saturday, November 21: 11:30am-6pm
- Saturday, January 9: 11:30am-6pm
- Saturday, February 20: 11:30am-6pm
- Saturday, March 13: 11:30am-6pm

Service Opportunities

- Saturday, November 14 Rake N Run 8am-Noon
- Making Valentines for Nursing Homes to be delivered February 1-14
- Aide during Elementary class sessions
- St. Jude Food Drives
- Baking for St. Jude special events
- Other opportunities will be communicated by email throughout the year

Year 2 Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Curriculum Requirements Continued...

Letter to Pastor Requesting Permission to be Confirmed Requirements

All candidates desiring to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation are asked to write a letter to our pastor requesting permission. He will grant this permission by allowing the candidate to receive the Sacrament and present him/her to the Bishop on the day of Confirmation as long as he/she conveys that they believe in our faith, understand what Confirmation is, accept the responsibility of service to others, commit to daily prayer and desire to continue growing in and living out our faith.

Should a candidate reach the end of the curriculum year with doubts about moving forward, please contact the director to schedule a meeting.

If all expectations are not met by April, alternative arrangements for Confirmation at another parish in the diocese at a later date will be made.

At baptism, parents make the promise and commitment to teach their child the Catholic Faith and raise them in the Sacramental life of the Church. Now is the time for your teen to make their own commitment to God by promising to continue to grow in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit received at baptism and to deepen their relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Each candidate is expected to write a letter, addressed to the pastor of St. Jude, that expresses his/her commitment to using his/her gifts and talents given by God to serve the Church as a part of the Body of Christ. This letter should not be rushed through, but should be thoughtfully and prayerfully reflected upon and sincerely expressed while meeting the requirements below:

- The letter must be typed, only one page (double-spaced) with 3 paragraphs, written in full sentences ensuring proper grammar and spelling. Please proofread with a parent or sponsor.
- The letter must be outlined as follows:
 - Address the letter to Fr. Ray Flores.
 - Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself and share with Fr. Ray where you grew up, a little bit about you and your family and what you like to do.
 - Paragraph 2: Give your earliest and fondest memories of your faith life. Explain what faith means to you, how you see God and your relationship with Him, how often you pray, in what ways you are growing in your faith and how you plan to live out your faith. Give a specific example of one way you are living out your faith in your life right now.
 - Paragraph 3: Explain what the Sacrament of Confirmation means to you. Why do you want to receive this Sacrament and become fully initiated in the Church? What do you want to continue learning about? Explain how you will continue to grow in knowledge of God and our faith after Confirmation, giving examples of how you will continue living out the Sacramental life of God's Church. Deepening our knowledge and relationship with God is exactly what it means to be Catholic!
 - Closing: Sincerely, [add your first and last name]
- Please submit the letter as an attachment in a PDF or Word Document to lettertopastor@stjudes.org by March 15th.

Monthly Mass Reflections

Keep holy the Sabbath Day...EVERY Weekend (7 reflections required for each family)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “It was above all on ‘the first day of the week,’ Sunday, the day of Jesus’ resurrection, that the Christians met ‘to break bread.’ From that time on down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Church’s life. Thus from celebration to celebration, as they proclaim the Paschal mystery of Jesus ‘until He comes,’ the pilgrim People of God advances, ‘following the narrow way of the cross,’ toward the heavenly banquet, when all the elect will be seated at the table of the kingdom.” (CCC 1343-44)

All Catholic families are expected to participate in the Sunday Mass and in Masses for all Holy Days of Obligation in-person. In the Catholic Mass, we gather to worship and praise God. We also receive the True Presence of God through Jesus in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the fulfillment of God’s covenant with us - His promise to be with us always. With the gift of Christ’s presence in our midst, our Church is truly blessed and strengthened. Returning again and again, each week, allows us to reach a communion with God that helps us to cooperate with the graces He pours upon us during the Mass and when we intentionally receive the Eucharist, the Bread of Life. This is the greatest gift we can give our children, it cannot be taken lightly! All Catholic families participate weekly in Catholic Mass and stay centered on the importance of the Eucharist in our lives. God has called each of us to this feast for we have been chosen!! “Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. These words are true, they come from God.” (Rev 19:9) Imagine calling your own children to come to you to spend time with you, to share a meal with you and you are ignored or told they are too busy. Remember, God is our Father and He is calling us to come to Him, to His home, to the meal He gives us. He knows what we need; the Mass is necessary in our lives at least every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Families are expected to complete seven monthly *Family Catholic Mass Reflections* during the Faith Formation year. The reflection is designed to help facilitate conversations before and after your family’s Mass experience. *Family Catholic Mass Reflections* are to be submitted online on our website. Find the reflection page under the Faith Formation tab at the top of the home page of St. Jude’s website.

<u>DAILY MASSES</u> Monday - Friday 7:30 am	<u>WEEKEND MASSES</u> Saturday 5 pm Sunday 7 am, 9 am, 11 am
--	---

Explore 4 Reflections- Life of the Parish

At the close of Mass, we are sent out with the word “Go!” We are called to take what we have learned and live out our Catholic faith, spreading the Gospel and love of God to others. Explore 4 is how we live out our Catholic faith to BE the Catholic Church Jesus established. The Church is not just a building – it is the people of our faith community living the Gospel in daily life.

***Explore 4 Reflections are a “living” component of our Faith Formation program.
(4 reflections required for all Grades)***

Children need to see us “being Church” together. We have to ask ourselves, “Do we practice the kind of Church we want our children to have?” It is in the life of the parish that children truly see us being Church together. It is here that they see us living our faith.

With “Explore 4”, families are expected to participate in at least 4 events sponsored or promoted by St. Jude or the Diocese of Joliet during the course of each Faith Formation year. These events are opportunities to help us explore and grow in our faith and community life.

An Explore 4 Reflection form is available online for your family to reflect on your experience after attending/participating in an activity. Families should submit reflections for 4 *different* events or activities.

Any event that happens at St. Jude that is not Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation may be an Explore 4 opportunity as long as you complete and submit a reflection form. Sacramental preparation does qualify as an Explore 4 opportunity if a reflection is submitted.

We have a growing list of suggested activities below and on our website. These opportunities are focused on everyday living of our faith as well as learning the traditions of our faith. This is not an all-encompassing list. Information about Explore 4 opportunities will be found in your monthly Faith Formation Newsletter, in the parish bulletin, on our website and Facebook page.

Upcoming and On-Going Explore 4 Opportunities

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Making and Delivering Cards for the Elderly
Bible Study	Meal Angels
Christmas Concert	Men’s Follow Me Group
Elizabeth Ministry	Men’s Ministry Prayer Group
Eucharistic Procession	Music Ministries
Family Advent Wreath Making	Parent Sessions
Giving Tree	Parish Mission (February/March)
Good Friday Crosswalk	Parish Picnic
Holy Hours (most 1 st and 3 rd Fridays of each month)	Peace and Social Justice Events
Knights of Columbus Events	Rake and Run
Learning Events by Ministries	Respect Life Ministry Events
Lenten Knights of Columbus Fish Fry	Rosary for Life
Lenten Stations of the Cross	Stations of the Cross
Life in the Spirit Prayer Group	Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion
Liturgy of the Hours	St. Francis Pet Blessing
Living Rosary	Welcome Retreat

Policies for Confirmation Preparation Sessions

Amendments to the Handbook:

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The Faith Formation program will attempt to keep parents informed of all changes as soon as possible. Some changes might be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

Attendance Policy:

We keep accurate attendance records so that we can account for each student. If a student is not able to attend their regularly scheduled gathering with their Small Group, it is essential to let the Faith Formation office know in advance for proper placement in another group to make-up the session. If your student is not able to participate in either Small Group Session option or (Sunday or Monday) Workshop, your teen will be required to make up that session another way. Notifications to make aware of the availability of these materials will be communicated through email. In any Sacramental Prep year, if your child misses more than 2 required sessions as outlined previously, you will be notified that the year will need to be re-taken and their Sacraments will be conferred at a later time.

Illness:

In the event of an illness, please keep your teen at home until all symptoms have subsided. A doctor’s note may be requested.

Student Arrival Policy:

*All teens must arrive at Franciscan Hall (Door 6) for our Small Group sessions and retreats.

*Any Workshops or Confirmation Prep sessions, teens and parents will enter through the main church doors.

Tardiness:

Teens are expected to be on time. If a student is expected to be late for any session, workshop, retreat or event, please notify the Faith Formation office or their Catechist well before the start of the event. If your teen will be more than 15 minutes late for any event (session, workshops, retreats or other event), please attend the other alternative session day offered. If 30 minutes late, the session will need to be made up. Please notify Jen Lehardt with any session day changes to allow time for group placement before sessions begin to ensure an efficient check-in process.

Student Dismissal Policy:

Dismissal for all gatherings will be from the St. Jude Church building. Please come into the Church to join us in our final prayer and pick up your teen. To eliminate any safety concerns, teens should not leave the Church without their parent.

Parents are instrumental in this process. We truly appreciate your cooperation.

Early Dismissal:

Parent/guardian must provide handwritten consent, indicating time and reason for departure as well as the person picking up the teen, even if a phone call or email has been made. The note must be turned in at check-in so that arrangements are made for a smooth pickup. If picking up 30 minutes or more before the scheduled end time, the session must be made up.

Late Pickup:

We understand that sometimes rides can be delayed due to unexpected circumstances. We ask that you call in to let us know so that we can adjust the logistics of dismissal and wait with your child until you arrive. Please leave a voicemail at 815-463-4266 with your estimated time of arrival. We will need your student's name and their catechist's name at the time of the call.

Walking or Riding Bikes to Faith Formation:

This is highly discouraged due to the darkness when a gathering has concluded. If you are unable to drive your child to your teen's event/session, please arrange a ride with another family or arrange for attendance on the other option offered.

Parent Conferences:

Parents may schedule a conference at any time with their teen's catechist or the director. Please contact the catechist or director as needed.

Behavior:

The behavior of the students attending St. Jude Faith Formation is expected to be exemplary of Christian values. Such a code of conduct requires that the student show the proper respect for themselves, their catechists and leaders, other students and any property we may use. St. Jude's discipline code is one that encourages responsibility and self-discipline, resulting in self-understanding and self-esteem. Therefore, it is important that the parents, catechists/leaders and administration/staff have the same high expectations for the student's behavior. For him or her to grow socially, emotionally and in faith, your child needs to be in a safe environment in which there are concerned adults who set firm, consistent, positive limits while also providing warmth and support for the appropriate behavior. Teens are required to adhere to these foundational rules:

- Confidentiality is a critical element of the small group experience (absolutely no gossiping!). Everything said within the small group is expected to be kept confidential in the small group. The catechist has been instructed to maintain this at all times unless the catechist knows that a teen has expressed something that will/should cause injury of self or others.
- Respect is expected and needed for the catechists, leaders, staff, all peers, the St. Jude Church building, the school and the property. This respect is expressed through right choices in group and all one-on-one interactions.

The procedure for disciplinary action will be as follows:

- o 1st Offense: The teen will receive a warning from a director or catechist stating that they have not followed the expectations of proper behavior in the small or large group setting.
- o 2nd Offense: The parents will receive a letter informing the parents of the situation and the teen will be sent to meet with the Director of Faith Formation. The student will not be allowed to return to a Faith Formation gathering until that letter is signed by a parent and returned to the Faith Formation Office.
- o 3rd Offense: A parent will have to attend gatherings with their teen, possibly until the end of the year.
- o 4th Offense: The parents will find alternative means of faith formation for their teen.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is an integral part of a teen's life-long faith journey. This journey must be made when the person is ready to make the commitment, not necessarily at a certain age. Please talk with your teen and use the Signs of Readiness form to help determine if your child is ready for the commitment. Remember, teens NEED their parents to participate with them as you play a vital role in their journey and their spiritual health.

Dress Code:

A teen's general appearance should not be distracting and must be modest and clean. Anyone dressed inappropriately will need to be sent home with their parent. Guidelines include:

- ✓ Articles of clothing which display obscene or suggestive phrases or images should NOT be worn.
- ✓ Occult (Satanic/devil worship) clothing or related symbols will not be tolerated.
- ✓ Clothes that display antisocial, immoral or illegal behavior are not allowed.
- ✓ Clothing or accessories which promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or which promote violence or death are not allowed.
- ✓ Uniform equipment is not allowed on premises. (ie, shoulder/knee/shin pads and shoes with cleats)
- ✓ Hats/sunglasses/hoods must be removed upon entry to the building.
- ✓ Electronic devices must be turned off. This includes cell phones, iPods, hand-held game devices, etc. Anyone using such a device during a gathering will have to forfeit the item until the end of the session.

Procedure to Resolve a Problem or Concern:

If a parent has an issue with a catechist or leader, the parent is to speak with the catechist of the group. If this issue is not resolved, the parent may meet with the Director of Faith Formation. A meeting will then be set up between the parent, the catechist and the director.

Special Needs:

The Faith Formation team asks parents to provide information of any physical, emotional or behavioral conditions of each student on the registration forms or as they arise throughout the year. You may also speak directly with your student's catechist. This information helps our staff and catechists to best minister to your child.

Health and Emergencies:

At the time of registration, you completed an emergency form for your child/children. If there are any changes to this information, please notify our office. It is important that we are informed of any health problems or medication that the child is receiving in case your child would require emergency treatment. In an emergency, we will attempt to telephone parents first. If not successful, we will notify the other responsible person or emergency contact you noted on the registration form. Unless otherwise indicated on your Emergency Authorization Form, the authorization gives us permission to have the child treated if you cannot be reached in an emergency. If any information changes (telephone or address), please advise the Faith Formation Office so we can have updated information on your children.

Statement of Non-Discrimination:

St. Jude Parish admits students of any race, color, sex, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, nationality and ethnic origin in administration of its policies, supplementary programs, or any other program-based function.

Tornado Alarms:

When a tornado alarm sounds (a rapid succession of short bells signaling an alert situation), students are to:

- Maintain silence so instruction may be heard.
- Walk single file to the corridors and sit on the floor as close together as possible (not next to or below any glass walls or exits)
- Place your head between the knees with the hands over head to be protected from falling debris.
- Wait quietly for all-clear bells to sound.

Emergency School Closing:

If weather or other conditions make it necessary to cancel classes, St. Jude Faith Formation Office is part of the Emergency Closing Center. An announcement will be made on AM radio stations: WJOL (1340), WMAQ (670), WGN (720), WBBM (780) or WLS (890). It will also be announced on the following television channels: CBS (2), NBC (5), WGN (9), FOX (32) and CLTV (37). When New Lenox schools have been closed or have early dismissal for inclement weather, we may also cancel faith formation classes that day.

Diocesan Policies/Procedures for Volunteers:

Required Information: Following the mandate of the Bishop for our diocese, all persons 18 and over working with minors (this includes catechists, aides and volunteers who will be working with the Faith Formation Program) must complete:

- Certification of "Protecting God's Children" done online through Virtus.
 - Acknowledge the following forms within your Virtus account:
 - DOJ Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (Rev. 2021)
 - DOJ Standards of Behavior (Rev. 2021)
 - A criminal background check (every 5 years) for ongoing volunteers.
- Completion of Illinois Mandated Reporter Training through the state of Illinois. (1 hr online certification)
- Sign the DCFS form for "Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status" CANTS 22 Rev. 2019 (on an annual basis)

Emergency & Diocesan Polices/Procedures

Fire/Tornado/Lockdown/Evacuation Procedures

In the event of Fire, Tornado, Lockdown or Evacuation, our Faith Formation team follows the standard safety routes and procedures set by St. Jude School. Your children's safety is of utmost importance; in case an emergency situation arises, children will remain with their catechists and be reunited with their parents when authorities determine it is safe to do so.

Emergency School Closing

St. Jude Faith Formation most often follows the New Lenox School District 122 closing policy. Therefore, if NLS D 122 has a closure, St. Jude Faith Formation classes may also be cancelled. If weather or other conditions make it necessary to cancel classes, you will receive an email notifying you of the cancellation. If you have opted into our Flocknote texting service, you may also receive a text about the cancellation. St. Jude Faith Formation office will call the catechists to inform them of the closing.

Health & Emergencies

At the time of registration, parents completed an emergency consent form and provided emergency contact information. If there are any changes to this information, please notify our office. It is important that we are informed of any health problems or medication that the child is receiving. In the case of an emergency, the office will attempt to contact the child's parent first. If we are not successful, we will notify the person designated as the emergency contact. If you cannot be reached and have granted authorization on the emergency consent form, it gives us permission to seek emergency medical treatment for your child.

Required Paperwork

The Diocese of Joliet requires that all parents/guardians receive the following informational pamphlets:

- *The Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors*
- *The Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors*
- *Parent Guide: Understanding & Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*
- *Diocese Chastity Pamphlet (Parents of 5th Grade Students ONLY, given out in November)*

DIocese OF JOLIET: PASTORAL POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS, Revised February 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. On December 8, 2002, the Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors were approved by Pope John Paul II. In June of 2005, the Charter and the Norms were revised, and in 2011, the Charter was revised in order to re-affirm the deep commitment of the Church to create a safe environment for children and youth. The Diocese of Joliet first promulgated a policy regarding sexual abuse of minors on June 14, 1990. Revisions were made in September 1993, in June 1997, in June 2003 and July 2008.

As with the previous edition, this policy is intended to be in conformity with provisions from the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and from the Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors. This policy is designed to ensure appropriate responses to allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy, seminarians, religious, employees and volunteers. It addresses preventing sexual abuse through education and screening, reporting abuse, providing pastoral assistance to persons affected by abuse and the processing of allegations. A copy of this policy is to be given to all clergy and seminarians as well as to all employees and volunteers who will sign an acknowledgement of its receipt. The policy is also to be published on the diocesan website.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is any sexual conduct with a minor or a vulnerable adult which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, which is engaged in by an adult employee/volunteer of the Diocese or a parish. It also includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or the use of whatever technology.

B. Ministerial Relationship: A ministerial relationship is established between persons when care or services are given. Persons in a ministerial relationship with others include clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates and religious, as well as employees and volunteers.

C. Employee: An employee is a person who is compensated for services to a diocesan agency, parish or school.

D. Volunteer: A volunteer is a person who functions without compensation in any role within a diocesan agency, parish or school.

E. Minor: A person who has not reached his or her 18th birthday is defined as a minor.

F. Vulnerable Adult: A vulnerable adult is one who habitually lacks the use of reason (Canon 99) or who, because of mental or physical disability is incapable of protecting himself/herself from sexual abuse.

G. Director of Child and Youth Protection: The Director of Child and Youth Protection, also known as the Director, is appointed by Bishop to oversee the workings of the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

III. POLICIES

A. Healing and Reconciliation

1. Ministry to Victims: The Victim Assistance Coordinator, appointed by the Bishop, is to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused as minors or vulnerable adults. Such care will serve to nurture healing and reconciliation. The Diocese of Joliet is to assist the healing process of the abused. For this reason, it seeks to treat all allegations of sexual abuse with a prompt, direct, thorough and confidential pastoral response. Appropriate assistance is offered to victims in accord with recommendations of the Review Board. This may include counseling, spiritual direction, support groups or other social services.

2. Ministry to the Accused: Appropriate steps are to be taken to protect the reputation of the accused during an investigation of sexual abuse. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and/or canonical counsel. When the preliminary investigation of a complaint so indicates, a priest/deacon may be referred for appropriate medical and psychological evaluation, as long as this does not interfere with the investigation by civil authorities. When an accusation has been unfounded, the diocese provides pastoral assistance, including psychological counseling to a person who was wrongly accused. All efforts are made to restore the good name of the person falsely accused (USCCB Norms 13).

3. Ministry to Communities: In faith communities in which the sexual abuse occurred or where a priest/deacon has been removed, a meeting is held between a representative of the Pastoral Response Team and representatives of the affected community. If requested, the Pastoral Response Team offers pastoral assistance (spiritual and psychological) to the affected faith community. Pastoral Response Team membership includes the Bishop or his representative, and may include the following individuals or their delegates: Superintendent of Schools, Director of Religious Education, pastor/head of institution, religious superior, as well as experts in trauma response/intervention services.

B. Prevention

1. Education: To foster a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults the Diocese is to have in place educational programs which include information about sexual abuse, its identifying signs, controlling access to children, appropriate boundaries in relationships, reporting incidents of abuse and the effects of abuse on victims. Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are required to present proof of attendance at a Virtus Protecting God's Children program. This requirement applies to all persons who are involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. The program is also available to parents and guardians. All persons who continue involvement with minors are required to participate in an updating educational program at least annually. Children and youth are to receive instruction appropriate to their age level (USCCB Charter 12). Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are to receive a copy of the Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors, and are to sign an acknowledgement of its receipt. The Standards of Behavior includes information about appropriate boundaries for those who have regular contact with children and young people (USCCB Charter 6). This requirement also applies to all persons who are involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis, and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. Procedures for reporting abuse are to be readily available in printed form and are to be the subject of periodic public announcements (USCCB Charter 2). The Office of Formation of Priests and Deacons is responsible for providing programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy that will assist clergy in living their vocation in faithful and integral ways. (USCCB Charter 17)

2. Screening: Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are required to undergo a criminal background check. This requirement also applies to all persons involved with minors on a regular recurring basis and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. Backgrounds are evaluated using

the resources of law enforcement or other agencies (USCCB Charter 13). Background checks are to be performed every five years for all persons who continue involvement with minors. All seminarians, extern priests, diaconal candidates, and diocesan and parish employees must be fingerprinted for the purpose of obtaining a criminal background check. Fingerprints are submitted to the Illinois State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for clearance as a condition of employment. Fingerprinting is administered by a vendor approved by the Diocese of Joliet. Prior to the individual being permitted to begin service, results are evaluated by the Diocese with its legal counsel when appropriate. Name-based background checks are used only for volunteers or for renewals of employees who were screened through that type of background check. Anyone with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse may not minister, be hired or volunteer in a diocesan agency, parish or school.

a. Employees: Any prospective diocesan, parish or school employee must complete an application that includes:

1. Employment history, indicating positions held, dates of employment, name(s) of the immediate supervisor, phone number(s), and reason(s) for cessation of employment;
2. Any allegations of physical or sexual abuse made against him/her, which may/may not have involved civil or criminal complaints;
3. A signed authorization to release the applicant's employment history to the prospective employer, as well as at least two references who are not relatives. Hiring agents must review the employment history and the references provided. All documents must be retained in the employee's file during the time of employment.

b. Volunteers: All volunteers are to complete an informational questionnaire provided by the entity for which they are intending to volunteer.

c. Businesses Furnishing Personnel: Any business supplying personnel for janitorial services, etc., is required to provide the diocese/parish/school with a copy of the criminal background checks of those persons who will be working at the facility. The business is also to provide a written guarantee that such personnel have never been arrested or convicted of any crime, that they are not aware of any complaint or allegation relating to sexual abuse or substance abuse, and that they are suitable to work in an environment where there may be contact with minors. Such information must be kept in a secure file along with the background checks of other employees and volunteers.

d. Members of Religious Orders: When any religious is presented for assignment or residence in an institution or parish, the appropriate religious superior is to provide the Bishop with a written statement about the person's suitability for ministry including information regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

e. Priests/Deacons: When a priest/deacon seeks an assignment in the Diocese of Joliet, his diocesan bishop or religious superior is to provide the Bishop with a written statement of suitability for ministry including information regarding allegations of sexual abuse. No priest/deacon of the Diocese of Joliet who has a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse or who has committed sexual abuse may be transferred for an assignment to another diocese.

f. Candidates for Priesthood and the Diaconate: The Diocese of Joliet uses adequate screening and evaluations in determining the fitness of candidates for admission to the seminary or to the diaconate. Additional evaluations are conducted during the years of formation. A comprehensive psychological profile of each seminarian/diaconal candidate must be obtained before anyone is admitted to the priesthood or diaconate.

C. Response to Allegations

1. Reporting: All persons, whether parishioners, employees, or volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect an incident of sexual abuse by anyone including clergy, seminarians, religious or employees have a serious moral obligation to report the incident or allegation to civil officials (USCCB Charter 4). Under Illinois law, certain personnel (including school, child care and recreational program personnel) are considered mandated reporters and must report to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) any situation in which they have reasonable cause to suspect physical or sexual abuse of a minor. Clergy are mandated reporters as to child sexual abuse. Reporting abuse of a vulnerable adult is made to the appropriate state agency. Reports of abuse should also be made to the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Complaints against members of religious orders are to be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator as well as to the respective superior. Procedures for making a complaint are available on the diocesan website, at parishes or diocesan offices, and are the subject of periodic public announcements. When a person reports an allegation of sexual abuse, the person will be received with the utmost respect and pastoral sensitivity. Victims are advised of and supported in their right to report abuse to civil authorities (USCCB Charter 4).

2. Assessment and Determination

a. The Bishop is immediately informed of any allegation. If he determines, after consultation with others, that there is a semblance of truth to the allegation, and that it is not manifestly false or frivolous, the assessment process begins. (Questions & Answers Regarding the Canonical Process for the Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors) However, in no way will the process conflict with an investigation being pursued on a state or federal level.

b. The Bishop notifies the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection (hereafter referred to as the Director) of the allegation, who in turn notifies the Review Board. He then appoints the Director to oversee an investigation. This investigation will be conducted by professional investigators and may include other competent professionals such as diocesan counsel and members of the Review Board.

c. The Review Board advises the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. (USCCB Charter 2) In certain cases, the Review Board may consider it important to speak directly with the person making the allegation, the accused person, or other persons for the sole purpose of gathering additional information. The Board will also offer to the Bishop other advice it considers pertinent to the case.

d. The Bishop has sole responsibility for deciding if it is more likely than not that sexual abuse has occurred and for determining any action with regard to the accused. In the case of clerics of the Diocese of Joliet, with sending the case to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, all in accord with Canon Law.

e. After reviewing the case, the Congregation will advise the Bishop as to which canonical processes are to be followed.

APPENDIX:

REVIEW BOARD: The Review Board is a consultative body that advises the Bishop regarding allegations concerning the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults and related issues. (USCCB Charter 2, Norms 5)

A. Membership: The Review Board, whose members are appointed by the Bishop, is composed of not less than nine or more than eleven members of outstanding integrity and good judgment. The majority of members are laypersons, none of whom are diocesan employees. Members are to have expertise in one of the following areas: social work, civil law, education, treatment of sexual abuse of minors, or clinical treatment of sexual disorders. One member should be the parent of a minor and one member should be a pastor. When possible, one member is a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse or a parent of the same. Annually members select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among themselves. Consultants to the Board may include a representative of the Bishop, a canon lawyer, the Promoter of Justice, the Chancellor, the diocesan attorney and the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

B. Terms: Members are appointed for a term of five years, which may be renewed once (USCCB Norms 5). The Bishop has the right to terminate the appointment of a member at any time.

C. Meetings: The Review Board convenes whenever there is business to conduct or assembles at least on an annual basis. It will ordinarily meet in person, but members may participate by conference call.

D. Duties: Members of the Review Board are to:

- Advise the bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry.
- Review diocesan policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors on a regular basis.
- Advise the Bishop, as requested, on all aspects of cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.
- Provide new members with an orientation to the Board and present them with a copy of the Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors, a copy of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People as well as other appropriate materials.
- Attend all meetings, especially those involving particular cases.

E. Criteria for Making Recommendations

- A simple majority of the entire Committee membership is needed to make a recommendation to the Bishop.
- Members may be present in person or electronically
- When considering an allegation of sexual abuse, each member decides, after considering all the evidence presented, whether the allegation is more probably true than not.

F. Communication: The Bishop will insure that the alleged victim and the accused are provided with appropriate and timely information about the progress of the case.

G. Confidentiality: Deliberations and conclusions reached by the Review Board are to be held in strictest confidence. The Bishop, or his authorized representative, are the only persons who communicate with the alleged victim and the accused, the media or any other persons.

DIRECTOR OF CHILD YOUTH PROTECTION: The duties of the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection include, but are not limited to the following:

- Oversee the implementation of this Policy on a regular basis.
- Report regularly to the Bishop and the Review Board about the implementation of this Policy and the progress of individual cases of abuse.
- Supervise the work of the Victim Assistance Coordinator.
- Serve as the central information point for child abuse issues among pertinent members of the Diocesan Curia and diocesan attorney.
- Maintain all records pertaining to child protection and child abuse.
- Provide staff assistance to the Review Board.
- Prepare for the annual audit.
- Communicate to the public, i.e., within the Church community and beyond, the efforts of the Diocese of Joliet to prevent the abuse of minors and to heal past abuse.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR: The duties of Victim Assistance Coordinator include, but are not limited to the following:

- Receive allegations of sexual misconduct against minors and vulnerable adults.
- Listen with compassion to the experiences and concerns of victims.
- Advise victims of their right to report to civil authorities and inform them they will be supported in the exercise of that right. And inform the Bishop of allegations including any anonymous allegations or allegations that do not contain sufficient information.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT: The Diocese does not enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality settlements unless the victim requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement (USCCB Charter 3).

RECORDS AND REPORTS: The Director maintains written and electronic documentation regarding all information acquired by the Review Board, its determinations and decisions. All of the above records are confidential. However, law enforcement officials receive whatever information is necessary for them to carry out their duties. Information and records generated by mental health practitioners, including those of alcohol and substance abuse treatment providers, are retained or released in accordance with the provisions of Illinois and Federal laws. The Diocese communicates transparently and openly about issues of sexual abuse within the parameters of legally mandated confidentiality and privacy especially to the faith communities directly affected (USCCB Charter 7). The Diocese publishes an annual public report on the progress made in implementing this policy and cooperates with audits conducted by the National Review Board.

POLICY SUBMISSION: A copy of this policy as well as any revisions to the policy is filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of its effective date (USCCB Norms 2).

DIOCESE OF JOLIET: STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR FOR THOSE WORKING WITH MINORS-June 1, 2003

There will be clear and well-publicized diocesan standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people (USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young

People, Article 6). To foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety in its ministry to minors, the Diocese of Joliet has established Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors. The Diocese expects all Church personnel to maintain high standards of professional, ministerial and moral behavior.

A. Definitions

1. A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18. For the purposes of these standards, the term “minors” also includes adults who would be considered vulnerable to abuse because of physical or mental disabilities. 2. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor. 3. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult. Abuse of minors is contrary to the teachings of the Church and is never permissible. Church personnel have a responsibility to actively protect minors from all forms of abuse. 4. Church personnel are any persons, lay, religious or clergy, who are employed by or who volunteer for a diocesan agency, a parish or an educational facility.

B. General Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. They do not supersede state law or DCFS requirements. For clarification of these guidelines or for guidance for behaviors not addressed here, contact an immediate supervisor or consult Faith Formation in the Diocese of Joliet (Religious Education Office) or the Personnel Policy Handbook (Catholic Schools Office).

1. Ministry to minors respects the rights of parents to educate and form their children in faith. Therefore, activities with minors are to be conducted with the explicit knowledge and consent of parents or legal guardians.
2. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. In the event that Church personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a minor, they are to contact the parent or legal guardian of the minor. Otherwise, they are to contact their supervisor before releasing the child.
3. Church personnel are never to leave minors unattended at the end of a class, session, event, etc.
4. Church personnel are to report uncontrollable or highly unusual behavior of minors to parents as soon as possible.
5. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with minors. They are also prohibited from furnishing alcohol or illegal drugs to minors or permitting minors to use such in their presence.
6. Church personnel may occasionally provide transportation for minors. The following guidelines should be observed when Church personnel are involved in the transportation of minors: a. Minors are never to be transported without written permission. b. Minors are to be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops are to be made. c. Church personnel are to avoid unnecessary and/or inappropriate contact with minors while in vehicles.
7. Church personnel are prohibited from speaking to minors in a way that is abusive or demeaning. All are to refrain from using inappropriate language/humor in the presence of minors.
8. Church personnel are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minors. However, it is expected that classes may address human sexuality issues. These classes will convey the Church’s views on the topics. If minors have other questions not answered or addressed by individual teachers, they should be referred to their parents or guardians. Church personnel are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors.
9. Church personnel are never to be nude in the presence of minors. Changing and showering facilities for adults are to be separate from those for minors.
10. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) or accessing similar materials on the Internet on Church property or in the presence of minors.
11. Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with minors.
12. Houses used as residences for priests and religious are exclusively for their use. Minors should not be allowed in the private quarters of those residences. With the exception of occasional visits from immediate family members, minors are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residences of priests or religious.
13. Counseling areas should have transparent windows or open doors. Care should be made to have another adult in the general vicinity during counseling sessions.

C. Physical Contact

The Diocese of Joliet has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing, safe environment for children and youth ministries while protecting both children and Church personnel from misunderstandings. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church personnel working with children and in youth programs. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline for behavior management of minors. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors. Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors is important for a child’s development. It is a positive part of Church life and ministry and should be given in public but not in isolated or secluded areas.

1. The following forms of affection are regarded as some appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs:

- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders or arms of minors.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.

- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (Avoid in some Asian communities.)
- Reciprocation of appropriate gestures initiated by a minor.
- Side hugs/ Shoulder to shoulder hugs

2. Some forms of physical affection have been used to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding minors over five/six years old on the lap.
- Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas.
- Sleeping in a bed, sleeping bag or small tent with a minor.
- Touching the knees or legs of minors.
- Tickling minors.
- Wrestling and/or roughhousing/ Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a minor to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a minor.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Compliments related to physique or body development

D. Undue Attention

Certain conduct has been used by adults to develop inappropriate relationships with minors. Activities include singling out minors or showing them unusual attention. Some examples of this behavior prohibited for Church personnel are:

-Presenting gifts to a minor that would not ordinarily be given to an entire group of children, excluding awards, etc. Allowing a minor to drive automobiles of Church personnel even though another adult may be present. Singling out a particular child for special dinners, events, trips or outings.

E. Screening

1. All applicants for Church personnel positions working with minors will be required to complete the following without exception: a. A standard application that includes a release of information to conduct background checks. Applicants will also be required to read and sign the Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors. b. Appropriate criminal records check. 2. For employees and volunteers who have worked in the parish or school for two years or more, the application and criminal records check will complete their screening process. 3. Additional screening procedures, such as reference checks and face-to-face interviews are recommended for new applicants. 4. Volunteers for programs working with minors in parishes should be registered members of the parish for at least six months before being placed in a volunteer position with minors. With care, exceptions may be made for parents of minors who can demonstrate evidence of satisfactory ministry with minors from a previous parish.

F. Program Supervision

1. Parents are encouraged to be a part of services and programs in which their children are involved in the Diocese of Joliet. If parents wish to observe programs/activities in which their children are involved, they may do so after making arrangements with the principal or program administrator. 2. Special care needs to be taken where a program is sponsored or administered by only one adult or by anyone under age 21. 3. Church personnel in leadership roles must be aware of all programs for minors that are sponsored by a parish or school. 4. Individual Church personnel are not permitted to implement new programs for minors without receiving approval from the appropriate administrator (school, religious education, and parish).

G. Reporting Violations

All Church personnel are required to report violations of the Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors by an adult employee or volunteer to that individual's immediate supervisor. Certain personnel (including priests, school and child care personnel, medical personnel, social workers, psychologists, professional counselors, and recreational program personnel) are considered mandated reporters under Illinois law and must report to DCFS any situation in which they have a reasonable belief that a child is being physically or sexually abused.

H. Education, Distribution and Acknowledgement

Members of the clergy, religious, employees and all volunteers who work with minors will be required to receive in-service education that addresses their role in protecting minors. Minors who serve as employees or volunteers will be informed that they have a right to a safe working environment and a right to disclose behavior not in accord with these standards. The Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors is to be given to all diocesan and parish employees and volunteers, as well as to all parents and parishioners whose children attend parochial schools or attend Religious Education. The document is posted on the Diocesan website: www.dioceseofjoliet.org All Church personnel are required to comply with the Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors.