

HOLY ANGELS



Religious Education Handbook 2010-2011

Religious Education Office (626) 445-2967

Christian Initiation for Adults Office (626) 378-0919

Christian Initiation for Children, Youth & Families Office (626) 446-2804

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Dear Parents,

We are very pleased to have your child(ren) participate in our Parish Religious Education Programs and we look forward to working closely with you and your child during the year.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church makes reference to the primary responsibility parents have in forming their children in the faith, developing their prayer lives and providing formal understanding of the Catholic Faith.

We, at Holy Angels, are privileged to be co-partners with you and invite your participation in our program. Our Catechists are trained volunteers who have a commitment to the Catholic Faith and love for young people. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to grow in your faith with your family. We hope this “Religious Education Handbook” helps you become familiar with our programs. Please read it carefully and call us anytime regarding your child’s Faith Formation. On behalf of the Holy Angels community, it is our pleasure to serve the families of our parish.

Our mission is to deepen the child’s relationship with our loving and merciful God, to strengthen their faith, to enrich their prayer experiences, and to provide opportunities to serve the community. As your partners in the religious formation of your child(ren), we strive to provide a welcoming, loving environment in which we can supplement what you are already teaching by your example.

Yours in Christ,

Religious Education Coordinators

Susanna DeBlase

Deacon Arnie Lopez

Norma Murasko

Erica Nelson

Lydia Orona

Patricia Perez

Deacon Sergio Perez

Faith Formation – A Life Long Journey

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 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. (*US Bishops document -Go and Make Disciples*). The mission of evangelization calls Catholic children “to be formed into disciples through the family’s life and Faith Formation” (*US Bishops document -Go and Make Disciples*). The family, then, is the first area 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, according to Vatican II Document *Gaudium et Spes* #48.

Parish Faith Formation programs assist in the 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, which begins at 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. Faith Formation within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles serves the domestic church by offering the guidance and instructions whereby each individual can come to her/his full potential as members of the people of God. Sincere cooperation between the parish and its family members will bring about the goal of evangelizing youth and children through their active participation in the faith life of the church.

“PARENT’S PRAYER”

Lord, you created my child as a unique person close to YOUR heart.

You know his/her needs

as no one else does.

Open my eyes and touch my heart

so I will recognize

this child’s goodness

and be sensitive to his/her needs.

Speak through me.

Let me offer the look or gesture

that will assure this child

of YOUR love,

YOUR forgiveness,

YOUR firm direction.

May this child truly feel

a sense of belonging

to the faith-filled family

I long to create in our home.

Amen.

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

As a community of disciples of Jesus Christ, Holy Angels parishioners are committed to continuing the Lord's work and making Him known to all. We accept the challenge to be a community dedicated to worship, education, service, caring for each other and mutual respect. We foster growth and welcome change while embracing our Catholic traditions.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. The Religious Education staff will support parents as primary educators in passing their religious values onto their children.
2. The Religious Education Coordinators will enhance the catechists' spiritual growth with encouragement and any possible help needed throughout the year.
3. The Religious Education students will actively participate in Faith Formation classes, prayer services, liturgies and community service.
4. The Religious Education students will receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation with understanding of the meaning of each sacrament.
5. The Religious Education staff will assist parents with their faith journey by providing adult catechesis and support.

PARISH STAFF

Pastor	Fr. Michael Evans	447-1671
Associate Pastor	Rev. Jay Wu	447-1671
Associate Pastor	Rev. John Hoa Nguyen	447-1671
Hospital Chaplain	Rev. Daniel McSweeney, S.S.C.C.	447-1671
Deacon	Deacon Arnie Lopez	378-0919
Pastoral Coordinator	Barbara Ferris	447-1671
Parish Business Manager	Pat Joyce	447-1671
School Principal	Ted Carroll	447-6312
Director, Music Ministries	Jerry Jaco	447-6312
Youth Director and Confirmation	Deacon Sergio Perez	446-0979
Christian Initiation for Adults	Deacon Arnie Lopez	378-0919
Christian Initiation for Children, Youth, and Families	Norma Murasko	446-2804
Elementary Religious Education	Pat Perez	445-2967
Middle School Religious Education	Lydia Orona	445-2967
Preschool Religious Education	Susanna DeBlase and Erica Nelson	445-2967
Religious Education Reception	Debra Bielec	445-2967
Parish Secretary	Suzi Noyes	447-1671

Holy Angels Policies and Guidelines

The following policies do not describe every circumstance that might arise and should be considered as a summary of key points for your reference. HOLY ANGELS Religious Education reserves the right to exercise its discretion when interpreting and applying these policies and to modify these policies at any time.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE

Our time with your child is very limited. It is essential that children/youth be present for each and every session. Each lesson builds upon the previous one and a session missed is an experience lost, it cannot really be made up. We need your cooperation to make the most of this time.

- Parents are asked to contact the appropriate coordinator via e-mail, if their child/youth will be absent. This helps our program account for all participants. If the coordinator is not notified, a phone call will be made from our office to ensure the parent knows the child/youth is absent.
- Confirmation students are required to sign-in. Students missing more than two sessions jeopardize the completion of the Archdiocesan Confirmation Program Requirements.

CATECHISTS

We take great pride in our Catechists and aides. Our Catechists are volunteers who give very generously of their time and talent to serve the people of this parish. We ask that you cooperate with them, ask them if they need your help and provide support as needed.

CHILD PROTECTION

Protecting God's Children is an Archdiocesan sponsored program that trains and educates adults on protecting our children from sexual abuse and other safety hazards. Attending this Virtus workshop is a requirement for all parish volunteers working with children and youth. Parents are encouraged to participate in this worthwhile program. Call the Religious Education Office for more details.

CLERGY

Clergy are a very important part of any religious education or formation program. It is important for students and their families to know our priests and deacons and to feel supported by them. There is always an "open door" for any of our clergy who wish to visit the classrooms and catechists are encouraged to invite them to come over whenever appropriate. Of course, the easiest and best way for our families to get to know our clergy is to attend Mass regularly and greet them after Mass.

COMMUNICATION

As Faith Formation partners, it is essential that we maintain open lines of communication at all times.

To ensure you receive any and all information requiring your attention and/or response:

- Announcements and Reminders will be sent regularly via e-mail (our primary method of communication).
- The bulletin boards at the east side of the church with the handicapped ramp and the one across from the school's trophy case will be used to post notes and announcements.
- The Parish Bulletin will also advise you of upcoming events and/or changes.
- Religious Education Coordinators are always available by phone or e-mail.

COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Preschool	Susana DeBlase Erica Nelson	pre@holyangelsarcadia.org pre@holyangelsarcadia.org	(626) 445-2967 (626) 445-2967
Elementary	Patricia Perez	pp@holyangelsarcadia.org	(626) 445-2967
Middle School	Lydia Orona	lo@holyangelsarcadia.org	(626) 445-2967
Confirmation	Deacon Sergio Perez	sap@holyangelsarcadia.org	(626) 446-0979
Christian Initiation for Children, Youth and Families			
	Norma Murasko	nm@holyangelsarcadia.org	(626) 446-2804
Christian Initiation for Adults			
	Deacon Arnie Lopez	deaconarnie@aol.com	(626) 378-0919

DISCIPLINE

We are commanded by Christ to love one another. It is important to know that this love flows from respect for one another. Mutual respect is the basis for the love that binds Christians as a community. Enrollment in Faith Formation classes at Holy Angels implies the willingness of parents and children to comply with the established policies and regulations. The entire Religious Education Staff is committed to establishing an atmosphere of love where participants feel safe, secure and happy to grow as children of God. Therefore, we expect everyone:

- To be courteous and cooperative
- To be prompt for sessions
- To keep meeting rooms clean, neat and tidy.
- To respect the rights and property of others
- To be considerate and helpful
- To follow directions

The following behaviors are unacceptable:

1. Disrespect and disruption in dealing with teachers and other participants
2. Fighting and vulgar language, gestures or signs
3. Property damage
4. Excessive tardiness
5. Writing on walls, desks, tables, chairs, etc

EARLY RELEASE

Parents requesting early release of their children should contact the coordinator directly.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are not allowed to use electronic devices (CD players, PDAs, cell phones, etc.) during class. If a participant is found using any electronic device, a catechist or staff member will confiscate the device until the end of class.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

It is very important that your child/youth and the Religious Education Staff know how to contact you during class hours. In case of illness, injury or any major problem we need to be able to reach you.

Please notify the Religious Education office - at (626) 445-2967 - immediately with any changes to the registration information.

In case of illness or injury, parents will be contacted by phone. Parents must arrange for the child/youth's transportation home. If the parent cannot be reached, alternate emergency phone numbers will be called in order to obtain necessary help for the child/youth. Minors are not allowed to walk home if sick or injured.

In the event of an emergency, which requires immediate medical attention, the parent will be notified and emergency personnel will be summoned.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Evacuation routes and procedures are posted in a visible place in each classroom and in each catechist's folder. These procedures are reviewed periodically.

Minors cannot be released during any emergency situation, without first ensuring clearance by emergency personnel or Religious Education Staff.

LITURGY

"As members of the Christian community, all are called to participate actively in the liturgical prayer of the Church. Religious Education therefore must involve the student in his/her faith community and in that community's liturgy. Liturgy itself educates, it teaches, it forms community, and it forms the individual. It makes possible worship of God." (NCCB, "Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education"). The Mass is the focus of our public worship of God and the focus of our parish worshipping community. We expect families to regularly attend Mass.

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN

Liturgy of the Word for Children is offered during the 11:00 AM Liturgy for all elementary aged students. Children are invited to join the catechists after the opening prayer. Catechists will accompany them to the library and occasionally to the hall. Parents may join them. Catechists prepare to share the Scripture readings of the day, music, activities and discussion related to the theme of the Liturgy.

The goal of Children's Liturgy of the Word is to share the Word of God with children at a level they can understand. To achieve this goal we:

- Use readings from the Children's Lectionary.
- Teach appropriate responses and the order of the Mass, mindful that this is a time of worship.
- Keep our worship site simple and informal, using language the children can understand.

Children will return to the church before the Offertory Procession.

MEETING (CLASS) TIMES

Preschool	Sundays during the 11:00 AM mass.
Elementary (grades 1 st – 5 th)	Sundays 9:30 – 10:45 AM. Strongly encouraged to attend 11:00 AM Mass.
Middle School (grades 6 th & 8 th)	Tuesdays 7:30 – 8:45 PM.
Confirmation (grades 9 th – 12 th)	Sundays – Students are required to attend mass at 5:00 PM, followed by Confirmation instruction from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the Parish on their scheduled Sunday.
Christian Initiation for Children, Youth and Families	Sundays at the 5:00 PM Mass with Dismissal. Parents join youngsters at Religious Education Building following Mass for reflection and sharing.
Christian Initiation for Adults	Sundays at the 9:00 AM Mass with Dismissal.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

“Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children...” *Declaration on Christian Education, Vatican II*. Holy Angels promises to foster your child’s growth as a Catholic Christian through a religious education program based on Scripture and the traditions of our church.

Please make known to us any special learning needs of your child/youth. All information on special needs is confidential.

PARENTS AS CATECHISTS

According to Cardinal Bernardin, “Parents do not wait until children begin school to teach them to speak or to walk, nor should they wait to teach children that God is good and loving.

Formal programs of religious formation are important, yet they can only supplement the child’s experience of living in a Christian home. Programs cannot replace parents in the religious formation of children.

A parent influences the religious development of a child initially and powerfully. A parent is the fundamental model and first teacher of faith for a child. A parent shares faith with a child by speaking of faith and by good example. Simply by living in the family, a child observes and begins to imitate the parent’s beliefs and values. Children will have many teachers, but their parents are unique.

As the first and foremost catechists of their children, parents need to be actively involved in the catechetical process. They involve themselves by:

- Praying daily and attending Mass weekly with their children.
- Reviewing and discussing the weekly lesson with their children.
- Volunteering as a catechist or substitute in the Faith Formation process.
- Responding to the catechist’s request for help in the classroom, as a chaperone on a field trip or retreat, planning/supervising service projects.
- Encouraging their children to participate in parish functions and activities.
- Attending adult faith formation classes and parish retreats.

- Making family participation in parish life as important as participation in secular, school and athletic activities.

PARENTAL CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES

A parent who has a question or concern regarding a situation involving a student is urged to follow these procedures:

1. Contact the student's catechist to discuss the situation and work with the catechist to arrive at possible solutions.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the catechist, the parent should then request a conference with the specific Coordinator.
3. If resolution has not been achieved after discussion with the catechist and the Coordinator, and the parent still feels the issue has not been addressed, the Pastor may be asked to assist in the resolution of the problem.

PARENTAL CUSTODY POLICY

The Religious Education Staff presumes that in the case of a divorce or separation that both parents have access to the child(ren), unless one parent can provide a court order stating otherwise. Please advise the Religious Education Office if a court order forbids a parent or any other individual from picking up your child.

PARISH FIESTA

Consistent with our mission to build community and our baptismal call to serve, our Religious Education Family is assigned a Fiesta Booth. Our Staff, volunteers and parents are asked to share their time and talent by working the booth. Each work shift consists of two hours. Sign-ups for the Fiesta begin the first week of classes. This is a great opportunity to give back to the community, have fun and to make new friends.

REGISTRATION FEE

Registration fee:

Pre-School \$50 per child

Elementary, Middle School and Confirmation \$75 per child.

First Communion Preparation 2nd year students additional \$30 per child.

No child will be refused enrollment due to financial difficulties. Arrangements may be made regarding payment of registration fee. Please contact the Religious Education Office at (626) 445-2967.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE HOURS

The Religious Education Office is open:

Monday thru Thursday 9:30AM-1:30PM and Sunday 8:30AM-12:30PM

RETREATS AND OTHER OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES INVOLVING MINORS

A student permission form must be signed for any activity that takes place off Holy Angels property. We also require a medical release form on file for each student who attends a function away from the parish. A new medical release form must be completed each year.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Generally, students receive sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Eucharist in the second grade. Parents have the right and the duty to be intimately involved in preparing their children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Catechesis is provided for parents at scheduled meetings throughout the year. Parents are required to attend these sessions. Please refer to the Religious Education schedule, which will be provided by your Religious Education Coordinator for parents' meeting, retreat and sacrament celebration dates.

A formation process in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is offered for high school students. The Confirmation program consists of regularly scheduled instructional sessions, celebration of special rites, retreats, opportunities for service ministry and Life Teen – Life Nights.

All candidates for sacraments must provide a copy of their baptismal certificate to the Religious Education office at the time of registration. Confirmation candidates must also present a copy of their First Communion certificate.

Children in the third grade or above, who have not received Baptism, Reconciliation, or First Communion can receive preparation through the Christian Initiation for Children, Youth and Families process. This is provided free of charge.

Children in the third grade and above, who have been baptized but have not received First Reconciliation or First Communion will be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine which program would better serve the students and their families. Please contact the Religious Education office for more information.

SERVICE/STEWARDSHIP

Through our Baptism, God calls us to be good stewards of the time, talent and treasure that have been given to us. A Christian steward is “one who receives God’s gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others and returns them with increase to the Lord” - *“A Disciple’s Response”, U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops*

Students are encouraged to share their gifts with our parish and community as often as possible. Our Religious Education family will have the opportunity to participate in parish service projects during the year, including the parish fiesta, parish food drives, clothing drives, Christmas caroling, etc.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

All Religious Education Staff are required to read and become familiar with the Archdiocesan Child Abuse Policy. Federal, State, and Local laws mandate educational facilities to report to the proper authorities any case of possible child abuse whether it is physical, mental or emotional. In compliance with these laws and the rights of the student, the staff at Holy Angels will carry out this procedure.

VISITORS

Parents are always welcome and encouraged to visit the classrooms. To ensure the safety of our children, we require each parent, or visitor to contact the coordinator before going to the classroom.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

PRESCHOOL (AGES 3, 4 and 5 year old children)

- Classes are held 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM, during the 11:00 AM mass from October through May.
- Children may be dropped off no earlier than 10:40 AM. This will ensure that your child’s teacher has arrived and will be present in the classroom.
- Children are to be brought to their appropriate meeting rooms through the back entrance of the Religious Education Building. Please note that for safety reasons, children are not to be dropped off or picked up using the front door. This door will remain locked during class times.
- All parents/guardians **MUST** sign their children in and out. This sheet is in your child’s meeting room.
- Children must be picked up immediately after Mass.
- Children may dress in casual and comfortable clothing. “Sunday Best” is not necessary. Many of our lessons include crafts and painting and may result in children getting messy.
- Parents are asked to sign up to bring snacks for your child’s room 2-3 times per year. Sign-up sheets

are made available in each room. (Please refer to the “suggested snacks” for what is recommended).

- Please keep your child home if they are experiencing any illness.
- Please inform us of any specific food allergies your child may have.
- All children MUST be potty trained. Please have your child use the restroom prior to coming to class.
- Our program continues to utilize the textbook, *I Am Special*, published by Our Sunday Visitor. The 5th edition is used in the 3 year-old classroom and the 4th edition is used in the 4 year-old classroom. The textbook, *Faith First*, is used in the 5 year-old classroom. The lessons in these texts help the children realize that the world and all living things are a gift from God and that each child is special in his/her own unique way. They also help them realize their potential to learn, care, help and to be a friend in God's world. Our program accomplishes this through stories, simple prayers, songs, games and crafts.
- During an emergency situation requiring evacuation, the gathering area will be in the grass area right outside the front door of the Religious Education Building.

ELEMENTARY (GRADES 1ST – 5TH)

- Sessions meet Sundays 9:30 -10:45 AM. Children and their families are strongly encouraged to attend the 11:00 AM Mass.
- We are using the catechetical series for Grades 1-6 - *Blest Are We*, Silver Burdett & Ginn, a RCL (Resource for Christian Living) product. *Blest Are We* is designed to engage children and families in faith formation. *Blest Are We* has 20 core chapters plus Feasts and Seasons. Each grade level and unit has a program theme song and music.

There are “We Care” chapters at the end of each unit to provide opportunities to introduce and discuss Catholic Social Teachings. Finally, *Blest Are We* has an “Our Catholic Heritage” reference section at the end of each child’s book based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We are very excited to bring the best formation resource to our children and parents with *Blest Are We*.

RCL has an excellent web site with material for students and parents. The web site can be found at <http://www.blestarewe.com>. You are strongly encouraged to visit the site.

- The Archdiocese of Los Angeles approves all textbooks used. Students are expected to bring their books to class each week. If a book is lost or stolen, replacement books will be available at the cost of \$17.00 per book.
- For the protection of our children, drop off and pick-up of all students will be done using the Campus Drive circular driveway.
- For the safety of the students, every car dropping off or picking up students should pull up to the middle set of double doors, in a single line, along the driveway to allow other cars to pull behind, with no double parking.
- Traffic monitors will assist with the flow of traffic, please follow their instructions. A monitor will be stationed at the door 15 minutes before classes begin and during each session. The monitor will ensure no unauthorized person enters the building. All other entrances to the school will remain locked to keep our children safe.
- No students, or any adults who are not catechists or R.E. staff, will be allowed in the classroom before class begins. All students are asked to line up outside the classroom and wait until classes begin. Students cannot be in the classroom without adult supervision at any time.
- Parental involvement is essential. Please take time to look through your child’s lesson each week, and ask about class work and activities. Please plan on attending Mass with your child on a weekly basis.
- Religious Education Classes are never a substitute for Mass. Parents of children in First Communion preparation are also required to attend Religious Education Parents’ Classes.
- During an emergency situation requiring evacuation, the school’s baseball field will serve as the staging area.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 6th & 8th)

EDGE is a Catholic middle school youth ministry program for early adolescents in grades 7th and 8th. EDGE is designed to meet the educational, spiritual, emotional, and social needs of young adolescents. It is modeled more like the Life Teen program than traditional classes. Goals of EDGE are:

- To foster a transforming spiritual experience of Jesus through the liturgy, allowing early adolescents to have a profound experience of the Word of God and the Eucharist.
- To assist middle school youngsters in gaining an understanding and appreciation for what the Catholic Church teaches and believes.
- To incorporate the Catholic Church's vision of social justice and peace into their spiritual life.
- To develop an identity in middle school youth and in the EDGE ministry as being a vital and visible presence within the parish.
- During an emergency situation requiring evacuation, the lunch shelter will serve as the staging area.

CONFIRMATION (grades 9th – 12th)

Life Teen – Teens are expected to continue their religious formation by attending Life Night regularly.

The goal of Confirmation Preparation is to celebrate and acknowledge that the Spirit of Jesus, given in Baptism is truly alive and at work in the Christian. Through this sacrament, the Church affirms the view that growth in the Spirit is a continual, life-long journey celebrating and deepening the ongoing initiation into the new life in Jesus which began at Baptism.

A well-balanced process for preparing high school candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation includes the following components:

- A Two-year Parish Preparation for High School teens including the participation of both parents and sponsors.
- Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy
- Community Life of the Church
- Confirmation Rituals
- Catechesis
- Retreats
- Prayer Life of the Community
- Service
- Spiritual Guidance

Objectives of Confirmation Process:

1. To guide young people in the call to holiness by developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, by meeting Him in the Scriptures, in the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, and in their own prayer lives.
2. To nurture a desire in young people for an understanding of an active participation in the sacramental life of the Church.
3. To empower young people to embrace the richness of diversity, to live the moral and theological virtues and to apply these virtues in their decision making.
4. To help young people develop a life of Christian service modeled on Jesus' life.
5. To equip and empower youth to be open to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and use their talents for the greater glory of God and His Church.

Role of Parents:

As primary educators of their children, parents along with sponsors are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children. (NCB #19)

The involvement of parents in the catechetical preparation of their teenager is an integral part of the Confirmation process. Recent church documents, especially those related to family and to Catechetical Ministry, consistently reinforce the role of parents as the primary religious educators of the children. The *National Catechetical Directory* emphasizes the importance of participation in the catechetical process of preparation for Confirmation. This preparation process is intended to challenge the candidates to examine their faith life and at the same time it calls parents to conversion and to new growth in faith.

During the course of the two-year preparation period, parents should be attending liturgical celebrations to help them:

1. Understand their role as models in the Christian development of their teenagers.
2. Deepen their own faith lives through involvement during the two years of preparation and at liturgical celebrations and the Confirmation Rite.
3. Strengthen their family relationships and together grow in their relationship with God.
4. Parents should affirm, support and pray for the candidates and their sponsors throughout the process. For example, they might invite the young person's sponsor to a family dinner. In fact, parents will want to advise their young person in his/her own choice of their sponsor.

Confirmation Sponsor:

The candidate should be accompanied by a sponsor when he or she asks to be admitted as a candidate. The sponsor should be someone who knows the candidate, helps the candidate and witnesses to the candidate's morals, faith and intentions. (RCIA #42)

Choosing a Sponsor

In our society, the role of a sponsor is sometimes looked upon as a way of honoring a family member or close friend. However, the role of the sponsor is much more than honorary. The sponsor is to be involved in the young person's life and journey in many ways. The person chosen as a sponsor should be:

1. A person that will pray with the candidate regularly
2. A real friend; someone that candidate can trust and confide in; someone who can be there when needed.
3. Someone the candidate looks up to; someone after which he/she would like to model his/her life.
4. A person whose experience as a Catholic is an invaluable source for helping youth to make decisions in their life as a Catholic.
5. A person who is interested in the candidate's preparation and who is willing to participate in special gatherings, meetings and liturgical celebrations during the preparation program.
6. A person whose relationship with the candidate will continue after the celebration of Confirmation.

Qualifications for Sponsors:

- Must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic (if married, married in the Church)
- May either be male or female
- Must be sufficiently mature to fulfill their function as a sponsor (even though the minimum age is sixteen, we encourage someone older)
- Must be a person who is an example and a witness of the Catholic faith in word and action
- Must be friendly, trustworthy and a good listener
- Must be one who will attend liturgical celebrations, meetings, rehearsals and

Confirmation Rite

- May **not** be the mother or father of the person to be confirmed

Expectations of the Sponsor:

1. Attend Mass with the candidate frequently.
2. Participate in special sessions during the two years of preparation.
3. Participate in liturgical celebrations, rehearsal and Confirmation Rites during the Confirmation process.
4. Meet with the candidate on a regular basis to encourage and assist the candidate to grow in knowledge, in prayer, in service and in worship.
5. Participate in other parish activities required of the two-year process with the candidate.

NOTE: *It is to the benefit of the candidate that the sponsors live locally.*

Service Hours:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Luke 4:18-19

“No one can claim the name Christian and be comfortable in the face of hunger, homelessness, insecurity and injustice found in this country and in the world.” (USCC, Economic Just for All)

Service is an integral component of the Confirmation Preparation Process, as well as an essential part of Christian living. When it is done well, the results can be life-changing. When service projects are well organized and designed, our youth experience a bonding and identification with the people they serve. They can come to understand the social causes of the injustice experienced by the people and communities they help. Youth can come to realize how meaningful a life of service to others can be. They discover what Christian discipleship really means.

In addition to serving others an effective service project will consist of these four elements:

1. Education
2. Reflection
3. Faith Sharing
4. Prayer

Fifteen (15) service hours are required annually, as part of the Confirmation Program.

Confirmation Names:

Reinforcing the connections between Baptism and Confirmation candidates are encouraged to be confirmed with their Baptismal or given name. The act of reaffirming the name given at Baptism is a way for them to confirm their Baptismal promises. However, Canon Law does permit the taking of a new name. Candidates that decide to take on a new Confirmation Name are encouraged to do so thoughtfully and seriously. The name might reflect a Christian ideal, goal, or value they wish to strive for. Most commonly they wish to honor a Saint whose holiness or charitable works have inspired them. Even those candidates that decide to be confirmed with their Baptismal name are encouraged to learn about the Saint whose name they carry.

NOTE: *Guidance for choosing Confirmation names will be offered during the second year of preparation.*

During an emergency situation requiring evacuation, the lunch shelter will serve as the staging area.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES Year-round Faith Journey for children and youth seeking Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Children/youth participating in this process:

- have not been baptized,
- have been baptized in another Christian denomination,
- have been baptized in the Catholic faith but not catechized.

Parents serve as sponsors for their youngsters and participate in the faith journey.

Since this is a "family" process, parents seeking Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist, or seeking to make a Profession of Faith, are able to join their youngsters in the sacramental preparation.

The young people and adults, along with their families, have time to explore and grow as they walk hand-in-hand down the road of faith. Through the journey, the young people and adults in the process, along with family members, are nourished with the Word of God. Surrounded by the parish community they come to recognize and trust God's love.

The Christian Initiation Process is a spiritual journey for the youngsters and their parents, who serve as sponsors. The journey begins with the Rite of Welcome and Acceptance which is celebrated at a Sunday Mass. Along the journey path there are many rites, retreats, prayer services, outreach projects and other celebrations such as a group presentation of Stations of the Cross during Lent.

This Initiation process meets on Sundays at 5:00 PM Mass with dismissal. Parents join their children/youth following Mass for reflection and sharing. Monthly calendars and newsletters are available year-around.

The process usually takes two to three years from the Rite of Welcome and Acceptance to the reception of sacraments at the Easter Vigil. However this depends upon the attendance, readiness of the catechumen or candidate and other special circumstances. After receiving the sacraments, the young people and their parents commit to continuing the child's religious education with enrollment in the elementary or middle school programs. High school students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Life Teen program.

During an emergency situation requiring evacuation, the grass area right outside the front door of the Religious Education Building will serve as the staging area.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS Year-round Faith Journey for those thinking about becoming Catholic or Baptized Catholics seeking to complete their Sacraments. This Initiation process meets on Sundays at 9:00 AM Mass with dismissal, followed by catechesis in the Parish library.

Sometimes it is a quiet but insistent inner urging. Sometimes it feels like an irresistible and powerful need. Sometimes it seems absolutely clear and certain, something you have known all along. Other times, it is a tentative question, full of uncertainties, unknowns, even anxieties. You may have felt moved by a Catholic friend, spouse, or a Mass, but it is an idea that appeals to you.

No matter how the feeling arose or what its shape is for you, if you are feeling drawn to explore the Catholic faith, we welcome you and your search. It is important to take those vague yearnings for "something more" very seriously, because they are often the way in which we are called forward to deeper spiritual growth, deeper communion with God and all of life.

Catholics are Christians, united with Protestant and Orthodox Christians in our belief that Jesus Christ has revealed to us in human form the loving nature of God and God's dream for all people. With many other Christians, we believe that Christ lives on still revealing God to us through the Spirit, who calls us to help God's dream become a reality by making the earth a place of justice, compassion and peace.

Catholics believe that all of us who are baptized are part of a people, a global family, thousands of years old.

We believe that Christ's Spirit lives not only in individual hearts, but also in the people – all of us together – who are Christ's hands and feet and voice in the world. Catholics believe that the Baptized, all together, are Christ's Body on earth, called to be His presence in every time and in every land in which we live. That is why Mass is so important to us: it is the way in which we come together to remember who we are, and then to be sent back out to the world on our mission to bring Christ's love into every situation of our lives.

Catholics believe then, that Christ is present not only in individuals and their personal relationship with God, but also in the community of the Church, and the world in which we live. The sacramental vision of Catholicism emphasizes that God's presence is to be found everywhere in life: in nature and beauty, in the arts and human love, in learning and the intellect, in you and me, in bread broken and wine shared.

Catholics are ordinary people, who struggle, and fail like everyone else, but who often sense, and always celebrate the extraordinary determined love that infuses all of life and is at the heart of the mystery of God.

How Do I Begin?

If you would like to explore Catholicism or the possibility of becoming Catholic, please call Deacon Arnie Lopez at (626) 378-0919.

What is the Process through Which One Becomes a Catholic?

If you have never been baptized.... You will have ample time to explore and grow and make your decision. You will take part in a process called "Christian Initiation for Adults." There are several periods to this process:

- **The Period of Inquiry** - This is exactly what it says: a time to inquire and explore, without any strings attached, and without having to make any commitments. It goes on as long as you want or need, and is meant to help you get a sense of how God is acting in your life, and what Catholicism is all about.
- **The Period of the Catechumenate** - If and when you feel you are ready to make a commitment to become a Catholic Christian, you will be welcomed by the Catholic community during a Sunday Mass. You are then called a Catechumen, which means that you are a kind of an apprentice member of the Church, preparing for the full initiation.
- **The Period of the Catechumenate** - Usually lasts a year, and longer if that seems best for you. During that time, you are able to reflect each week on the scriptures of the Sunday Mass, and on what questions those scriptures raise for you about your life and purpose, our Church and our society. You will be given a companion ("sponsor") to talk with – an ordinary Catholic who will be there to share your reflections and to be a friend to you as you ask your questions.
- **The Period Of Purification And Enlightenment** - When it seems that you are ready to fully enter the Church and take on its work in our world, you will be baptized at the next Easter time. During the forty days before Easter, known as Lent, you will be asked to enter a time of deeper prayer and reflection to prepare you for this great event.
- **The Period of Mystagogy** - Baptism in most Catholic churches takes place on the night before Easter. On that night, you will be baptized confirmed, and brought to the table to join in the Eucharistic Prayer and share with us in the bread and cup of Holy Communion. Your initiation will mean not only that you are a full member of the community, but also that you have been sent by Christ to carry out his mission in the world in which we live. In the fifty days after Easter, and through the whole first year after your Baptism, we continue to help you to reflect on the wonderful mysteries you have experience in your own life and journey, and to discover how the Spirit is calling you to share God's love with others.

What if I Have Already Been Baptized?

If you have been baptized in another Christian tradition, or if you have not been active in your church, or if your denomination is very different from Catholicism you may participate in a process similar to that for unbaptized people. If you have been baptized in another Christian tradition and you have been an active Christian, then a process suited to your individual circumstances will be developed.

If you were baptized as a Catholic, but have never received Communion. You can participate in a process similar to that for unbaptized people, but especially suited for you.