



ST. JOSEPH
OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL
ST. JOACHIM

Parishes of the Five Towns Faith Formation Program

Welcoming families into a journey of grace, growth, and belonging.

Guidelines and Policies

Dear Families,

Welcome to a new year of Faith Formation. We are honored to walk with your children as they grow in love, understanding, and connection to God and the Church. This packet contains important information to help you feel prepared and supported throughout the year.

We know that each family brings its own story, rhythm, and hopes. Our goal is to make this journey one of joy, reverence, and belonging. If you ever have questions, concerns, or simply want to share a moment of grace, we are here.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's spiritual growth. May this year be filled with gentle learning, meaningful prayer, and moments of grace.

With gratitude and hope,

Dcn. Ivan Toro

Director of Faith Formation for the Parishes of the Five Towns

Mission Statement

Our Faith Formation program is rooted in the belief that every child is a beloved member of the Body of Christ. We accompany families as they nurture their children's spiritual growth, preparing them to receive the sacraments with reverence, joy, and understanding. Through prayer, study, and community, we seek to make faith formation a cherished experience of grace and belonging.

Attendance & Participation

We ask families to prioritize attendance at both weekly sessions and parish liturgies. Consistent participation helps children feel connected, prepared, and spiritually supported.

- **Weekly Sessions:** Please arrive on time and remain for the full duration.
- **Mass Attendance:** Families are encouraged to attend Sunday Mass together. Children preparing for sacraments will receive Mass reflection sheets to complete.
- **Absences:** If your child is sick or unable to attend, please notify the Faith Formation Office. Make-up materials will be provided when appropriate.

Early Pick-Up & Dismissal

To ensure safety and minimize disruption:

- **Early Pick-Up:** Must be requested in advance and approved by the Faith Formation Office. Frequent early dismissals are discouraged, as they interrupt the child's experience and the group's rhythm.
- A designated adult must sign out the child at the office.
- **Dismissal:** Children will be released only to authorized adults listed on the registration form.
- **Drop off and pick up:** Please drop off and pick up your children at the school entrance to ensure a safe and smooth transition.

Medical Needs & Allergies

We are committed to the safety and well-being of every child. Please help us care for your child by providing accurate medical information.

- **Medical Forms:** All families must complete the medical section of the registration form.
- **Allergies:** If your child has allergies (especially food or environmental), please list them clearly. We will take every precaution to ensure a safe environment.
- **Medications:** If your child requires medication during class, please contact the Faith Formation Office to arrange a care plan.
- **Illness:** Children who are sick should remain home. If symptoms arise during class, we will contact the parent or guardian listed.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, we will follow parish and diocesan protocols to ensure every child's safety.

- **Evacuation & Lockdown:** Teachers are trained in emergency procedures. Children will be guided calmly and safely.
- **Contacting Families:** We will use the emergency contact information provided on your registration form. Please ensure it is up to date.
- **Reunification:** Children will only be released to authorized adults listed on the form. Identification may be required.

✝ Sacramental Preparation

Receiving the sacraments is a sacred milestone. We accompany each child and family with reverence, clarity, and joy.

- **First Reconciliation & First Communion:** Preparation includes classroom sessions, family activities, and parish celebrations. Reflection sheets and keepsake materials will be provided.
- **Confirmation:** Teens will engage in study, service, and spiritual reflection. Sponsors should be chosen prayerfully and in accordance with diocesan guidelines.
- **Parent Involvement:** Parents are essential partners. We offer meetings, materials, and opportunities for shared prayer and learning.

Sacramental Preparation Requirement

In order to receive the sacraments of First Holy Communion or Confirmation, children must be enrolled in and actively participate in a minimum of two consecutive years of religious education. This period of formation ensures that each child is spiritually prepared and has a foundational understanding of the faith appropriate to their age and sacramental readiness.

Behavior Expectations & Classroom Conduct

Children are expected to participate respectfully, listen attentively, and treat peers and catechists with kindness. Disruptive behavior will be addressed with compassion and clarity, and families will be contacted when needed.

Technology & Personal Belongings

Personal devices (phones, tablets, etc.) should remain off and stored during class unless otherwise directed by the catechist. Please label jackets, bags, and other belongings to avoid mix-ups.

Communication & Updates

We strive to keep families informed and supported throughout the year.

- **Email & Reminders:** Weekly updates may be sent via email. Please check regularly for calendar changes, reflection sheets, and reminders.
- **Teacher Notes:** Instructors may send home brief notes or handouts. These are meant to support your child's learning and spiritual growth.
- **Questions & Support:** The Faith Formation Office is here to help. Reach out anytime with questions, concerns, or pastoral needs.

Weather & Emergency Closures

In the event of inclement weather or unexpected closures, families will be notified via email and parish communication channels. Please check your messages regularly during winter months.

Calendar & Events

A full calendar—including class dates and curriculum overview—will be provided at the start of the year. Additional events and updates will be shared via email throughout the program. Key dates to note include:

- First Day of Classes
- Parent Meetings
- Sacrament Preparation Sessions
- Retreats & Rehearsals
- Celebration Masses

Please mark these dates and notify us of any conflicts early.

Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome parent volunteers for classroom support, hospitality, and special events. If you're interested in helping, please contact the Faith Formation Office.

Safe Environment & Volunteer Screening

All adult volunteers must complete diocesan Safe Environment training and background checks prior to serving. Details are available through the parish office.

Spanish-Language Support

A Spanish-language version of these guidelines is available upon request. Please contact the Faith Formation Office for assistance.

Digital Access Option

This handbook is available digitally. Families may request a PDF copy or access it via the parish website.

Contact Information for the Faith Formation Office

1355 Noel Avenue

Hewlett, NY 11557

Phone: (516) 569-6080

Email: fivetownsfaithformation@gmail.com

Acknowledgment & Partnership

Faith Formation is a shared journey. We ask each family to read these guidelines and return the signed acknowledgment form.

- **Partnership:** Your presence, prayer, and participation are essential. We are grateful for your trust and collaboration.
- **Commitment:** By signing the form, you affirm your commitment to supporting your child's spiritual growth and honoring our shared expectations.

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” — Mark 10:14

Acknowledgment Sheet

Please read the **Faith Formation Guidelines for Families** carefully. Sign and return this sheet to the **Office of Faith Formation**.

Child's Name(s):

_____ **Grade Level:** _____

_____ **Grade Level:** _____

_____ **Grade Level:** _____

_____ **Grade Level:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

- I have read and understood the Faith Formation Guidelines.
- I agree to follow the procedures outlined for attendance, safety, health, and communication.
- I understand the importance of Mass attendance and home faith practices.
- I will contact the Office of Faith Formation with any questions or concerns.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM

Please complete and return to the Faith Formation Office.

Student Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Grade Level: _____

Class Day/Time: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Primary Phone: _____

Alternate Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Emergency Contact (other than parent): _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Phone Number: _____

Authorized Pick-Up Persons (Name & Relationship):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Medical Conditions or Allergies:

Preferred Hospital (optional): _____

Physician Name & Phone (optional): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Photo/Video Permission and Release Form

I hereby grant permission, without reservation, to The Parishes of the Five Towns, and to those authorized by them, to take photographs and make recordings of my child(ren) named below. These materials may be used, in original or modified form, in all media now known or hereafter developed—including, without limitation, websites, bulletins, newsletters, and promotional brochures—with or without name or identifying information, solely for the purposes of promotion, public education, and/or fundraising activities of The Parishes of the Five Towns.

I understand and agree that I am not entitled to receive any compensation for the above. I release The Parishes of the Five Towns, along with their officers, directors, agents, employees, independent contractors, licensees, and assignees, from all claims—present or future—related to the use of these materials.

I further agree that The Parishes of the Five Towns will be the sole owner of all tangible and intangible rights to the photographs and recordings described above, with full authority to use or dispose of them as they see fit.

I am the parent or legal guardian of the minor(s) named below, and I give my full consent to the above on behalf of the minor(s) and myself.

Name(s) of Child/Children

Name: _____

Signature

Date