

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish Westborough, MA

Faith Formation Program Handbook 2018- 2019



Please visit our website at
www.stlukes-parish.org

Philosophy

The Faith Formation Program at St. Luke's Parish was established and has operated on the assumption and belief that the responsibility for determining and demonstrating the importance of religion within the family lies primarily with each child's **parents**.

Accordingly, the parents are the primary religious educators of their children and therefore, are responsible for their spiritual growth and development. Our program has been designed to assist and compliment the faith teaching actions of parents.

By enrolling children in Faith Formation classes at St. Luke's Parish, parents acknowledge their responsibilities, and commit to working with our program to ensure the appropriate religious education of their child. **Weekly Mass attendance is expected.**

Parish Center Office Hours:

The Religious Education Office is located in St. Luke's Parish Center at 1 Ruggles Street. (Mailing address is 70 West Main St.)

Our Summer Office hours (June-August) are:
10AM-3PM, Monday—Thursday.

School Year Hours:

9:30 AM-5:30 PM, Monday-Thursday

The Parish Center Office is closed on Fridays.

Telephone: 508-366-8509

Our Staff

Religious Education Faith Formation Coordinators:

Dianne Patrick, Director, Religious Education (DRE)
(Grades Preschool-6, the Family Program, and SPRED and RCIA for children.)

religiouseducation@stlukes-parish.org

Gloria Josephs, Director, Youth Ministry (YM),
(Grades 7-12)youthministry@stlukes-parish.org

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Pam Vaccari, Parish Center Secretary (9:30AM—5:30PM)
and during the Summer Hours.

religiousoffice@stlukes-parish.org

Catechists/Aides

All catechists and aides are **volunteers** from our parish family at St. Luke's. They are subject to a CORI background check and must attend a diocesan "Safe Environment Training" class in order to be in the classroom with your child.

Training for catechists is provided for each grade level. Catechists and aides are expected to be active witnesses of their faith, not just teachers. Each volunteer is expected to know and abide by the Diocesan *Child Safety Policy*.

Registration

Registration is held in the Spring of each year for the next school term. Students must be 3 years old by September 1 in order to begin the pre-school program. All students should be registered by June 30 Late registrations will be admitted only as space becomes available.

Baptismal Records

We recommend that parents submit a copy of their child's baptismal certificate at the time of registration to be kept on file. This is required of any student enrolled in a sacramental preparation program. If your child was baptized at St. Luke's, you do not need to obtain a certificate because it is a matter of our Parish record.

Program Fees

Our Program fee schedule for a school year is set each spring when the parish budget is prepared.

*Program fees are due at registration time. Registration is offered online with payment by credit card. Checks may be used for on site registrations and should be made out to **St. Luke's Parish**.*

The 2018-2019 Registration Fees are:

Regular Fee	
All Grades	\$90.00 per student
Max per family	\$250.00

Other Fees*:

Family Program	\$50.00 per person (for 8 meals) (\$200 Family Maximum)
Freshman Retreat	\$10.00
Confirmation Retreat	\$190.00

***Note:** These “other fees” are subject to change.

Fee Waivers:

A fee waiver is available to all volunteer Catechists with children enrolled in the program. Other fees do apply, however.

Anyone who cannot afford to pay these fees because of financial difficulties is asked to contact the Coordinators (508-366-8509). **No one will be deprived of a religious education because of the inability to pay the fee.**

Fee waivers will be kept confidential. We ask that you apply for a fee waiver before **June 30, 2018**

Class Schedules:

All classes are held in the Parish Center. We offer the following options:

I. Regular Schedule Sunday:

CGS (ages 3—6) and Grade 1	9:00-10AM 10:30--11:30AM
Grades 2—6	Sunday, 10:30 -11:30 AM

Early Dismissal

Students who must leave early are required to bring a note from their parents to their Catechist prior to the start of the class. Parents must come to the Office to pick up the student. Parents should not go directly to the classroom.

Emergency Closings

In the event of severe weather or other reasons, classes may be cancelled on short notice. This information will be posted on the parish website, and the catechist will contact you.

If the Westborough Public Schools cancels school or releases early due to inclement weather then all Faith Formation classes are cancelled.

Dress Code

When students attend classes, retreats and church functions they must adhere to the same dress code set by the Westborough school system.

Sacramental Attire

Eucharist and Confirmation are special Church/family celebrations. Proper attire should be worn when attending such Masses. A nice dress, or skirt and blouse for the young ladies and a nice pair of slacks and dress shirt (tie or suit is optional) for the young men is suggested. No gym shoes or jeans should be worn on such occasions.

Guidelines for Sacraments

The Diocese of Worcester requires that any child preparing for **First Eucharist** normally first receive the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**. At St. Luke's we recommend that parents consider this when enrolling children in the preparation program. Our program is generally completed in second grade but is non-graded and open to students desiring the sacrament in other grade levels as well.

A child must have completed one full year of religious education before entering the Reconciliation/Eucharist preparation program. (Exceptions can be made based on circumstances of the individual family. The decision will be made by the coordinator.)

Confirmation candidates must commit to a three step preparation process: a meeting with the Youth Minister, attendance at all preparation classes, and participation in a Confirmation Retreat. All three must be completed to be confirmed.

Parent Obligations

As stated in the philosophy, **parents are the primary educators of their children and are responsible for their spiritual growth and development.** By enrolling your students in St. Luke's Faith Formation Program you are asking our help in this regard and accept the obligations to the program that result for you and your student. It is important for you to attend Mass as a family and partake in Eucharist. This is a wonderful time to reinforce your teachings and come together as a family.

To participate in Faith Formation classes students are expected to:

- Be on time for class.
- **Bring** their class **text to each session** (Grades 1 – 6).
- **Participate** in activities and discussion.
- **Comply with all class rules:**
 - Respect** the thoughts and feelings of other students.
 - Respect** the authority of the catechists and aides.
 - Listen** and take turns.
 - Use indoor voices.
 - Walk, don't run in the Parish Center
 - Respect** the grounds and building of St. Luke's Parish

To have your child participate in our program parents are expected to:

- **Read this Handbook completely**
- Be familiar with scheduled classes and events
- Read and act promptly on all communications
- Be familiar with disciplinary procedures
- Work with the student at home and help them prepare for class sessions.
- Attend parent/catechist and other special meetings.
- Assure the student's regular attendance at classes and special events.
- Support our Safety Rules.

THANK YOU!

Disciplinary Procedures

Catechists make every attempt to maintain an atmosphere in which the students can form a community of faith. Students who disturb the class rob all of valuable time. We ask for your cooperation in establishing respect and courtesy habits with your children.

The following disciplinary procedures have been established:

1. The catechist will attempt to reconcile any problem privately with the student.
2. If this does not work, the student will meet with the coordinator to resolve the problem and the parent will be contacted by phone or in writing.
3. If the above procedure produces little or no results, the coordinator will arrange a meeting with the parent, student, and catechist.
4. If the above steps fail to improve the student's behavior, then a parent must attend classes with the student.

Miscellaneous Information

In order to best provide a meaningful experience for your child, please make the Office or the appropriate coordinator aware of any learning, emotional, physical or medical problem your child may have. We will work accordingly with you and your student. All information will be treated as confidential.

Students' records – parents may have access to their student's records, unless specifically restricted by court order.

Medication -personnel WILL NOT maintain, supervise the taking of, or administer medication.

Scheduling –We make every effort to schedule classes and events so as to minimize conflict with known Westborough school activities. Please alert the office of any school activities for a specific school not previously on the school calendar.

Notes:

- Schedule conflicts with extracurricular activities should be addressed to the specific activity director/coach and are not the responsibility of our Faith Formation program.
- Pictures will be taken at St.Luke's sponsored events for use in our parish bulletin. Let us know if you have concerns.

Curriculum

All teaching materials used in our program are approved by the Diocese of Worcester.

We offer the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* for all children ages 3-6 (preschool, and kindergarten)

Grades 1 through 6 use programs by RCL Benziger. Each level's content builds upon the previous year's focus, offering continuity to teacher and children. It is based on the four pillars of our faith: Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer. Guided by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the central teachings of each pillar are communicated, with special attention given to the variety of needs of today's parish. Our Family Program uses Our Sunday Visitor's Alive in Christ texts for home schooling.

Our **Junior High** program uses Center for Ministry Development. Lessons cover the four pillars of our faith: creed, sacraments, morality and prayer.

Our 3 year **High School** program uses Total Catechesis by St. Mary's Press. The sessions cover lessons on the creed, sacraments, morality, and prayer. Students are encouraged to witness their faith and explore the teachings of Jesus more fully.

The **Confirmation** program is designed to work for the total personal and spiritual growth of each student and draw them to responsibly participate in the life, mission and work of the faith community in preparation for Confirmation. Key aspects stressed are continuing education in the areas of Church, Bible and Morality; special emphasis on preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, prayer and spirituality; service to others and building community. The total program is a 3 year journey to lead our young people to the commitment that Confirmation and the Holy Spirit ask of us.

Youth Ministry

All High School students are invited to get involved in St. Luke's Youth Group. This group of young adults is supervised by our Youth Ministry coordinator. There are many opportunities for social and service events throughout the entire year. We want you to help put our faith into action!

(Youth Ministry, continued)

We also want you to be active participants in liturgy as greeters, lectors, altar servers. Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (Confirmed seniors only) and singers in the Contemporary Choir at the 6:30 Mass. Please send Gloria Josephs your email at: youthministry@stlukes-parish.org.

Special Grade Level Placement

Any un-baptized child (catechumen), any child already baptized in another Christian faith (candidate) or any child baptized as a Catholic whose formal religious instruction has been interrupted and desires to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and/or Confirmation needs to contact the Religious Education Faith Formation Office.

A student's desire to be in this program must be discussed with the parent or guardian who must give their permission. Placement of the student will be at the discretion of the coordinator. Students will be expected to attend regularly and complete all assignments. The family plays an active role in this process.

Call the Office, 508.366.8509, for more information.

Special Needs Placement/ Special Religious Development*

All children are welcome to participate in our Faith Formation program here at St. Luke's. Whenever possible, a student will be included in classes. Others can be serviced on an individual basis or within a smaller class placement. Arrangement must be made through our DRE, Dianne Patrick.

St. Luke's Parish in cooperation with the Worcester Diocese offers a uniform Special Needs Program and Curriculum for parishes in our diocese: (*SPRED). Please check our website or speak with Dianne Patrick if you are interested in learning more about this program. Training for catechists in this program is required and is offered each fall. Catechists work one on one with each student. The classes meet twice a month in the Parish Center, and students are grouped by age.

There are four SPRED Centers in the Diocese of Worcester:

- St. Peter / St. Andrew Mission in Worcester
- St. Luke the Evangelist in Westborough
- Sacred Heart of Jesus in Webster
- St. Joseph / Madonna of the Holy Rosary in Fitchburg

SAFETY Matters

We are committed to making the Parish Center a safe place!

- Please escort students preschool—grade 6 into the building (rather than in the parking lot).
- Only bottled water is allowed in the classrooms due to food allergies. (No food, please!)
- Walk, don't run.
- Parents and students should **ENTER** the Parish Center from the main entrance on Ruggles Street when Religious Education sessions are scheduled.
- Students in Preschool through grade 6 must be signed out of class by a parent or responsible party.*
- Parents and students should **EXIT** the Parish Center with caution.
- Please make certain that children are supervised once dismissed from class.
- Please be prompt in picking up your child(ren).

* Please provide the Parish Center Office with the names of persons allowed to pick up your child (for Grades Preschool through Grade 6 only). **We cannot release a child to anyone whose name is not on file without your written permission.**
Your full cooperation is expected and appreciated.

Peace be with you.
THANK YOU!

Stay informed!

Please print a copy of and keep this handbook for your reference on matters concerning St. Luke's Faith Formation Programs. We have made every attempt to answer the most frequently asked questions and provide you with the latest information.

For up-to-date information about St. Luke's Parish Family, log on to our parish website at www.stlukes-parish.org, sign up for "Flocknotes" at flocknote.com/stlukeswestborough or pick up a Parish Bulletin at Mass!

Thank you, the parents of our young people, for enrolling your children in our Religious Education Faith Formation Programs and for taking the time to read through this handbook.

May God bless you and your family!