

**HOLY NAME CATHEDRAL**

**CHILDREN'S FAITH**

**FORMATION**



**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2023-2024**

## MISSION STATEMENT

Children’s Faith Formation (CFF) is a family-focused ministry, and recognizes that, according to Canon Law, the parent(s) are the primary educator(s) of their children. As such, the ministry strives to promote a family-centered approach in the formation of Christian values by:

- Acknowledging the uniqueness of each family and their background.
- Presenting the central truths and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church in a shared learning environment.
- Commitment to family life, peace, and justice.

The mission is to build *authentic* and *inclusive* faith-sharing where young people can experience a closer connection to their God, and from that encounter embrace their Catholic heritage and live out the Gospel message in their own lives as they mature into adulthood.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Rector

Fr. Gregory Sakowicz                      gsakowicz@holynamecathedral.org

### Assistant Director of Evangelization (Primary Contact)

James Keene                              jkeene@holynamecathedral.org  
(312) 787-8040-x105

### Director of Evangelization

Kenneth Ortega, Ed.D.                      kortega@holynamecathedral.org

## MINISTRY OF THE WORD: CATECHESIS

“Catechesis, in presenting the Christian message, not only shows who God is and what his saving plan is, but, as Jesus himself did, it reveals man to man and makes him more aware of his sublime vocation. Revelation, in fact, "... is not... isolated from life or artificially juxtaposed to it. It is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life and it illumines the whole of life with the light of the Gospel, to inspire it or to question it.”

—General Directory for Catechesis 116

## CURRICULUM

In the upcoming year, Holy Name Cathedral will continue to use a lectionary-based curriculum for our non-sacramental program groups. Based on the Sunday readings, Pflaum Publishing creates lessons, integrating the Scripture with an appropriate Church teaching. The groupings are as follows

- Promise (Kindergarten & Grade 1)
- Good News (Grades 3 & 4)
- Venture (Grades 5 & 6)

For children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion (usually Grade 2), catechists will use Pflaum Publishing's *Together in Jesus* series.

For adolescents preparing for Confirmation (usually Grades 7 & 8), catechists will use Ascension Press's *CHOSEN*, an online, video based curriculum.

## SACRAMENTS

The Archdiocese of Chicago *requires a two-year, consecutive preparation* for the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. Also, parents/guardians are *required* to participate in sacramental preparation gatherings, designated by Holy Name Cathedral.

### **First Reconciliation/First Communion**

The concepts of mercy, forgiveness, and the Eucharist are gradually introduced in Grade 1. As the children enter Grade 2, they become aware of God's love for all Creation, and how to seek God's forgiveness. Also, the children are introduced to the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, the Mass, as well as the parish community. Once prepared, the children will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

### **Confirmation**

Preparation begins traditionally in Grade 7 and continues into Grade 8. This two-year process is *especially necessary* for Confirmation, as the children have more capacity to understand the depth and meaning of the Faith as they grow into adolescence.

### **Order of Christian Initiation for Adults adapted for children**

Children, not baptized by the Age of Reason (7 years old), are enrolled in this process. In accordance with Canon Law, these children will be baptized, confirmed, and receive Eucharist at a determined date.

## REGISTRATION POLICIES

Due to enrollment concerns, the following procedures must be respected to assure effective registration.

- Registration is available online on the parish website *until September 9, 2023*.
- Photocopies of Baptismal and Eucharist certificates (if applicable) are required.
- If transferring from another parish, a letter stating the status of your child's catechetical formation may be required.
- All families must complete the online student registration form.

All families are expected to pay the tuition and other fees. *However, no child will be denied religious education due to financial difficulties.* Please contact James Keene for further information. All calls are confidential.

## CODE OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

We expect students and adults to behave in a Catholic manner rooted in kindness and respect.

- Respect to classmates, other children, and adults is expected. We do not allow inappropriate words, actions, and general malice. This includes, but is not limited to: foul language, bullying, harassment, fighting, threats, disobedience of instructions, or other disruptive behavior.
- Unless the Assistant Director approves, no one should bring food or beverages into the classroom (except water).
- Children will dress in attire appropriate for religious instruction and occasion. Dress should not be distracting to the class.
- Children will respect the parish property, and not vandalize or destroy any aspect of the property. We share this space with Francis Xavier Warde School, and we want to show our gratitude towards their work by using the space(s) appropriately.
- *No one, especially children,* will bring illegal drugs, alcohol, or weapons on the premises. This could lead to dismissal without refund.

## OVERVIEW OF CONDUCT POLICIES

Catechists minister solely for the purpose of engaging children in Faith Formation. Correspondence outside scheduled Faith Formation hours with a student should occur *only* in appropriate situations, and with the child's parent/guardian present. Once warned, failure to comply with this guideline will lead to the catechist's immediate dismissal.

- Telephone/ Video Call— All phone calls concerning minors should be of a ministerial nature, and must be directed to the parent/guardian.
- Social Media— There should *never* be communication with a child through social media.
- Social Gatherings— Beyond parish-sponsored events, catechists should *never* socialize with minors without the presence of the parents/guardians. In all these cases, neither the parish nor the Archdiocese of Chicago is liable for incidences that may occur.

**Safe Interaction Requirement.** *No adult, except parent(s) or guardian(s), should ever be alone in a room with a minor for a conversation or meeting.* If a catechist finds themselves alone in the room with a child, they are instructed to calmly and joyfully direct the meeting to a room where another adult is present. Failure to abide by this policy will result in dismissal of the catechist, or adult from participation in the program. Personal conversations between adults and children should *always* be in view of other adults, contain appropriate subject matter, and demonstrate respect for the personal boundaries of the child and rules decided by their parent or guardian.

**Transporting Minors.** With the exception of their own children, volunteers *are not allowed* to drive young people in a personal vehicle with drivers other than their own parent/guardian. In addition, *no* paid staff personnel can organize carpools.

**Permission Forms.** Whenever a minor participates in a parish-sponsored activity that occurs off the Holy Name campus, a parent/guardian must complete and submit an Archdiocesan permission form.

**Administration of Medication.** Unless there is a signed permission form on file from the parent/guardian, with clear directives on circumstances and instructions on how to administer medication, catechists should *never* administer medication. Also, the catechist must consent to the this procedure.

**Child Abuse.** In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, adults ministering to minors, including parish leadership, are mandated by state law to report evidence of reasonable suspicion of abuse and/or neglect of a minor to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services: 1 (800) 252-2873. *All* volunteers are required to be certified Mandated Reports, and annually sign the State of Illinois form acknowledging this status. *If you witness an incident of child abuse, regardless of who the adult is, you must call 911 and report the incident.*

**Child Safety Lesson.** In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, Holy Name Cathedral provides children with a lesson on personal safety. A parent/guardian is given an opportunity to determine if participation is appropriate. If opting out is preferred, *an opt out form is required*, and material can be sent upon request, allowing the parent/ guardian to handle the discussion.

**Special Needs.** In accordance with Canon Law, every child, within the official parish boundaries, has a right participate in religious education. If there is sufficient collaboration with the parent/guardian, and the consent of the catechist, special needs students can participate in Children Faith Formation programs. An assessment of the situation will assure the positive experience of all involved. Please contact James Keene if this is relevant to your family's needs.

**Rules during sessions.** To assure the safety of all children, a parent/guardian is obligated to the following procedures:

- Families enter Frances Xavier Warde School through the courtyard doors.
- Families have permission to relax in the FXW auditorium during session times, but must use the space respectfully.
- A parent/guardian can escort their children to a classroom, and then return to the ground level.
- A parent/guardian must request early dismissal from the Assistant Director. Even if you inform the catechist, you *must* inform James Keene.
- If a parent/guardian wishes to visit a classroom, on-site personnel will escort the adult to the classroom. The adults should *never* wander around the premises, but return to the ground level when done with the observation.
- If a child is ill or needs attention, personnel will contact the parent/guardian. The child will be on the ground level for pick up.
- At dismissal, families can exit through the courtyard doors. Do not exit through the other doors.
- Please note that two adults must be present until every child is picked up. Please contact the rectory if there is a delay: (312) 787-8040. The receptionist will know how to contact personnel.



