



Middle School Youth Faith Formation

2017-18

Parent/Guardian Handbook

St. Michael Catholic Church

16311 Duluth Ave SE

Prior Lake, MN 55372

952.447.2491

www.stmichael-pl.org

Parish Priest

Fr. Tom Walker

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952.447.2491 ext. 112

Director of Faith Formation

Deacon Terry Beer

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Director of Middle School Youth Faith Formation

And Youth Ministry

Lori Hinker

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The purpose of the Faith Formation Program at St. Michael Catholic Church is to provide an opportunity for the children and youth of the parish to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Christian Faith in a community atmosphere as well as via individual spiritual growth. Our desire is to actively engage the students in a dynamic learning environment.

Supported by the parents and the parish community, in conjunction with weekly worship and daily prayer, our mission is to provide a carefully planned formation process where each child and youth will come to know God and bear witness to His love in their daily lives. From every corner of their daily lives our children and youth are being informed and influenced by messages which too often set them on the wrong track. Our mission is to help the children and youth of the parish to overcome these obstacles.

PROGRAM POLICY INFORMATION

Student Drop off and Pick up:

- Youth in grades 6-8 are to be dropped off **before** their session begins at either 5:00pm or 6:15pm.
- Youth will be dismissed at either 6:00pm or 7:15pm.
- We will begin each session in the St. Michael's School Gym unless noted otherwise.

Attendance Policy:

We support the family in its effort to form their children and youth in the faith. We believe that the home is the best and most privileged place to share the faith, since it is lived there on a daily basis. Parents are the primary catechists of their children.

Regular attendance at Faith Formation Sessions is CRITICAL in order to provide the best faith formation possible. However, we do understand that some absences are unavoidable due to illnesses or family emergency.

- **Call or notify the Church Office (952.447.2491) or the Catechist of any anticipated absence for your child.**
- If a student is absent without an excuse for 2 consecutive weeks, parents will be contacted by phone by the Director of Middle School Faith Formation.
- The parents of students who are perpetually late to class or leave early will be contacted by the Director of Middle School Faith Formation for resolution. These practices put an unfair burden on the Catechists and other students.

Cell Phone and Electronic Policy:

- Youth may not use any electronic devices (cellphone, iPads, etc.) during sessions, retreat, service projects, large groups or social events unless authorization is given by a Catechist and/or Director of MSFF.
- Youth, who are found using electronic devices during these listed events without permission, the device will be confiscated by the Catechist and/or Director of MSFF and given back to the youth or parent after the event.
- In some small groups—cell phone will be collected before session begins, and returned once the session is completed.

Communication:

- All Middle School Faith Formation announcements are emailed weekly by Director of MSFF. Please make sure to review each week for important information as well as highlights of class activities in our program.
- In addition to the family emails, each Catechist is given contact information for their youth that includes family phone numbers and email information. The Catechist will send class updates as needed.
- We ask that all of our parents take an active role in assuring that they are informed in what is going on in their youth's sessions.

Student Behavior:

- Prayerful, respectable behavior is expected of youth, catechists, and parents in the Church and rooms. Parents are expected to show proper example to their youth. Remember that Church and School is God's House and is not to be treated like a gymnasium (even though we gather in one).
- The use of tobacco products is not permitted by anyone.
- Toys, candy, gum or any other distraction are not permitted in small group, unless given to the students by the catechist or brought in with catechist permission.
- Vandalism of any type will not be tolerated.
- Fighting and physical contact between students is prohibited in and on the church and school property. No running in the building or immediately outside.
- Session time is limited; it is important that we try to make the experience the best it can be for all of our students. One's child's disruptive behavior must not affect the experience of the rest.

Discipline Policy:

- **First intervention** - behavior is addressed directly with the youth by the catechist in a way which is respectful and allows the child to maintain his or her dignity.
- **Second intervention** - child visits Lori Hinker, Director of Middle School Faith Formation, to agree on a plan for improved behavior.
- **Third intervention** - youth phones home, talks to parents, and parent picks up youth after meeting with Lori Hinker.
- **Fourth intervention** - youth once again comes to Lori Hinker, conference is set between Lori and parents. Youth may return to class after written agreement of better behavior between youth's parent and catechist.
- **Fifth intervention** - youth is released from program and parents are offered an At Home Catechesis Curriculum.

Parent Commitment:

- One parent/guardian must be a registered member of a local Catholic parish.
- Reinforce the beliefs of the Catholic Faith in the day-to-day lives of their youth.
- Attend Mass with youth each weekend and Holy Day of Obligation, a mandatory practice of the Catholic Faith. It does not help youth who hears this instruction repeatedly in class, who is then not able to put the liturgy into practice.
- Take youth to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once per year.
- Pick up lesson and cover material missed if youth is absent from class for any reason.

Faith Formation Cancelation Information:

There are typically several times throughout the year when it is questionable whether there will be programming at the Church.

- Any decision to close the building will be made by the Parish Priest and Director of Faith Formation.
- If the church is closed during daytime, it will not re-open for any evening events.
- Evening program/meeting decisions will be made by 2:00 p.m. The church phone message at 952.447.2491 will be changed to announce closing information and this information will be put on the church website www.stmichael-pl.org.

Appreciation to our Catechists:

- “A little appreciation goes a long way”. Our Catechist are VOLUNTEERS, and give a lot of their time and talent on behalf of God’s children. Please help to keep their enthusiasm alive by expressing your gratitude and appreciation for the gifts that they share, now and throughout the year.

Family Packets:

- Packets that you have received at Parent Information Night (September 27) contains all information needed pertaining to Middle School Faith Formation.
- Upcoming Youth Ministry events will be provided in a timely matter. (Ignite, Chillfest and more!)
- If you lose your packet, or need extra copies at any time please contact Lori Hinker.

Thank you parents for enrolling your child in faith formation – Faith is like a tiny mustard seed. If it is protected and nurtured, it will grow and grow. We hope they form a bond with Jesus and their Catholic Faith. *Please remember that your commitment does not end here—to find out more ways to get involved and volunteer contact Lori Hinker.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR IDEAS ABOUT ANYTHING DURING THIS YEAR, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL ME.

Lori Hinker

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Terry Beer

Director of Faith Formation
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