

## Family Guidelines

### The Role of the Parents

At St. George Parish we make our Faith Formation program a first priority. Our goal is for our youth to have good values and a good sense of morality and ethics in their lives. It is the role of the parish to assist parents in nurturing the faith of their children. It is essential that parents cooperate with the parish and work with those who are the designated leaders of the parish program.

**Can. 774 § 2.** Parents above others are obliged to form their children by word and example in faith and in the practice of Christian life; sponsors and those who take the place of parents are bound by an equal obligation.

**Reminder:** Faith Formation is not a substitute for attending Mass. Bring your son/daughter to Mass every Sunday and to Faith Formation class and activities every week they are scheduled.

Code of Canon Law - Intra Text  
[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

### Admissions Policy

- † All Saint George youth, regardless of race, sex, national origin, physical or mental challenges, are welcome to be a part of our Saint George Faith Formation Program.
- † Each family must complete and submit a Faith Formation Registration Form. Also, keep us informed of any changes that may occur during the school year. (Ex. Address, phone #, etc.)
- † Students are typically enrolled in the grade in which they are currently attending in school, unless other arrangements are made with the Faith Formation Leader. An exception to this may be necessary to meet specific requirements for sacramental preparation.
- † Registrations will be available during the months of July and August. Families who wish to enroll their children at other times during the year may do so by contacting the Faith Formation Office.
- † Registrations will be accepted on or before the first scheduled class and also at the Parish Picnic.

### Registration

If your student was not baptized at Saint George Parish, a copy of his/her Baptismal certificate must be submitted at the time of registration. This is not necessary if your certificate is on file.

## Program Fee

The pastor, in cooperation with the Pastoral Council, determines the annual fees for the Faith Formation Program. The following schedule has been recommended:

### Parishioners:

Per Child: \$65

### Non-Parishioners:

Per Child: \$100

No one will be prevented from attending because of inability to pay. An inquiry to the Pastor or the Faith Formation Leader is all that is necessary to have the fees excused. Program Fees are non-refundable after the start of classes.

Faith Formation Registration Forms and schedule can be found on the Website:  
[www.stgeorgeerie.org](http://www.stgeorgeerie.org)

## Curriculum

Saint George Parish follows the Diocese of Erie *Curriculum Guidelines* issued by Bishop Lawrence Persico. The textbooks and other materials used in the classrooms have been chosen because they offer catechists the resources necessary to conduct classes and are in conformity with the teachings found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

We will be using the following materials:

K-1 Promise (Pflaum Publishing)

2nd Blessed First Reconciliation (Dynamic Catholic)

3rd Blessed First Communion (Dynamic Catholic)

4th, 5th & 6th Venture (Pflaum)

7th & 8th Visions (Pflaum)

9th Gifted With the Spirit (Pflaum)

10th Gifted With the Spirit (Pflaum)

11th Decision Point (Dynamic Catholic)

Student Records & Rights: The Saint George Faith Formation Leader will maintain a file for each student/family in the Saint George Parish Faith Formation Data Base. Included in this file will be, information from your registration form, Baptismal Certificate, and all correspondence we may have sent. You may review these records during normal working hours by contacting the Faith Formation Leader. These records are the property of Saint George Parish and are available to all professional staff of the parish. This material will not be released to anyone outside those mentioned above without your written consent.

## Classes

### Attendance:

Faith Formation gives our youth the chance to not only learn about their Catholic faith, but also discuss their faith with their peers, under the guidance of a Catechist. The Church feels that Faith Formation is of vital importance to the spiritual formation of the youth, and will help them to make a true commitment to Christ and his Church.

Each student in the Faith Formation Program is expected to attend every class and activity for the year. If your child will be absent, a parent must notify the Faith Formation Leader or catechist prior to class. Parents will be contacted when a student has had two consecutive absences without a written or verbal excuse.

### Arrival & Dismissal:

Classes are held in Saint George School. You may enter and leave the school at the Main School entrance on Georgian Way.

Please do not drop off children more than 10 minutes before classes are scheduled to begin, and please pick up your child promptly at the end of class.

**Younger students (Kindergarten through Grade 3) must be picked up by their parent(s) or their designee at the classrooms unless notified of a change in plans.** All other students may wait for their parents at a designated spot.

The Faith Formation Program includes 9:30 Mass also known as the Family Mass. Class will begin after the 9:30 Mass and end at 11:25 am. At times Mass may run longer than normal, starting times may vary.

### Missed Classes:

Each class session builds on the material covered in preceding classes. Students who are absent miss a great deal and will have to make up the material covered in the missed classes. Missed work will be sent home with the student. Parents, it will be your responsibility to review the work with your student. The missed work must be completed and returned to the catechists for credit. Failure to do so may delay receiving the sacraments.

### Homework:

Catechists may assign work for the children to do at home with the assistance of their parents. Parents are encouraged to ask their children about homework and discuss what they did in class.

### Penance Services:

Students in 3rd—11th grades will participate in Penance Services during the school year during class time or retreats. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to community penance services during the year.

### Classroom Visits:

Parents are permitted and encouraged to visit their child's classroom at any time. They are required to sign in with the Faith Formation Leader before entering the classroom.

### Special Events:

Parents will be notified regarding any event or field trip for which the student will be taken off the parish grounds. Parents must fill out a permission slip and turn it in to the Faith Formation Leader. No child will be taken on such trips without the required forms.

### Sacraments/Liturgy:

St. George Parish follows the Diocesan Policies for sacrament preparation.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation** is received in the 2nd grade. The preparation involves two parent meetings, a Saturday morning retreat for students & parents, catechesis at home, along with classroom preparation. First grade attendance is mandatory! This includes all St. George School students who are parishioners!

First Reconciliation is usually held during Lent.

**First Holy Communion** is received in 3rd grade. The preparation involves two parent meetings, a retreat for students & parents, catechesis at home, along with classroom preparation. Practices are held during class time. It is very important to attend every class! This includes St. George School parishioners!

**Confirmation** is received in 11th grade. The preparation involves one parent meeting, class time, a Confirmation Retreat, Confirmation Interview, Service Hours, Sponsor Information, Saint/Confirmation Name, Letter to the Bishop, Rehearsal and Confirmation Celebration. (Detailed information on the website [stgeorgeerie.org](http://stgeorgeerie.org))

### More Information:

As part of a student's sacramental preparation, *2nd grade* students must have regularly attended 1st grade Faith Formation classes or a Catholic School.

*3rd grade* students are required to complete 1st and 2nd grades or a Catholic School in order to receive First Holy Communion.

*9th & 10th grade* religion classes must be completed in a High School Faith Formation Program or attend a Catholic High School in order to enter into the Confirmation Program in 11th grade.

## FAITH FORMATION MASS

As part of the curriculum, students are asked to attend 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. Children's Liturgy of the Word is offered to children ages 4 to 4th grade during the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

## RCIA for Children

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Children is offered at Saint George Parish for children needing Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Contact the Faith Formation Office for more information.

## Discipline

Everyone involved in the program is challenged by the words and example of Jesus to respect each person's right to be treated not only with dignity and respect but also with love. In order to provide for a safe and well-ordered program in which students and catechists can learn to follow Jesus' call to love, some rules for behavior are necessary. The program exists for student growth and in turn students are expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Show respect to Catechists, other students and program personnel.
2. Treat the property, good name and physical safety of others with respect.
3. Be present only in the areas of the building for which you have permission at a specific time. Act in a safe manner in and around the building.
4. Cell phones must be turned off at the beginning of class and all activities. Catechists have permission to collect them if necessary and return them to the student after class.
5. Use voice and behavior in a manner appropriate for a classroom.
6. Please follow your school dress code when deciding what to wear to class.
7. Use of, or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, vapes/E-cigarettes or tobacco is strictly prohibited. Such items will be seized and parents notified immediately. Law enforcement may also be notified.

## Disciplinary Action

Catechists are responsible for the safety and welfare of the children in their class. Also, they are responsible for creating an environment in the room, which is positive, Christian and conducive to learning. In order for that to happen, the Catechist must establish him or herself as a leader in the classroom and set behavioral expectations for the students.

Good discipline is aimed toward growth. We recognize that students may make mistakes and the role of the Catechist at times will be one of guiding and correcting

those mistakes. Catechists will handle discipline problems in a positive manner. Catechists are encouraged to handle minor discipline problems in their classrooms.

Students whose behavior becomes a continual problem in the classroom will be sent out of class to the Faith Formation Office. Anytime a student is sent from class for disciplinary reasons, their parents will be contacted either by phone, in person or in writing. If necessary a meeting will be scheduled with the pastor, leader, parent and student regarding the problem.

If the student's behavior continues to be a problem, the student will be removed from class and the parents contacted again. At this time, attendance in the Faith Formation Program may be postponed until necessary maturity is evident.

#### Weapons Policy

In order to ensure a safe and Christian environment, it is forbidden for anyone to possess a weapon or any object/material/substance that could be used as a weapon or confused with a real weapon by any reasonable person (toy guns, etc.) in the buildings, or within the boundaries of Saint George Parish. This is a zero tolerance policy. The student will be removed from the program and an alternative method of Faith Formation will be negotiated. Judgments about re-admittance to the program will be made on a case by case basis and this decision is at the sole discretion of the pastor.

#### Class Cancellation:

In the event that inclement weather would require us to cancel classes, catechists will be notified and will in turn notify you. If you do not receive notification, please use your own discretion.

#### Other Activities:

Students are invited to participate in the following activities offered by Saint George Parish. *Regular attendance at Sunday morning class is encouraged.*

- Choir (Grades 1 and up)                      Scouts
- Youth Group (Grades 5— 12)
- Sports (Football, swimming, wrestling, cross country, golf, bowling & ski club)

#### Vocation Cross

The Faith Formation students have the opportunity to take the Vocation Cross home with them for the week. The cross is inside a wooden box with a battery operated candle and a booklet containing a prayer to say as a family. Please consider praying, as a family, for vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life!

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest"

(Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2)

## Child Protection

The Diocese of Erie is committed to protecting the children and youth who are entrusted to its care and to ensuring that those in ministry with our young people are in right relationship with the children/youth receiving services. To share in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility. The privilege is the joy of sharing in the mission of Jesus Himself. The responsibility is acting in a way that conforms to the attitude and actions of Christ.

The Bishops of the United States have mandated that all children and youth be in-serviced in regard to safe environment. Article 12 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states:

*Dioceses will establish "safe environment" programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.*

In this spirit, the Diocese has issued a Revision of the Policy for the Protection of Children. The code is included in the diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, which also includes mandates for creating safe environments. To read the policy, go to <https://www.eriercd.org/childprotection/policyupdatenotice.html>

or for more information, contact Mrs. Cindy Zemcik, at the diocesan offices at [czemcik@eriercd.org](mailto:czemcik@eriercd.org)

### Contacts:

#### Pastor

Fr. Brian Vossler  
864-0622 ext. 356

#### Parochial Vicar:

Fr. James Power  
864-0622 ext. 354

#### Faith Formation Leader:

Mrs. Mary Lou Pacoe  
864-0622 ext. 281