



FAITH FORMATION

A JOURNEY FOR LIFE

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2019-2020



Office of Faith Formation
Post Office Box 1524
Tampa, Florida 33601-1524
813-229-1595

Fr. George C. Corrigan, OFM
Pastor

Barbara Ferreris
Director of Faith Formation
813-229-1595, ext. 204
bferreris@sacredheartfla.org

Maria Giral
Associate Director of Faith Formation
813-229-1595, ext. 214
mgiral@sacredheartfla.org

Faith Formation sessions are held at
Sacred Heart North Campus
3515 North Florida Avenue
Tampa, FL 33603
Sunday – 10:30 to 11:30 am
Wednesday – 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	5
Registration/Fees	6
Sacramental Preparation	7
Policies	8
Mass Attendance	8
Attendance	8
Arrival and Dismissal	10
Dress Code	10
Behavior	11
Other Policies	12
Communication	14
Hurricane Plan	15
Safety	15
Photos/Videos	16
Right to Amend	16
Prayers/Doctrine to Know/Learn	17
The Role of the Catechist	18
DOSP's Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Youth	20
DOSP's Code of Conduct for Children	23
DOSP's Safe Environment Program	25
DOSP's Safe Environment Program Training (Children & Youth)	26
DOSP's Fingerprint-Based Background Screening	27
Session Schedules At-A-Glance	29
Annual Photo Release	31
Acknowledgement	32

MISSION STATEMENT

Upon saying His final farewell to His apostles, Jesus gave His new church the task to evangelize, that is, to bring the message of the Gospel to all the world (Acts 1:8). The Bishops of the United States have pointed out that the first goal of evangelization is to “bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others” (Go and Make Disciples). The family, then, is the first forum in which the mission of evangelization takes place. Hence, parents are recognized as having the primary responsibility for training their children in the practice of the faith (Gaudium et Spes #48).

Parish Faith Formation sessions assist in this sacred duty by providing opportunities for parents and children to develop their prayer lives and their formal understanding of the faith.

The gift of faith, celebrated in Baptism, must be nourished throughout the entire life of each Christian. The family is rightfully called “the domestic church” and, as such, is the foundation of the wider church community. Religious Education within the Diocese of St. Petersburg serves all the domestic church by offering the guidance and instruction whereby each individual can come to his/her full potential as members of the People of God. Sincere cooperation between the parish and its member families will bring about the goal of evangelizing youth and children; namely, that they grow in understanding and accepting Catholic Doctrine, in their active participation and in awareness of Catholic Liturgical and Sacramental Life, their embracing of the fundamental principles of Catholic Morality and the life of Catholic Prayer (Catechism of the Catholic Church).



REGISTRATION/FEEES

Faith Formation Sessions

1. Faith Formation has an open registration policy throughout the year.
2. Families who wish to enroll children in Faith Formation must be registered parishioners.
3. Parish registration card must be filled out at the time of registration, if not already a registered member.
4. If Sacraments will be received this year, a copy of the Baptismal certificate must be provided at the time of registration, if not already on file.
5. Faith Formation participants must be at least 4 years old by September 1 of the year in which the child is enrolling.

Faith Formation Fees

The cost of the program is as follows:

Registration received:	04/14/19 –	\$78 per child/youth
	05/31/19:	
	06/01/19 –	\$85 per child/youth
	07/31/19:	
	08/01/19 or later:	\$110 per child/youth

The fee pays for the books and supplies and offsets the cost of the teachers' manuals, DVDs, resources, Catechist training and background screening.

Sacramental Preparation Fees

The fee for the materials for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation/Eucharist is \$100. The fee pays for the books, workshop and take home materials, retreat days, certificates, reception and other incidental expenses.

The fee for the materials for the Sacrament of Confirmation is \$150. This includes a fee of \$70 for workshop and materials, textbook, Bible, certificate, reception and other incidental expenses, and a fee of \$80 that pays for the overnight retreat at the Bethany Center in Lutz, Florida.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 0-6 years | Contact the Parish Office for more information regarding Baptism. |
| 7-17 years | Contact the Director of Faith Formation for more information regarding RCIA Adapted for Children. |
| 18+ years | Contact the Director of Faith Formation for more information regarding RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). |

The process of Sacrament Preparation at Sacred Heart is consistent with the guidelines established by the Diocese of St. Petersburg. For those 7 years of age or older, the process consists of no less than one year of Faith Formation sessions, followed by a second year of immediate preparation for reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Placement in all Sacrament Preparation processes is based on the following criteria in accordance with diocesan guidelines.

First Reconciliation/First Eucharist/Confirmation

1. Families with children 7 years of age or older who have not received First Reconciliation/First Eucharist are eligible to enroll for Sacrament Preparation.
2. Families with children in the eighth grade or older who have not received Confirmation are eligible to enroll for Confirmation preparation.
3. Families of candidates must be registered in Sacred Heart Parish.
4. Proof of Baptism must be provided at the time of enrollment in the Sacrament Preparation process.
5. Children must have completed one year of faithful participation in Faith Formation sessions or Catholic Parochial School **immediately prior** to enrollment. Concurrent enrollment in a Catholic Parochial School or Parish Faith Formation session is required.

POLICIES

Mass Attendance

Parents, when you had your child baptized, you agreed to raise them in the Catholic faith. That means you have the responsibility of attending Mass with your child every Sunday. Faith Formation sessions do not give your child all the knowledge they need; they need the knowledge and grace that is received from Mass. "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God." CCC 1074



Attendance at Faith Formation for Grades PreK-4 through High School

Since each grade level of our Faith Formation Program has its own curriculum focus, children enrolled in the Faith Formation Program should attend every session. Our calendar for the year takes into consideration holiday weekends which allows for family time. If, however, due to illness or family commitments it is necessary for students to be absent, parents should notify their child(ren)'s catechist in advance. In the event of an absence, children and/or parents should check with the catechist to see what was missed. In a non-sacramental year, four absences or more are considered excessive. If a child misses four consecutive sessions without prior notice, he or she will be considered withdrawn from the program unless parents notify us otherwise.

1. Attendance records are in keeping with diocesan policies and help determine eligibility for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

2. **Faithful attendance to all scheduled sessions is expected. For Sacramental Programs, regular attendance is required for successful completion of the process.**
3. Children and families are expected to make up any missed work due to absences.
4. Tardiness is a distraction to children, parents and catechists and robs everyone of valuable faith sharing time. Children and parents need to be respectful when entering a group that is already in session.
5. All absences require either a written excuse presented to the catechist or phone call to the Faith Formation Office. Absences can be considered excused only if oral or written communication is provided to the Faith Formation Office.
6. Children who are chronically absent without speaking to a catechist or Director will be dropped from the program.
7. **Regular attendance at Faith Formation sessions is at least as important as regular attendance at school.**

Attendance during Sacramental and Preparation Years

Regular attendance is expected for all grade levels and a special emphasis is placed on attendance during sacramental preparation years, **including the year of remote catechesis prior to the year of sacramental celebration. Attendance is monitored closely.** It is in the best interest of the children preparing for sacraments that all classes be attended without absence.

Please note: Children who do not regularly attend sessions during these years will be considered to not have properly prepared for the reception of sacraments and will be advised to begin the preparation process at a later time when they can make a commitment necessary to be well prepared to celebrate the sacraments.

Arrival and Dismissal

SUNDAY FAITH FORMATION – All children should arrive promptly to class with all necessary texts and materials. All children should be picked up from their classroom no later than 5 minutes after the end of class.

On Sunday mornings, all children in PreK-4 through 12th grade must be escorted to and from their classrooms by a parent/guardian.

If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up a child, written notice must be issued to the Faith Formation Office from the parent/guardian granting permission for release from the classroom to the adult.

No child will be permitted to walk to the parking lot unattended.

Any child who is not picked up by 10 minutes after dismissal time will be taken to the Faith Formation Office to wait for his/her parent/guardian. In order to help our fellow parishioners who volunteer their time and talent as catechists and classroom aides, we ask that all parents pick up their children on time.

WEDNESDAY FAITH FORMATION – Sessions begin promptly at 6:00 pm. Families gather in the North Campus Auditorium then break into smaller groups. Families will be dismissed from their group at the conclusion of the workshop.

Dress Code

Children/Youth attending Faith Formation sessions are expected to adhere to the dress code standards outlined by the Hillsborough County Public School system.



Behavior

1. Children/Youth are expected to model their behavior after Jesus Christ who instituted two Great Commandments: "You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind; and to love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27)
2. The following are some guidelines for behavior based upon these simple principles:
 - a. Keep hands feet and other objects to yourself.
 - b. Talk respectfully, no name calling, teasing, cursing, etc.
 - c. Follow directions the first time.
 - d. Bring required materials, supplies and completed assignments to each session.
 - e. Behavior or language that intimidates, belittles, harasses (including harassment of a sexual nature); inappropriate references of physical harm to oneself or others will result in disciplinary action.
3. The fact that a child has been registered in Faith Formation at Sacred Heart Church indicates that its rules and guidelines have been read by parents/ guardians, have been reviewed with the child(ren) by the parents/guardians and have been accepted by the parents/guardians and children. It is to be understood by the parents/guardians and children that severe disruptive behavior by a child will result in disciplinary action and/or a parent/catechist conference and/or removal from the program. Severe disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Refusal to obey directions of catechists or other staff members.
 - b. An established pattern of behavior which is disruptive to the learning environment of the session.
 - c. Threats, assault, battery or physical injury to other children and/or staff members.

- d. Use of profane or abusive language.
- e. Possession or distribution of obscene pictures, magazines, books, music.
- f. Theft, damage or misuse of Sacred Heart Parish property including the North Campus.
- g. False fire alarms.
- h. Possession or use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or narcotics.

In the event a child engages in inappropriate behavior, any or all of the following may occur:

- a. Parental notification of infraction.
 - b. Meeting between parents and catechist and Director of Faith Formation.
 - c. Removal of child from Faith Formation process.
4. The Director of Faith Formation is responsible for ensuring that all sanctions against children are implemented in a fair and consistent manner by the Faith Formation Office and the volunteer staff.
 5. In the event that a parent/guardian is not satisfied with the action taken by a catechist, they may contact the Director of Faith Formation.
 6. If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the Director of Faith Formation's action, the matter may be taken to the Pastor for resolution.

Other policies

1. The Faith Formation Office keeps records of a confidential nature: attendance, discipline, last grade completed, address, telephone number, date of birth, sacraments received, marital status of parents, disabilities and emergency contact information.
2. The Faith Formation Office abides by the Privacy Act and will not disclose personal information to third parties without written

permission from the persons involved. Parents and/or guardians have a right to review any records kept by the Faith Formation Office pertaining to their child for any reason.

3. Catechists are provided limited access to personal information as is necessary for them to perform their ministry. Such information would include: last grade completed, disciplinary records, address, phone number, emergency contacts, disability and other information when it is appropriate.
4. The Faith Formation Office abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records when such records are requested. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information give, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide the Director of Faith Formation with an official copy of the court order.



Communication



The Office of Faith Formation will use email as the **PRIMARY** means by which information will be communicated to parents. To ensure delivery of emails to your Inbox, please add us to your Safe Senders List or Address Book.

The Faith Formation office, along with the Church Universal, strives to maintain open communication with all who participate in Faith Formation sessions. We also encourage catechists and parents to keep each other informed of a child's progress through informal contact at the beginning and end of each session.

From time to time, it may be necessary for parents to discuss issues of concern with the catechist or the Director of Faith Formation. In keeping with Church teaching and the Biblical tradition of subsidiary, issues of concern should be resolved at the lowest possible level. Parents/guardians should attempt to resolve any issues with a catechist by first contacting the catechist and discussing the issue.

If satisfactory progress is not made, the parents/guardians may contact the Director of Faith Formation to discuss the issue and request that action be taken. If the parent is not satisfied with the Director of Faith Formation's action, the matter should be taken to the Pastor for resolution.

Hurricane Plan for Program Cancellation

Should a tropical storm or hurricane be forecast to hit our area over a weekend, it may be necessary for Faith Formation sessions to be cancelled. The decision to cancel sessions will be based on the Hillsborough County School System's decision to cancel public school classes the Friday prior to Faith Formation sessions or the Monday after Faith Formation sessions.

Safety

The safety of children is most important to all involved in the Faith Formation sessions. Please cooperate with the following procedures:

1. Fire Safety
 - a. Fire drills will be conducted twice a year. All children, youth and adults will depart the facility.
 - b. In case of a real emergency, children and youth will be taken to a prearranged evacuation area.
 - c. There is a map posted in each room with the preferred exit route and gathering place outside the building.

2. Natural disasters

In the event of a natural disaster (tornado, hurricane, etc.) occurs, catechists will be warned (if possible) of the approaching danger. Children, youth and adults are to move to the center of the building away from windows.



Photos/Videos

During various activities, the children in the Faith Formation Program may have their photo taken. Permission release forms for the use of photos or videos must be signed by a parent/guardian for each child. As always, the parent/guardian has the right to opt-out of his/her child's photo being used. If you choose to opt-out, please provide the Office of Faith Formation with a recent head shot of each child for the sole purpose of identifying by our editing staff which individuals are to be excluded from any photo placed in the bulletin, the parish website or other media.



Right to Amend

This handbook is primarily a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how we intend to go about our ministry. Sacred Heart Church Faith Formation Program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified in writing if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.

Prayers/Doctrine to Know/Learn

Children and youth of every grade level in Faith Formation at Sacred Heart Church are taught the importance of developing an active, daily prayer life. They are taught to pray both formally and informally and to pray *always*.

Formal prayers which have already been learned should be prayed frequently and parents/guardians should help their child(ren) to learn new prayers by praying with their child(ren). Parents/guardians should also help their child(ren) to understand the meaning of the words to these prayers and to know what it means to *pray from the heart*.



PreK-4	Sign of the Cross, Simple Meal Prayer
Kinder	Hail Mary, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer (and all of the above)
1 st	Our Father, Simple Meal Prayer, Sacraments – Baptism (and all of the above)
2 nd	Act of Contrition and Mass Prayers (i.e. Penitential Rite, Gloria, Profession of Faith, Acclamation, Breaking of the Bread), Sacraments – Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation (and all of the above)
3 rd	Apostles' Creed, Stations of the Cross, The Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, Sacraments – Marriage, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders (and all of the above)
4 th	The Great Commandment, The Ten Commandments, The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary (and all of the above)
5 th	The Seven Sacraments, 20 Mysteries of the Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, Corporal Works and Spiritual Works of Mercy (and all of the above)
6 th	St. Francis' Prayer before the Crucifix, Hebrew Scriptures (and all of the above)
7 th	Christ in the Liturgy
8 th – HS	Life in Christ Jesus



THE ROLE OF THE CATECHIST

The role of our volunteer catechists is central to the ongoing life of our church. To catechize means “to echo or resound.” Our catechists are members of our faith community who have experienced God’s revelation and have responded to His call to see life through the eyes of faith. They lovingly give their time, talents and treasures to our faith community in order to partner with the parish and the parents of our children. As members of our faith community, parents/guardians are invited to offer assistance to our catechists and/or the Faith Formation Office for the arising needs of our ministry. Please come and join this awesome ministry of loving and serving the Lord and His people.

A Catechist is faith, hope and love attached to arms, legs, aches and pains, family duties and not enough time.

A Catechist is an ordinary person who is extraordinary because he or she teaches as Jesus did.

A Catechist is faithful to the past, open to the future, but especially dedicated to deepening the faith of the present generation.

~ from the poem, “A Catechist Is” by Monsignor John Francis Murphy



(revised January 1, 2010)

Introduction

The Catholic Church in west central Florida is blessed with a great diversity of persons created in the divine image. We respect, honor and celebrate the Image of God revealed in human uniqueness, dignity and diversity, as suggested in Genesis 1:27: "On the sixth and last day of the creation, God created a man to His own Image: to the Image of God He created him".

We believe that every child is a gift from God from the moment of conception. We believe that the children enrolled in our schools, parish religious education programs and other programs must be treated with dignity, respect and care, as described in "A Sacred Trust, The Safety of Our Children" (National Catholic Education Association, 2003).

An adult involved in any role of a program is must be at least 18 years of age, post high school, and approved to work with young people by the pastor, principal, community organization leader or a designate. We serve all young people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, political beliefs or disabilities. All adults working with youth in any capacity must be approved through the proper background checks and be Safe Environment Program trained as required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

This code is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students, and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the sacraments, other liturgies, worship services, and ministries. This code is used in conjunction with existing diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

Professional Role

1. Adults recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful to anyone of any group.
2. Adults work collaboratively with the pastor, supervisors and associates in community, ministry, or school programs. These adults distinguish their own private opinions from those of the Catholic faith or their profession in all publicity, public announcements or publications.
3. Adults have a responsibility in all relationships to witness the chastity appropriate to their vocation in life, whether celibate, married, or single.
4. Adult leaders are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities working with youth. They are to be made aware of all diocesan policies for working with youth.

5. Adults are aware they have considerable personal power because of their position or ministry. Therefore, they will sustain respectful relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
6. Adults maintain appropriate professional boundaries, e.g., physical, sexual, relational and emotional. Appropriate use of time for working with, speaking with and engaging with children and youth is an important boundary. Adults are not to be available 24/7, but rather work within normal expected time frames.
7. Adults model healthy and positive behaviors with young children, adolescents, and other adults.

Professional Accountability

1. Adults must never engage in sexual intimacies or overt sexual behaviors with children and/or youth. This includes consensual and nonconsensual contact, covert or overt seductive speech or gestures that sexually abuses, exploits, or harasses another person.
2. Touching should be age appropriate and based on the need of the minor and not on the need of the adult. An adult is to avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
3. Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with youth is inappropriate and unethical.
4. Adults should never possess or use alcohol or drugs while supervising and/or participating in a youth activity.
5. Adults always meet with young people in areas that are visible and accessible.
6. One-on-one meetings with a young person are best held in a public area, or if that is not possible, then the door to the room is left open. Another adult is to be notified about the meeting whenever feasible. Notify parents of meetings.
7. It is always a preferred practice to have two adults present in the area where youth are present.
8. Driving alone with a young person should be avoided.
9. Adults are not to be alone with minors in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, other closed room, or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
10. Audiovisual, music, and print resources used in programs must be screened prior to use to ensure their appropriateness for the participants. It is never appropriate to use an "R" rated movie without parental consent or without screening for sexual content, nudity, language, violence, and themes or content which harm the dignity of the human person. Even "PG" movies should be reviewed carefully. Movies with ratings

stronger than "R" are never appropriate. Music lyrics should also be reviewed to ensure their appropriateness. Parents should be informed of movies that will be used in conjunction with any program.

11. The computer and Internet are acceptable and common means of communication and entertainment. Adults must never engage with sexually explicit and/or pornographic materials or chat rooms with children and youth. They should not use any computer software, games or any form of Internet personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents.
12. Adults are trained to be aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
13. Adults are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and will make appropriate referrals.
14. Adults agree to adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.
15. Adults are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, harassment, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

<http://dosp.org/safe-environment/code-of-conduct-for-adults-working-with-youth/>

The first premise of this code is that children and youth function best when behaviors and expectations are clearly defined. It is accepted that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children in all aspects of their development. This experience aims at developing upright citizens and good Christians, following the new commandment Jesus gave His disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

In Timothy 4:12, we read "Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity." Timothy is urged to rely on the gifts he has received from God. This code urges our children and youth to rely on God's gifts to them, especially charity, chastity and purity. This calls the young person to acknowledge and promote one's personal dignity and the rights that go with it.

It becomes important for children and youth to know the difference between "right" and "not right" relationships. "Right" relationships foster personal, spiritual, and emotional growth, e.g., the ability to communicate, to forgive, to show affection, to be honest, vulnerable, dependable, etc. "Not right" relationships become harmful and hurtful, and even abusive. Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another's boundaries, uses power, tricks, threats, or violence to cross or change another's boundaries, or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) on another person.

This code is used in conjunction with existing local or diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

When engaging in formal and informal activities, functions, and programs, children and youth are expected to behave appropriately at all times, respecting the rights of others.

1. Christian behavior is expected at all times.
2. Respect for individuals, the community and facilities being used is required.
3. Cooperation and self-control are necessary when participating in programs and activities.
4. Dress must be in accord with the activity and appropriate for a Christian environment.
5. Unacceptable behavior and lack of cooperation will not be tolerated, but will be addressed appropriately. Examples of unacceptable behavior are as follows, though not limited to:
 - a. disrespect for adults and peers
 - b. use of vulgar language or gesture, use of racial slurs
 - c. damaging of property
 - d. fighting or intent to injure others

- e. constant disturbance of others at work or in an activity
 - f. cheating
6. Possession of weapons, possession, sale or use of alcohol or drugs are forbidden.
 7. No child or youth has the right to treat another in any manner that will cause physical or emotional pain. Therefore, harassment of any kind is unchristian and unacceptable.
 8. Coercion or threats to do something physically hurtful or for the purpose of exposing someone or something about another is unacceptable behavior.
 9. Chastity is a virtue to be held in high esteem and promoted in practice. Sexual abuse of any sort, coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically touching the sexual parts of another's body, treating a person like a sexual object are unacceptable and abusive behaviors. Consensual sex between students or initiated by minors to adults must never occur.

References:

Diocese of Omaha, NE (2002). Sample Youth Code of Behavior.

Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002). Code of Conduct, Bishop Moore Catholic High School.

Code of Conduct, Annunciation Catholic Academy.

Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002).

McCarthy, Robert J. (2002). Protecting Young People, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers, Washington, D.C.

23rd General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco (1990). Educating Young People to the Faith.

Third Draft 03.06.03

<http://dosp.org/safe-environment/code-of-conduct-for-children/>

Diocese of St. Petersburg's Safe Environment Program

The Safe Environment Program (SEP) is mandated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Diocese of St. Petersburg, and certain Florida statutes to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults from abuse, especially sexual abuse.

Our SEP programs are meant to enable children and vulnerable adults to feel secure and protected in their surroundings. We want our children and youth to feel free to receive a Catholic education and to experience healthy relationships. We want to foster a safe environment and to provide a healthy and loving relationship in the image of God for our vulnerable adults who may be sick and or shut-in, and for our elderly who may be suffering from the infirmities of aging.

All volunteers, contractors, vendors, consultants, Memo of Understanding (MOU) personnel, and persons who are entrusted with the care, responsibility, or supervision of children, youth, and, or vulnerable adults or who may have unsupervised access to these vulnerable populations are also required to comply with diocesan fingerprint policy for background screening policy and to attend the appropriate safe environment training program.

The Safe Environment Program consists of two major components:

1. [Background screening](#): Anyone who wishes unsupervised access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults or who may have the care, responsibility, or supervision of these vulnerable populations must have his/her backgrounds screened for criminal history. Currently, the diocese uses the FBI/FDLE Volunteer Employee Criminal History System (AFRNP) Level 2 background screening program.
2. [SEP Training](#): There are two types of Safe Environment Program training workshops.
 - a. The first program type is for adults who wish to have unsupervised access to children or youth or who may have the care, responsibility, or supervision of children or youth. These adults are taught to recognize signs of predatory behavior in an adult, to recognize signs of abuse in a child, and to report **actual** or **suspected** child abuse to the police or to the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-962-2873).
 - b. The second type of training teaches adults who wish to have unsupervised access to vulnerable adults or who may have the care, responsibility, or supervision of vulnerable adults to recognize signs of abuse in a vulnerable adult, to recognize signs of predatory behavior in an adult, and to report **actual** or **suspected** vulnerable adult abuse to law enforcement or to the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-962-2873).

<http://dosp.org/safe-environment/about/>

Diocese of St. Petersburg's SEP Training Program

In accordance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Diocese of St. Petersburg Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People, adults (18 years of age or older and post high school) who wish to have unsupervised access to children and youth must receive Safe Environment Program (SEP) Training and receive a FBI/FDLE (AFRNP) Level 2 Criminal History Background Check.

It is important to note that **individuals under the age of 18 and post high school cannot have unsupervised access to children or youth** – this includes all youth ministers. When minor aged youth act in leadership positions over younger children, SEP-trained and background screened adults must be physically present.

Those who wish unsupervised access to children and youth must attend a 3-hour SEP training workshop.

These workshops teach caring adults: (1) to watch for signs of predatory behavior in adults, (2) to watch for signs of abuse in a child, and (3) to report it to the police (911) or to the Florida Department of Children and Family's Abuse Hotline (800- 96ABUSE). These training sessions are presented throughout the diocese in various locations and can be found on the [SEP calendar](#).

Persons attending a SEP training session/workshop will be issued a SEP Training Attendance Certificate which is good for five years.

Individuals who wish to keep their certification active must be re-certified every 5 years by completing an online recertification course at www.shieldthevulnerable.org or by attending another live training session.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg uses the Girls and Boys Town Family Center for Adolescent and Family Spirituality child safety program. The Diocese of St. Petersburg **does not** accept SEP training from any other dioceses or archdioceses. Even though the basic child protection information is generic, there are other differences that do not address local conditions. These conditions pertain to such things as diocesan policy, local or state law, notification procedures and telephone numbers, etc.

If previously SEP trained and background screened individuals serve in more than one volunteer or combination volunteer/employee position, or who may be relocating to another parish or school within the diocese wish to transfer their training and background screening information, please contact the diocesan Safe Environment Program Office to facilitate the transfer process.

<http://dosp.org/safe-environment/training-programs/sep-program-for-access-to-children/>

The Diocese of St. Petersburg is now a Participant in the Applicant Fingerprinting Retention Notification Program (AFRNP). Given the opportunity to upgrade the diocese's background screening capability, Bishop Lynch decided to have the diocese participate in the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Applicant Fingerprinting Retention Notification Program. The AFRNP alerts the diocese immediately when an individual with unsupervised access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults has been arrested or convicted after successfully completing an initial FDLE/FDLE Background criminal history background check.

Fingerprinting Requirement for FDLE/ Level 2 Background Check

- **All covered volunteers:** *(Those persons who are volunteers and who may have the care responsibility, and or supervision of children, youth or vulnerable adults or who may have unsupervised access to these vulnerable populations)* must complete a [Covered Volunteer Application Form \(CVA\)](#). This form should be completed and turned in to the office of the volunteer's organization (parish, school, other diocesan entity). The form acts as the organization's permission to expend the funds necessary to fingerprint a covered volunteer. Once the organization accepts the CVA, the covered volunteer must [click here](#) to go online to register and schedule a printing session. The results will go to the organizational point-of-contact at the location selected by the volunteer during his/her online registration session.

In accordance with the Title 28, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 50.12, the Diocese of St. Petersburg **does not accept background screening reports from any federal agency, state agency, or private information vendor** regardless of the screening organization and regardless of the position that an individual currently holds or may have held in the past – with one exception. The Diocese can accept FDLE/FBI (AFRNP) Level 2 background criminal history background checks performed by [Qualified Entities](#) of the FDLE/FDLE Volunteer, Employee Criminal History System (VECHS). Otherwise, fingerprints contained in the FBI database can be used only for the purpose intended and are federal or state statute specific. This means that the FDLE and the FBI prohibits the sharing of criminal history reports between entities outside of the Diocese of St. Petersburg is not allowed except as noted above. In order to begin the background screening process, Church personnel who wish to have unsupervised access or who wish to have the care, responsibility, or supervision of children and youth, and or vulnerable adults must first obtain and complete either an **Employee Application**, a [Covered Volunteer Application Form](#), an [Independent Agreement](#), [License Agreement](#), or a **Memorandum of Understanding**. These forms can be obtained from the parish, school, or early childhood center where they wish to work or volunteer or from the Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office.

Second, individuals must register online at <https://fingerprint.fadv.com/fpWebApp/webPages/module/home/redirect.jsf>. They must select a time, date, and location to be fingerprinted and then keep the appointment. For those individuals who do not access to a computer, please contact the PrideRock Customer Assistance number at 1-877-323-8885 to register by phone. Results of criminal

history background checks are provided to the pastor, principal, or organizational head of each diocesan entity except for those of contractor personnel.

The FBI prohibits the sharing of background screening results of contractor personnel with their respective employers. The diocese provides clearance or non-clearance letters to contractor employers and their diocesan clients.

<http://dosp.org/safe-environment/fingerprint-based-background-screening/>

2019-2020
SESSION SCHEDULE At-A-Glance

For children enrolled in the
SUNDAY Faith Formation Sessions
at Sacred Heart Church

September	8*, 15, 22*, 29
October	6, 13, 20, 27
November	3, 17
December	1, 8, 15
January	12, 26
February	2, 9, 23
March	1, 8, 29
April	5, 19, 26

* Open House in all classrooms

* Parent Orientation at 10:40 am in the North Campus Auditorium

For children enrolled in the
WEDNESDAY Family Faith Formation Sessions
at Sacred Heart Church

September	11, 25
October	9, 23
November	20
December	4, 18
January	8, 22
February	5, 19
March	11, 25
April	15, 29

**SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION
CELEBRATIONS OF
FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST**

Parent Orientation	Tuesday	September	24
Church Search with Parents	Wednesday	October	2
Reconciliation Workshop 1	Wednesday	October	16
Reconciliation Workshop 2	Wednesday	November	13
Reconciliation Workshop 3	Wednesday	December	11
First Reconciliation Retreat	Saturday	January	11
Celebration of First Reconciliation	Tuesday	January	14
Eucharist Workshop 1	Wednesday	January	29
Eucharist Workshop 2	Wednesday	March	4
Eucharist Workshop 3	Wednesday	April	1
First Eucharist Retreat	Saturday	April	25
Celebration of First Eucharist	Saturday and Sunday	May	2 & 3

**SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION
CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION**

Parent Orientation	Tuesday	October	22
Workshop 1	Tuesday	October	29
Workshop 2	Tuesday	December	3
Workshop 3	Tuesday	January	21
Workshop 4	Tuesday	February	11
Workshop 5	Tuesday	March	31
Workshop 6	Tuesday	April	21
Retreat at the Bethany Center	Saturday & Sunday	January	25-26
Celebration of Confirmation	Sunday	TBA	



**ANNUAL PHOTO RELEASE
2019-2020**

From time to time, photos are used in the parish bulletin and website as well as in newspapers, television and other media used to portray events occurring at our parish. These may or may not be accompanied by photos or videotape of students. The releases may be prepared by Sacred Heart Church or a media representative.

- I do give permission for my student's name and likeness to be included in such publicity releases.
- I do NOT give permission for my student's name and likeness to be included in such publicity releases.

Parent's Name (Printed)

Parent's Signature

Date

Child's Name

Grade

Child's Name

Grade

Child's Name

Grade

Child's Name

Grade



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and accept the policies contained in the Faith Formation Family Handbook including the local Parish Program Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Youth, Code of Conduct for Children and the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Please check all that apply and print/sign/date in the spaces provided.

- My child(ren) and I/we will attend the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program as scheduled by the Parish.
- I wish to receive all additional materials (beyond handbook policies) related to the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program.
- I do not wish to receive the materials (beyond handbook policies) related to the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program.

Parent's Name (Printed)

Parent's Signature

Date

Child's Name (Printed)

Grade

Child's Name (Printed)

Grade

Child's Name (Printed)

Grade

Child's Name (Printed)

Grade