

Faith Formation Parent Handbook



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St. Blase Catholic Church

***A welcoming
Catholic community
where the love of Jesus Christ
is learned and lived,
sung and shared.***

Mission Statement, Pentecost 2006

Dear Parents,

We are excited to be partners with you in catechesis for your children—to pass on the message of Jesus, to foster Christian community, to invite them to prayer and worship, and to motivate them to a life of service.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide important, essential information regarding the policies and procedures for all youth-centered religious formation programs at St. Blase Parish. Included are the guidelines for participants in the programs and expectations for families, as well as what families can expect from the parish. Please feel free to contact us at any time with your questions or comments. We are here to assist you.

As we begin together, we remind you of your awesome power as Christian parents. What we do is minimal compared to the great work you are constantly doing. Your children will learn what it is to be Catholic in today's world because of you: your faith and values are what they witness seven days a week. Thank you. Keep up the good work!!!

BAPTISMAL INFORMATION

A copy of the Baptismal certificate must be submitted at the time of registration for all children NOT baptized at St. Blase. If you do not have a copy of the Baptismal Certificate simply call the parish of Baptism, they will send it to you.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL

Participants in all Religious Formation Programs should arrive 10 minutes prior to the start of the program. This allows the sessions to begin on time and avoid disruptions.

The safety of our youth is always our first concern; therefore, children will only be released to a parent or designated guardian.

- Children in the Early Childhood Program will be in attendance with a parent/guardian and will be dismissed with them at the end of the session.
- Family Program (Grades 1-5) catechists will keep children in the room until a parent/guardian comes to the room and signs out the child on the attendance sheet.
- Children in the RCIA and young people in the Early Adolescent Program (Grades 6-8) will wait in the gathering space with adult supervision until they are picked up by a parent/guardian.
- An adult will also supervise teens in the Youth Group until they are picked up or walk home.

In the rare event that a young person needs to leave early, the parent/guardian will need to provide written notification to the Section Coordinator and/or the catechist.

EMERGENCIES:

CLOSINGS

In the event of inclement weather, St. Blase will cancel religious formation sessions when Utica Community **or** Warren Consolidated Schools cancel classes. When this is necessary, every attempt will be made to contact parents/guardians prior to the scheduled religious formation session. Please make sure we have an accurate email address.

In the event of an emergency after a session has begun, detailed safety procedures and plans are in place to aid the catechists. Catechists are instructed to keep their group of young people together;

minors will not be released until the Section Coordinator has determined that the threat has passed and it is safe to do so.

□ **FIRE & NATURAL DISASTERS**

Fire and disaster plans are in place to provide for the safety of all. In the event of an emergency evacuation, all persons will exit the building according to the designated route for their location (church, social center, Room A, etc.) and gather along the West side of the Parking Lot (not along the driveway) OR at the north end of the parking lot. Please do not stay in the building looking for your children; this action will endanger the safety of those trying to exit the building by creating confusion and congestion.

□ **MEDICAL**

Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of a medical emergency. Religious Formation Staff and catechists do not dispense or administer any medication to young people unless special circumstances warrant an exception. In this case, a dated note with written instructions and permission are required from the parent/guardian. Parents are asked to leave an emergency number, such as a cell phone.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY CONCERNS

For the protection of the youth and the adults who work with them (catechists, parents, chaperones, etc.) all religious formation sessions and activities for youth must meet the criteria of being **observable and interruptible**. Sessions/activities will be held in open spaces (for example, the social center) or rooms that contain open doors or windows on the doors. This will enable the Religious Formation Staff to observe and monitor all youth-centered sessions/activities and interrupt them when appropriate.

In addition, St. Blase Parish will follow the Guidelines of the Archdiocese of Detroit in handling all allegations of sexual misconduct. These Guidelines are available from the diocesan office or at the Parish Office.

VISITORS

Most times visitors are welcome in religious formation sessions, particularly Youth Group activities and Family Faith Sunday sessions; at other times, it may be inappropriate to bring a friend to a religious formation session due to limited space and supplies. Please contact the Section Coordinator at 586-268-2244 before inviting a friend to participate in a religious formation session.

ATTENDANCE

Regular, prompt attendance is essential for the effectiveness of our parish faith formation programs. The curriculum is designed to foster ongoing learning that may be diminished by absences; however, we realize that the nature of childhood includes occasional illness.

When it is necessary for a young person to be absent, parents/guardians are asked to call the Parish Office at 586-268-2244 and give the necessary information to the appropriate Section Coordinator. When applicable, missed lessons are expected to be completed at home.

ROLE OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIAN

Parental involvement is an important part of a child's faith development. We believe that your child receives the maximum benefit when parish and family work together as a team. Your active involvement in the religious formation sessions at the parish and at home aids your own continued

growth in faith as well as teaching your children the importance of religious education and faith formation. Expectations of parents in our various programs are: parents are expected to attend all sessions **with** their children for the **Early Childhood** program. Parents are invited to participate in the opening sessions in church for the **Family Faith** program (grades 1-5), stay to participate in the Parent Formation session, and during all Sunday sessions. At various times the parents will be invited to participate with their children/ teens in the **Family Faith** program, **Young Adolescent** (grades 6-8) program and **Youth Ministry** (UNITY - teens) program.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If your child has special medical or learning needs, such as allergies, ADD, etc. please note them on the Religious Formation registration form in the appropriate section, and bring them to the attention of the Section Coordinator. This will enable us to provide a better learning environment for all participants.

SCHEDULES

Schedules of dates and times for all Religious Formation Programs for will be given to families during Parent Orientation. Additional copies will be available after that in the Parish Office or can be downloaded from the parish website.

COMMUNICATION

Since we are partners in the faith development of your children and are committed to serving the needs of adults and youth, we want you to know and constantly be aware of all that we are doing during religious formation sessions. Therefore, we will make every effort to keep you informed about the activities of the various programs through, email, phone calls, *The Flame* (our parish bulletin), and the parish website (www.stblase.org). We will also contact you in the event of a young person's inappropriate behavior.

Please note: email is our primary means of communication.

OFF-SITE PARISH-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

Permission slips signed by the parent/guardian are required for each parish-sponsored event held away from the parish grounds. This includes such activities as retreats, field trips, service projects, etc. Behavioral expectations for participants remain the same whether the activity is held on or off of parish grounds. Parents are invited and encouraged to support youth participation in off-site events by acting as chaperones or drivers when needed.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions please feel free to contact the Religious Formation Staff at any time. We are available at the Parish Office during regular business hours or via email.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone: (586) 268-2244

Early Childhood Program	Janel Mariani	janel.mariani@stblase.org
Family Faith Program	Alice Doppel	alice.doppel@stblase.org
Young Adolescent Program	Claudia Messina	claudia.messina@stblase.org
Youth Ministry	Joe Wilseck	joe.wilseck@stblase.org