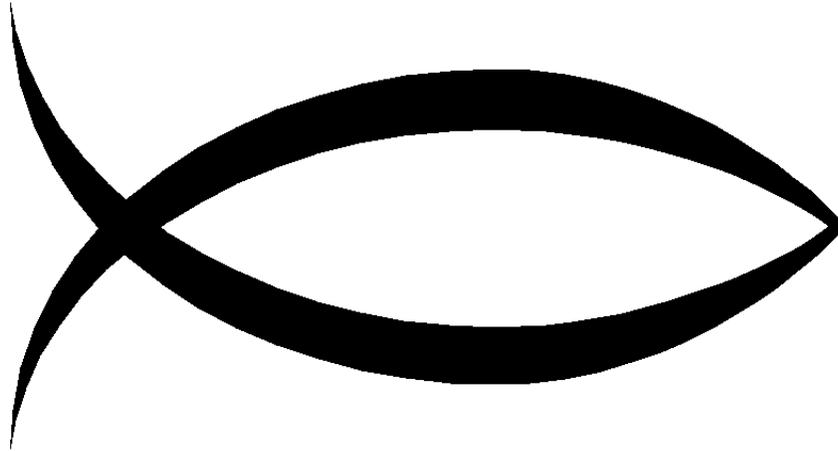


JUNIOR HIGH FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK 2016-17



Come Follow Me

**HOLY TRINITY PARISH
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Loving God,

You sent your Son Jesus into this world
to be an example to us all.

From a young age He followed Your will.
He preached, healed and led people to You.
He suffered, He died and He rose.

Give us knowledge, courage and a willing
heart to be the disciples of today.

To learn God's will,
to share God's message
and to be God's people.

To know, love and serve with youthful zeal.

Bless us with happiness, friendship,
love, laughter, peace, hope, faith,
achievement and direction.

Amen

Dear Parents and Junior High Participants:

Welcome to our Junior High Faith Formation Program. We are happy to have you enrolled and we hope that the coming year will be an exciting and rewarding one. This handbook is intended to assist you and your family with information to successfully navigate and take full advantage of the Junior High process.

We will be using a new curriculum by Ascension Press, **Chosen**, which uses video presentation followed by discussion.

Chosen utilizes a powerful and effective methodology with lessons designed to capture teens' attention and present the faith in new and unexpected ways. Featuring multiple dynamic presenters in visually stunning, fast-paced videos, along with fully integrated written materials for students and leaders, Chosen captures the attention and interest of young teens far better than the traditional textbooks that have been used in the younger grades.

In addition to the classes taken in either the summer or fall, the JH teens will be asked to become engaged in their parish and their faith through Youth Ministry events, active participation at Mass, and service to others in their parish and greater community.

One question that is often asked, "Why is junior high faith formation so different from my child's formation up to this point and why has confirmation been moved to a time when a young person is already so busy with other things in his/her life?" The answer is very simple, but often hard to accept, "Because a young person is so busy with other things in his/her life!"

It is during this period that a young person begins to personify God; God is becoming a real person, rather than some distant figure that we learn about and that our parents tell us about. It is at this time a young person begins to explore independence. With this independence, a young person can become involved in life situations that have not been faced before. It is at this time a young person looks critically at the faith and values handed on by parents. It is at this time, the adolescent will begin to question, doubt, analyze faith in order to come to a conclusion of either personally accepting what has been taught or refusing to accept what has been taught.

The parent's role is vital. An adolescent whose parents practice faith convictions, is willing to share the high and low points of one's spiritual journey, and is willing to listen to their teen's struggles without passing judgment, will find that this time of spiritual discovery and commitment is a rewarding experience for both the parent and the teen.

The Offices of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry are looking forward to assisting you every step of the way, so please do not hesitate to give us a call with your questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Ms. Michelle Angelo, Director of Faith Formation

Patricia Martin, Coordinator of Youth Ministry

PHILOSOPHY OF HOLY TRINITY JUNIOR HIGH FAITH FORMATION

The goal of Holy Trinity's Junior High Faith Formation Process is to nurture, enhance, and deepen faith formation begun in the early formative years of our childhood. We recognize that this formation does not end, but rather changes in scope and experience as these young people accept, more deeply, the invitation to discipleship.

STRUCTURE OF THE JUNIOR HIGH FAITH FORMATION PROCESS

The Director of Faith Formation and the Coordinator of Youth Ministry are responsible for the process. Included in this process are trained catechists, adults who desire to share their faith and journey with our young candidates and a number of trained peer ministers chosen from among our older high school CYO members.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

In order to be accepted into the Junior High Faith Formation process, each child and their family must be a Registered Parishioner at Holy Trinity:

FOUR COMPONENTS OF THE JUNIOR HIGH FAITH FORMATION PROCESS

This process stresses total faith formation which includes participation in the life of the Church through: **WORD WORSHIP COMMUNITY SERVICE**

WORD

Participate in Catechetical Sessions (summer or fall classes)

WORSHIP

Regular participation in the Sunday Eucharist

Participate in Reconciliation Services

COMMUNITY

Participate in a Retreat

Participate in CYO Meetings/Events

SERVICE

Participate in Service

WORD

There are four options for Junior High Catechetical Sessions:

A **Summer Session** is a week long, Monday-Friday, full day immersion program that is offered in the last week of June. Registration for the Summer Session is in February.

Monday Traditional Bi Monthly Sessions are offered during the school year on Monday evenings from 7:00-8:30 PM in the Holy Trinity School. Classes are held twice each month, October through March, for a total of 12 classes. Registration for the Traditional Program is in the spring.

Sunday Traditional Bi-Monthly Sessions are offered during the school year on Sunday mornings from 10:15-11:30 AM in the Holy Trinity School. Classes are held twice each month, for a total of 12 classes. Registration for the Traditional Program is in the spring.

These first three options use the Chosen curriculum.

ONE-ON-ONE INSTRUCTION Parents teach their child(ren) at home using the same the Alive in Christ curriculum that was used in the younger grades. Students in this option will also be responsible for completing and submitting unit reviews and online material. Parents and students will also meet twice during the year with the Director of Faith Formation to review material. Students must also complete all CYO, Liturgy Reflections and service requirements as teens in the summer and traditional programs.

WORSHIP

Participate regularly in Sunday Eucharist - The Sunday Liturgy is the lifeblood of our faith. We gather as community for the greatest prayer of the Catholic Church, to worship God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit. We break bread together to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who commanded us to "Do this in memory of me" (*Luke 22:19*). We proclaim our Catholic beliefs in the creed, we give thanks and share the gifts God has given us and we sing and listen to the Word of God proclaimed.

Participate in Advent & Lenten Reconciliation Services – There are communal Advent and Lenten Reconciliation Services in the church each year.

Liturgy Reflection: *Each year of Junior High Formation a participant will submit 6 Liturgy reflections. The reflections are due within four weeks of attendance, so that we may verify the Liturgy components. Liturgy reflection sheets are in your folder, and are also posted to the website. A total of 12 Liturgy reflection sheets are required over the two years of 7th and 8th grades.*

COMMUNITY

Teens participate in CYO meetings, events and a retreat

Retreats - *There are two day long retreats held in the Parish Center each year. A retreat setting is an opportunity for candidates to reflect on their deepening relationship with Jesus Christ through their adolescent years. This retreat is a time for the candidates to nurture spiritual growth and to awaken their awareness of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives. A retreat is a concentrated experience that offers an environment for grappling with faith issues and learning new ways to pray. It is also an opportunity for the Candidates to build community with other teens of the parish.*

Catholic Youth Organization - *CYO meetings/events will take place from September through April on scheduled Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays. And there will be approximately 15 opportunities each year to gather with a Community of Faith and earn CYO units.*

Community: *Each year of Junior High Formation a participant will acquire 6 CYO units and if their schedule permits, also a retreat experience. A total of 12 CYO units and 1 retreat are required over the two years of 7th and 8th grades.*

SERVICE

Every Christian has a calling and a responsibility to serve as a living example of Jesus' teachings - to serve one another. God calls us to serve as we say, "Here I am Lord!" To serve others is a true gift for both the recipient and the giver. For Christians, young and old, service should be an attitude, a way of life. It is important not only to listen and understand the Word of God, but also to apply the lessons learned, through daily life and service to others. This is essential to living as a Christian and following in Jesus footsteps. These opportunities also give the candidates ways to explore how they can be helpful to our parish and the community.

Service: *Each year of Junior High Formation a participant will perform 6 hours of community service and keep track of their hours on the service reflection form in your folder or a copy can be found online. A total of 12 service hours are required over the two years of 7th and 8th grades.*

OVER THE TWO YEAR JUNIOR HIGH FORMATION PROCESS

- 1 1 Day - 12 hour retreat
 - 12 CYO units
 - 12 Liturgy Reflections
 - 12 Service Hours
- Completion of Classes in summer or fall

Yearly Sample breakdown:

7 th Grade	8 th Grade
1 week of summer class	12 Monday evening classes
6 CYO units	6 CYO units
6 Service Hours	6 Service Hours
6 Liturgy Reflections	6 Liturgy Reflections
1 Retreat	

Please note that a participant can complete the components as their schedule permits. For example, a participant can complete more CYO credits before or after an athletic season or they can complete their service over the summer months, etc. A teen may attend the summer program in one year and the fall program the next year. Together with their parents a participant needs to develop a completion schedule that best suits them and their family.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We strongly encourage parents to be actively involved with their child's formation process. We ask parents to:

Discuss the materials presented to the teen on a weekly basis

Provide transportation to meetings and events

Attend weekly Mass with the teen

Be faith role models for their teen as well as all of the others in the program

Attend parent meetings as they arise

Pray for their teen as well as all others participating in this process

POLICY SECTION

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Fees are based upon the number of children per family and is found on the registration form emailed in the spring.

Families enrolled in our fall programs are asked to pay all fees by **Oct. 1 of the Catechetical year**. Summer fees are due by June 1. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Families experiencing financial difficulties are asked to contact the **Office of Faith Formation** to explain their situation and request a partial or full waiver for the year. Such requests are kept in strict confidence. **No child will be denied religious instruction due to a financial situation.**

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The Christian principles learned in the classroom and home only make sense if they are practiced regularly. **ATTENDANCE AT MASS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF FAITH FORMATION.** It is expected that the families who have enrolled in any of our Faith Formation programs be fully aware of their **Sunday Mass and Holy Day Obligation** and fulfill the obligation faithfully by participating in the Eucharistic Celebration (Mass). We consider this practice to be fundamental for successfully instilling the seeds of our Catholic Faith in our children.

Because of the variety of models of faith formation provided, it is expected that a child enrolled in any of these models will attend class regularly. There are times, however, when absence from class is necessary due to **illness or family emergencies**. In such cases, parents are asked to send a note to the child's catechist explaining the reason for the absence. When a child is absent from class twice in a row, the catechist will call inquiring about the child's absence. Excessive absence is a cause for repeating the grade. **NO MORE THAN 2 ABSENCES FOR BI-MONTHLY SUNDAY OR MONDAY EVENING GROUPS *unless there are extenuating circumstances determined by the Director Of Faith Formation after a meeting with the parents. If your son/daughter will exceed the number of allowed absences, contact the Director immediately.***

Please note that **LATENESS** is disruptive to the class and we stress that every attempt be made to arrive for class on time. **3 LATE OCCURRENCES** will be marked as **1 ABSENCE**.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

Whenever inclement weather forces school closings, Parish Religious Education classes will be cancelled. We will post the cancellation notice on our voice mail system so that you may obtain that information by calling our office and send emails to all families.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Every person is worthy of being treated with care and the respect made in the image and likeness of God. Classroom behavior needs to be characterized by genuine Christian care, mutual respect, and honesty. Disruptive behavior prevents learning from the whole class and can be frustrating for the Catechist who is volunteering his/her time for the good of the children/youth. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A YOUTH OR AN ADULT BE PERMITTED TO STRIKE ANOTHER OR USE ABUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR ANY REASON.** Lack of self discipline will be addressed promptly.

NORMAL STEPS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION:

- 1. Verbal correction by the Catechist**
- 2. Youth will be sent to the office to meet with the Director**
- 3. Parent will be notified by the Catechist and a conference will be held**
- 4. Parent and Youth will meet with the Director**
- 5. Youth may be removed from the Program**

A YOUTH WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM IMMEDIATELY FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS:

- Drugs/Alcohol/Substance abuse**
- Verbal or Physical Harassment**
- Stealing or damaging parish/school property**
- Jeopardizing a person's safety**
- Fighting**

A written notice will be given to the parents indicating the reason for the removal from the classroom or Catechist's home group

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICIES

Substance abuse is defined as the possession of, use of, or trafficking in any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, injection, or percutaneous means. Anyone found in possession of an illegal drug or unauthorized substance will be immediately dismissed from the program. Anyone trafficking illegal substances will be formally removed from the program and the matter turned over to the local authorities.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Child abuse includes but is not limited to the following:

- *Engaging in sexual activity with a child*
- *Denial of proper or necessary substance, education, medical care, or other care necessary for the child's health*
- *Use of restraint procedures on a child that cause injury or pain*
- *Administration of prescription drugs without ongoing supervisions of a licensed physician*
- *Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances*
- *Commission of any act, other than by accidental means that threatens or results in any injury or death to a child.*

The Parish Director of Faith Formation is required by the New Jersey Code and Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse to report **suspected** or **actual child abuse or neglect** to the proper authorities. Catechists and parents who observe actual or suspected child abuse are encouraged to report this matter in confidence to their Director of faith Formation immediately.

Catechists or parents who witness an act of child abuse perpetrated by a cleric, employee, or volunteer in the parish, suspect that such an act has occurred, or receive a report of such an act, must report the incident **to one** of the following:

- **Pastor of the parish**
- **Director of Faith Formation for the parish**
- **Archdiocesan Chancellor**

All Catechists have participated in Checkpoint, the Archdiocesan Screening Process and have read and signed an agreement to abide by the **Archdiocesan Policies on Professional and Ministerial Conduct**

RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Both parents have the right to access their child's religious education progress and achievement information unless one parent produces a legal document (court certified) to the contrary. Upon reception of such a document, it will be attached to the child's record and all Catechists to whom the child/youth is assigned will be informed of all special directions. All communications from the Office of Faith Formation will be done with the custodial parent unless otherwise indicated in writing. A change in the child's normal routine must be approved by the custodial parent to the Office of Faith Formation and the Catechists will be notified of these changes. **No child will be dismissed from the program to the non-custodial parent without the written consent of the custodial parent.**

Monday Evening and Sunday Morning Classes

- *All 7-8 graders will enter through the Waterson St. doors by the Rescue Squad.*
- *The classes will be dismissed through these same doors.*

Summer Session:

Children enrolled in our summer sessions will be dropped off by the First Street entrance to the Gym. The day's session will begin and end in the school Gym.

LEAVING CLASS EARLY

Because families have been given the option to choose the most effective model of faith formation for them, it is assumed that each family has made a commitment of time to that model. Therefore, **only under special circumstances** should a child/youth have to leave class early. If, however, a special circumstance arises, the parent will indicate the circumstance in writing and give it to the Catechist. When picking a child/youth up early, the parent must report to the **Office of Faith Formation** and someone from that office will go for the child. At no time, will a child be released early from class to an adult other than the Director of Faith Formation or her designated office assistant.

YOUTH MINISTRY/CYO DISCIPLINARY POLICY

While trying to create fun, relevant, and exciting activities for CYO participants, we must also create a safe environment where they can grow and exercise their faith. Therefore, we have created policies to deal with problems in the following areas. These policies are not meant to curb the enjoyment or creativity of participants but are provided to let everyone know what behavior is expected. We expect everyone to learn, remember, and abide by the policies, but we do not anticipate having to use the disciplinary actions outlined (though we are prepared to do so). We have found that when participants know what is expected of them, we have very few problems and are able to create the warm and nurturing environment described above. Also, **participants may not come late or leave early from any meeting, event, trip or retreat**. If a participant can not give their full participation on any given date or time, they are asked to choose another possibility.

1. Disruptions during meetings

We are able to have a good time, joke, and have fun in our meetings. Some participants, however, occasionally take it too far and disrupt our meetings, causing others to be distracted from the event's teaching. In these cases, we follow these progressive disciplinary steps:

- Disruptive participants will be separated from their friends. We will move the disruptive person to another seat, away from their friends.
- After being separated on any given week, if the participant continues with the negative behavior, the person will be asked to leave the meeting and an

adult worker will phone the parents/guardians to pick up the participant early.

- If, when the participant returns the next time, he or she continues the disruptive pattern, the person will be given a cooling off period away from youth ministry activities for two weeks.
- If, the participant causes further disruption when returning from a cooling off period, he or she will be suspended indefinitely.

2. Participants who are under the influence of or in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or possessing a weapon

• If a participant comes to any youth ministry activity and a.) is noticeably under the influence of drugs or alcohol or b.) has possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or weapons, we will immediately report the incident to the participant's parents, send the participant home, and enforce a cooling off period from all youth ministry activities for two to four weeks depending on the severity of the situation. If recommended by the church leadership and/or required by law, the police and/or other authorities will also be contacted. Professional counseling will be recommended.

3. Leaving the supervisory presence of the youth ministry staff (i.e. leaving the youth room, leaving the church, leaving the group during trips, etc.)

Sometimes participants try to leave the supervisory presence of adult workers so they can avoid group activities, talk on a cell phone, smoke, couple off, or leave the premises. We cannot allow this behavior because parents trust us to be responsible custodians of their children, and we can't be responsible when participants have left our presence.

• Therefore, participants are not permitted to leave the youth room during our meetings. Those who leave the youth room, church premises or group on a trip will face the following progression of disciplinary steps: On the first offense, the participant's parents will be notified and the participant will be given a cooling off period from youth activities for two weeks. Parents may be asked to pick up the student from the trip wherever the group may be. If there is a second offence, the participant will be suspended indefinitely or banned from one or more future trips.

4. Divisiveness and arguing

We do not tolerate arguing and contention that affects the overall unity and mission of the group. Even small pockets of division have major effects on the group, destroying the collective witness of the Body of Christ. When disruptive division or arguing occurs, both parties will be asked to meet with the youth ministry staff to mediate the conflict. Participants who will not own up to their roles in the conflicts and will not attempt to exist peaceably with the other participants will face the same disciplinary steps discussed below in

section five. Typically, we allow participants' emotions to cool for one week before we take any disciplinary action for lack of reconciliation.

5. Physical Bullying or Fighting

Would you send your child to a meeting knowing there's a good chance he or she will get assaulted? Not likely. Parents need to know they are leaving their child in a safe environment. To that end, we do not permit physical fighting--period. Participants who engage in physical bullying or fighting will face the following steps:

- The participant will be asked to leave the meeting or activity and an adult worker will phone the parents/guardians to pick up the participant early. The situation will be discussed with the parents and the participant will be given a cooling off period away from all youth ministry activities for two weeks.
- If there is a second offense, the participant will be suspended indefinitely.

6. Physical Displays of Affection, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

- We do not permit tickling, wrestling, piggyback rides or inappropriate touching. In addition, physical displays of affection such as kissing, sitting on laps, and lying or sleeping next to each other are inappropriate and being isolated or alone with another participant is not allowed.

Participants who offend these policies will be counseled by the youth ministry staff and the parents/guardians will be notified. If there is another offense, the participant will be given a cooling off period from youth activities for two weeks.

- Participants who engage in sexual harassment or sexual misconduct will be counseled by the youth ministry staff, their parents will be notified, and the participant will be sent home. In addition, depending on the severity of the situation, there will be a two to four week suspension from youth ministry activities. The church leadership will also be notified. If recommended by the church leadership and/or required by law, the police and/or other authorities will also be contacted.

7. Inappropriate Clothing

Participants are not permitted to wear clothing that is sexually suggestive or spiritually degrading. T-shirts or other clothing with evil, vulgar, illegal, or inappropriate content will not be permitted. In addition there should be: no midriffs, no low-cut tops, no spaghetti straps (tank tops must have straps at least two fingers wide), no see through clothing, and no sagging pants (no boxers or underwear showing).

- Those deemed to be wearing inappropriate clothing by the youth ministry staff to youth activities or trips will be given a large, over-sized t-shirt to wear over their clothes.
- The parents of repeat offenders will be notified. If the inappropriate dress continues, further disciplinary actions including suspension may be taken.

8. Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices tend to cause disruptions in our meetings, quarrels between participants, or the isolation of individuals. Therefore, the use of cell phones, iPods, cameras or other personal electronic or entertainment devices is prohibited during activities and services.

- If participants choose to bring such devices, they do so at their own risk. The youth ministry staff does not take responsibility for the safe return of these items.
- Devices used during undesignated times, whether on the church premises or on trips, will be confiscated until the end of the service, trip or event.

9. Return after Suspension from Youth Activities

Participant wishing to return to youth ministry activities after a cooling off period or suspension will be asked to meet with the youth minister and/or youth ministry staff before returning so that appropriate behavior expectations may be reviewed.

ZORACH V. CLAUSON - 343U.S.306 (1952)

This US Supreme Court case ruled that it is not unconstitutional for a public school student to attend religious instruction at a parochial school or church event even if this should disrupt the public school schedule.

By “public school schedule” it has been interpreted to include sporting events, band competitions, school plays, and any other school sponsored event.

Any type of “punishment” for missing or leaving an event early is NOT permitted and is a violation of the law.

Therefore school personnel cannot:

Threaten the student in any way (example: removal from the team)

Mock or make fun of a child’s religious convictions.

Point out the reason why a student is not present or leaving early to other students or staff

Place penalty such as “extra laps”, “benching”, or any other type of action, which is placed upon the student because of his/her absence or early dismissal.

If your family has a problem with a teacher or coach, please do not hesitate to call our office.