

*ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH
FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK
2010-2011*

Growth in faith is a lifelong journey

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE NUMBER
Philosophy of the Faith Formation Programs	1
Elementary Faith Formation (Green Pages)	
Curriculum	2
Program Options, Home Study Program, Children’s Liturgy of the Word	3
Prayers to Learn at Each Grade Level	4-7
Middle School/High School Formation (Ivory Pages)	
Curriculum	8-10
Program Options, Home Study Program	11
General Information for All Student Programs	
Attendance, Discipline	12
Inclement Weather, Volunteer Information	13
Sacramental Preparation Information	
Infant Baptism, Baptism/Penance/Eucharist for Older Students,	
First Penance	14
First Eucharist, Confirmation-Youth & Adult	15
Marriage, Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)	16
Adult Faith Formation (Blue Pages)	
Faith First, Apologetics Study Group, Welcome Back!,	
Adult Bible Study Group, Harvesting Our Tears (Grieving Our Loved Ones),	
Divorced But Not Alone, Natural Family Planning (NFP),	
Woman’s Story Gathering	17-18
Elementary, Middle School, & High School Calendar	Appendix A

Philosophy of the Faith Formation Programs

The family is the PRIMARY community where faith is shared and nurtured in our children and youth.

The church community provides SUPPORT in forming our young Catholics.

Therefore, the goal of our Faith Formation Programs is:
active learning as the basis of active faith.

Elementary Faith Formation

Curriculum

The students will use a variety of materials in the elementary classes. Supplementary books, handouts, videos, music tapes, and guest speakers are just a few examples of what enhances the students' learning about their faith.

The following textbooks or guides are used with our students:

Sharing God's Story

The materials in these kits provide a creative and interactive experience for our Pre-K (4 year olds) and Kindergartners. They will explore stories in the Bible and receive take-home handouts that the students may use to share God's story with their families.

Children Discover the Mass

These worksheets and activities provide our First Grade students with hands-on lessons that teach them about the parts of the Mass. The students use these the first semester. The second semester they will use the Call to Faith textbooks.

Call to Faith

In response to parents' requests to provide a solid foundation about our Catholic faith, this series will help achieve that goal. The history, tradition, and basics of our faith are presented at every grade level (1st grade through 5th grade) that uses this textbook. It is a tool that will help students experience their Catholic identity, integrate their Catholic values, and express their Catholic beliefs. It also follows the four pillars that are stressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (The Profession of Faith, The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Life in Christ, and Christian Prayer). The students will use these textbooks along with other supplementary materials.

Parents may wonder if, in any of these programs, their children will learn all the doctrine they need in order to understand their Catholic faith. NO child can acquire an understanding of faith that is adequate for a Catholic adult. Ongoing adult catechesis is necessary for such an understanding. However, children do need to know Catholic doctrine so they can begin to understand its tradition. Remember, any formal religious formation program can only supplement and support what is being taught at home.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

WEDNESDAY CLASSES

The elementary faith formation sessions generally meet every other Wednesday from August through May.

Class times are: 4:30 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. for Pre-K through 5th grades
7:00 p.m. - 8:20 p.m. for Kindergarten through 5th grades

During the year, students may gather together to hear the Sunday Gospel or to learn about an important liturgical theme.

Since Mass is not taking place while the students are in class, access to the church is readily available. The students have the opportunity to explore our church in great detail and get a closer look at areas they may not otherwise know exist. It also allows the catechists to show the students what they are reading about (i.e. the Tabernacle, Sacristy, etc.) and not just looking at pictures in their textbooks.

It is assumed that children will have eaten a snack or dinner before coming to class. Special occasions and learning-related activities may include food, but snacks will not be a part of the normal class routine. If the catechists in the Pre-K and Kindergarten classes feel that a snack is necessary, they will arrange it with the parents.

We require that a parent attend at least one class session with his/her child(ren). We will have sign-up sheets available at the September parent meeting.

We welcome a parent or older siblings' assistance in our classes and with various activities that take place during the year (such as going to the St. Francis Nursing Center during December, Seder Meal, driving for field trips, etc.)

Please make sure that the class time you choose is the best time for your child to attend. Since classes fill quickly and catechists may not be available, switching class times may not be an option during the year.

HOME STUDY

The Home Study Program is available for students 4 years old through fifth grade. Parents receive materials and guidelines at the beginning of the year. **Home Study families use the same textbooks that are used in our Wednesday Faith Formation classes.**

Four to five required family sessions are scheduled during the year for families to meet, share ideas/concerns, and participate in activities with the group. If there are extenuating circumstances that would cause a family to be unable to attend the family gatherings, then parents will need to make an appointment with the Coordinator of Elementary Faith Formation to bring in the child(ren) to take an Assessment Evaluation each quarter. These assessments will provide the Coordinator and the parents an opportunity to evaluate what ideas/concepts may need to be discussed further with the child(ren).

At the end of the Faith Formation year, families complete the program with a private family follow-up meeting.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Elementary-aged children who have not yet received their First Eucharist may participate in this Sunday Liturgy. This program forms children in the liturgical language of the Church and nourishes and guides their spiritual growth in ways that make the Scriptures understandable to them. This is a supplemental program so it may not be used in place of attending the Wednesday Faith Formation classes or participating in the Home Study Program

PRAYERS to learn in Faith Formation
Grades Pre-K - 5

PRAYERS FOR PRE-K

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

GRACE BEFORE MEALS

Bless us, O Lord,
and these, thy gifts,
which we are about to receive
from thy bounty
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR KINDERGARTEN

And PRAYERS LEARNED IN PREVIOUS GRADES

GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

PRAYERS to learn in Faith Formation
Grades Pre-K – 5 (Cont.)

PRAYERS FOR FIRST GRADE

And PRAYERS LEARNED IN PREVIOUS GRADES

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
it is now and ever shall be:
world without end.
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR SECOND GRADE

And PRAYERS LEARNED IN PREVIOUS GRADES

ACT OF CONTRITION

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
and your church.
I firmly intend, with the help of your Son,
to make up for my sins
and love as I should.
Amen.

PRAYERS to learn in Faith Formation
Grades Pre-K – 5 (Cont.)

PRAYERS FOR THIRD GRADE

And PRAYERS LEARNED IN PREVIOUS GRADES

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of Heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell,
and on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God,
the Father Almighty;
from there he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS FOR FOURTH GRADE

And PRAYERS LEARNED IN PREVIOUS GRADES

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
Our life, our sweetness, and our hope!
To you do we cry,
Poor banished children of Eve;
To you do we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
Your eyes of mercy toward us,
And after this, our exile, show unto us
The blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary,
Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Amen.

PRAYERS to learn in Faith Formation
Grades Pre-K – 5 (Cont.)

PRAYERS FOR FIFTH GRADE
And PRAYERS LEARNED IN PREVIOUS GRADES

THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation

The Visit of Mary to Elizabeth

The Birth of Jesus

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

The finding of Jesus in the Temple

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden

The Scourging at the Pillar

The Crowning with Thorns

The Carrying of the Cross

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection of Jesus

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven

The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles

The Assumption of Mary into Heaven

The Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL FAITH FORMATION

CURRICULUM

6th & 7th Grades:

Faith and Witness: “Creed, Part I”; “Creed, Part II”; “Liturgy and Worship”; “Church History”

Each course will invite the youth to venture further into the mystery of faith and the challenge of discipleship. The students will study, reflect, pray, and act in response to God’s word in their small faith communities.

8th Grade Pre-Confirmation and all Confirmation students:

Send Out Your Spirit

The textbook helps to prepare candidates in the knowledge and practice of their faith and their vocation as witnesses to Christ in the Church. The students will learn the primary place of the sacraments of initiation in the life of the Church and in their lives as faithful Catholics. This text will assist in helping to establish and intensify their relationship to the Trinity by presenting a sound Trinitarian theology and spirituality.

Note: Since Confirmation is a two-year program, the students will complete this text during their Confirmation year.

High School **Confirmation**

Send Out Your Spirit

The textbook helps to prepare candidates in the knowledge and practice of their faith and their vocation as witnesses to Christ in the Church. The students will learn the primary place of the sacraments of initiation in the life of the Church and in their lives as faithful Catholics. This text will assist in helping to establish and intensify their relationship to the Trinity by presenting a sound Trinitarian theology and spirituality.

The students will complete this text during their Confirmation year. (Students begin using this textbook in the Pre-Confirmation class). Students who did not participate in our Pre-Confirmation class will need to meet with the Director of Faith Formation to determine placement of these students.

The students in grades 9 through 12 choose to attend one of these classes for the year:

FIRE (Forming Individual Religious Education)--If a student wants/needs to continue learning more of the foundational pieces of our Catholic faith, he/she should take this class.

Note: If a teen has not actively participated in a Middle School or High School Youth Faith Formation Program for at least 3 years, he/she **MUST** take this class.

LIGHT (Launching Into God's Heavenly Truth)--If a student wants to begin a focused approach to reading and understanding the bible, then he/she should register for one of these classes.

Note: A teen must have actively participated in a Middle School or High School Youth Faith Formation Program for at least 3 years to be eligible to take this class.

APOLOGETICS—Students who have **made their Confirmation** may register for these sessions. The students will study various topics and learn how to explain their faith clearly, defend it confidently, and share it kindly and lovingly. Note: The Apologetics class meets every other Sunday for 1.5 hours.

9th Grade FIRE

Introduction to the Catechism: “Creed”; “Sacraments”; “Prayer”

The lessons are derived from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which is more than 700 pages long. As a result, this four-book series on the Catechism has been especially written for Catholic high school students.

9th Grade LIGHT

Journey Through the New Testament

The textbook used for this class provides an introduction to the bible with emphasis on the New Testament.

10th - 12th Grades FIRE

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth

This book contains the essential teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, but presents the information using language and examples that are easier to understand.

Understanding the Catechism: Morality

This book will introduce/review the moral teachings of the Church to help guide the students in living their lives in Christ. This text will be used in conjunction with the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Total Youth Ministry “Prayer and Worship”; “Evangelization”; “Justice and Service”; “Community Life”; “Youth Leadership Development”; “Pastoral Care”

These texts follow the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops publication, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. This publication directs youth ministry to:

- ◆ empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today
- ◆ draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community
- ◆ foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person

10th - 12th Grades LIGHT

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth

This book contains the essential teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, but presents the information using language and examples that are easier to understand.

The Great Adventure

Salvation History

A Father Who Keeps His Promises

The first semester is an overview of the Bible, to get the big picture of God's working in history to bring about the redemption of humanity by tracing the "seed line" (Gen 3:15). The second semester is a more in-depth study of salvation history focusing on the covenants between God and man and biblical typology to explain the significance of the Old and New covenants. This will culminate in showing the Catholic, universal church as the fulfillment of the promises and covenants of the Old Testament.

Theology of the Body

This is an introductory course for teens. The Theology of the Body program is large in scope, but our emphasis will be on chastity and vocation.

Post – Confirmation “APOLOGETICS”

Various books and materials will be used for these sessions.

Parents may wonder if, in any of these programs, their teens will learn all the doctrine they need in order to understand their Catholic faith. NO teen can acquire an understanding of faith that is adequate for a Catholic adult. Ongoing adult catechesis is necessary for such an understanding. However, youth do need to know Catholic doctrine so they can begin to understand its tradition. Remember, any formal religious formation program can only supplement and support what is being taught at home.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

WEDNESDAY CLASSES

The faith formation sessions generally meet every other Wednesday from September through May.

Class times are: Middle School 4:30 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. (6th-7th grades)
7:00 p.m. - 8:20 p.m. (6th-8th grades)
High School 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY APOLOGETICS CLASS (for Post-Confirmation students)

This class generally meets every other Sunday from September through May from 6:30-8:30 PM.

Please make sure that the class time you choose is the best time for your child to attend. Since classes fill quickly and catechists may not be available, switching class times may not be an option during the year.

HOME STUDY

The Home Study Program is available for Middle School and High School students. Parents receive materials and guidelines at the beginning of the year. **Home Study families use the same textbooks and materials that are used in our Wednesday Faith Formation classes.**

Four to five required family sessions are scheduled during the year for families to meet, share ideas/concerns, and participate in activities with the group. If there are extenuating circumstances that would cause a family to be unable to attend the family gatherings, then parents will need to make an appointment with the Director of Faith Formation to bring in the student(s) to take an Assessment Evaluation each quarter. These assessments will provide the Director and the parents an opportunity to evaluate what ideas/concepts may need to be discussed further with the student(s).

At the end of the Faith Formation year, families complete the program with a private family follow-up meeting.

ATTENDANCE

When a student does not attend Faith Formation classes on a regular basis, continuity is lost. Also, when a student arrives late to class, the child must be “caught up” on what has taken place and the class has been interrupted.

If a student arrives *10 or more minutes late*, the attendance sheet will be marked as *TARDY*. If the child continually arrives late to class, then the parent will be contacted about the problem. If the tardiness continues, then the child will do the lessons(s) in the Director’s office or another designated person’s office so that no further classes will be interrupted.

Students are allowed **two (2)** excused absences. Students will be expected to make-up all additional class time missed. All students who have attended class or completed the missed lessons will receive a certificate for successfully completing a year of the Faith Formation Program. Those not meeting the minimum attendance requirements will be promoted to the next grade but will not receive a certificate. Also, any child who is preparing for a sacrament will be prepared the next year for that sacrament if the minimum attendance requirements have been met.

If a child misses two (2) consecutive classes the Coordinator, Director or another designated person will call to see if there is a problem. A parent may contact the child’s catechist, Coordinator, or Director to make up the lesson. When the lesson is returned the absence will be marked as *Excused*.

Children of divorced or separated parents are sometimes unable to attend the Faith Formation classes on a regular basis. If a child is with a parent on alternating weeks and can only attend classes once a month, please inform the Coordinator to make special arrangements for this situation. If a parent is willing to work on the missed lessons with the child, the lessons will be marked as *Excused*.

Unfortunately there have been some instances where families have continually arrived late when picking up their children. Therefore if a parent/guardian arrives 10 minutes late more than 2 times during the year, a meeting must be arranged with the Director of Faith Formation. In order for the child(ren) to continue attending the Faith Formation classes, the parent/guardian will need to remain on campus to ensure that pickup will be on time.

DISCIPLINE

The students of St. Francis of Assisi are wonderful, loving children & youth. They show proper respect toward their teachers and fellow students. However, if a student continually disrupts the class, is disrespectful, or harms another person, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The catechist will tactfully talk to the student about the problem.
2. If the student continues the inappropriate behavior, the Coordinator or Director will meet with the child to determine what needs to be done to solve the problem.
3. If the problem/behavior has not improved, the Coordinator, catechist, and Director of Faith Formation will meet with the student to determine a solution to the problem.
4. If the behavior still does not improve, then the Director of Faith Formation will meet with the parent(s) and student to determine a plan of action which may be:
 - a. that the child will only be admitted back into class if a parent is willing to attend the classes with the child. (If the child demonstrates the ability to act appropriately in four (4) consecutive classes, then the child will be given the chance to attend without the parent).
 - b. the parent must attend the remainder of the classes for the year.
 - c. moving to the Home Study Program.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

As in the past, **Wednesday classes will be cancelled if Districts 11 or 20** have cancelled or had early dismissal due to inclement weather. **However, the cancelled class will be re-scheduled for the following Wednesday** so that our time with your children will not be lost.

If the decision to cancel classes is determined soon enough, catechists will call parents to inform them. If a parent is unsure about whether or not classes are being held, please call the Parish at 599-5031. A message will be on the Parish Voice Mail, the Elementary Coordinators' Voice Mail at ext. 108, the Youth Coordinator's Voice Mail at ext. 109, or the Director's Voice Mail at ext. 107.

USE YOUR BEST JUDGMENT when the weather is threatening. You and your family's lives are more important than trying to get to classes.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are vital to the success of the Faith Formation Programs. Many catechists and leaders are needed. A catechist will teach or assist the classes and attend the Catechist Meetings (usually 4 a year).

We strive to maintain consistent class sizes:

- Pre-K and Kindergarten--12 students
- First through Fifth -- 15 students
- Middle School/High School—20 students
- Adult Programs—Unlimited!

There is also a great need for substitutes, catechist assistants, student assistants, and special project assistants. Contact the Coordinator of Elementary Faith Formation, the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, or the Director of Faith Formation for further information.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The Diocesan Policies and Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation are the basis for our Sacramental Programs.

INFANT BAPTISM

Sacrament of Baptism is the gateway to all the Sacraments. It is the responsibility of parents and godparents to model their faith by word and example, to help the newly baptized infant's faith development and growth towards Christian maturity.

Prerequisites for Infant Baptism:

- ★ the child has not celebrated his/her seventh birthday
- ★ at least one parent/guardian should be a practicing, active Catholic
- ★ the parents/guardians and godparents attend an appropriate amount of adult sessions to help them deepen their own faith and understanding of Baptism

Classes are offered from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM every other month. Please call the Parish Office, ext. 100, to register for a class or to get further information.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS-RCIA (adapted for children and youth) BAPTISM

FIRST PENANCE

FIRST EUCHARIST OF OLDER STUDENTS

Un-baptized children and youth who have reached the age of reason (7 years and older) and are of catechetical age should be included in the RCIA process for children. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the Roman Catholic Church instructs us not to separate the initiation sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) when a person is not baptized. Therefore, students age seven and above will prepare with their families through the RCIA process for full initiation. Contact the Director of Faith Formation for further information.

PENANCE (RECONCILIATION, FIRST CONFESSION)

These six (6) classes are separate from the regular Faith Formation classes. Preparation for Penance takes place in the Fall. Penance classes are held on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. NOTE: **At least one parent/guardian is required to attend the first three (3) classes.**

A Child is eligible to make the sacrament of Penance if:

- ★ he/she is a baptized Catholic or has made a Profession of Faith
- ★ a parent makes the commitment to help prepare the child (teaching the required prayers and helping with any assigned homework.)
- ★ the child has successfully completed a Diocesan approved Faith Formation Program AT LEAST the previous year before the year of sacramental preparation.
- ★ the child is in second grade or above.
- ★ the child has successfully met the minimum attendance requirements in the regular Faith Formation class or is in the process of completing the Home Study Program
- ★ the child can distinguish right from wrong.

A parent may teach the Penance lessons at home. However, a parent must still attend the first three (3) meetings on Tuesday evenings. Additionally, the family must schedule a follow-up parent/child interview with the Coordinator of Elementary Faith Formation or the Director of Faith Formation to determine if the child is adequately prepared to make his/her First Penance.

If a child received First Eucharist in another diocese without receiving Penance, the child may enroll in the Penance class this year.

Please check the calendar for the dates of the Penance classes.

FIRST EUCHARIST (FIRST COMMUNION)

These seven (7) classes are separate from the regular Faith Formation classes. Preparation for First Eucharist takes place in the Spring on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. until 7:45 p.m. Due to the need to “practice” for First Eucharist, the Home Study option is not available for this class. Please contact the Coordinator of Elementary Faith Formation if there is an extreme circumstance that requires special consideration about attending these classes. **NOTE: At least one parent is required to attend the first three (3) classes.**

A child is eligible to make First Eucharist if:

- ★ a parent makes the commitment to help prepare the child with required assignments/projects.
- ★ the child received the sacrament of First Penance at least three (3) months prior to receiving First Eucharist.
- ★ the child has successfully completed a Diocesan approved program AT LEAST the previous year before the year of sacramental preparation.
- ★ the child is in second grade or above.
- ★ the child has successfully met the minimum attendance requirements in the regular Faith Formation class or is in the process of completing the Home Study Program
- ★ the child regularly attends Mass with the family and can participate in basic parts of the Mass.

Catholics are sacramental people. As a Eucharistic community, Sunday Mass is the central act of worship that nourishes us and gives us the strength to love and serve one another the rest of the week. Our children acquire a sense of belonging to St. Francis of Assisi Parish by participating in Sunday Mass, attending parish activities, and learning about our God from parents with the help of available faith formation programs. **If one of these aspects is missing, the entire experience is diminished.**

Please check the calendar for the dates of the First Eucharist classes.

CONFIRMATION

These classes are separate from the regular Faith Formation classes. Preparation for Confirmation usually begins in September and continues through May. Classes generally meet twice on a month on Sunday evenings from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM unless otherwise noted on the calendar.

Parents and/or sponsors will be required to attend specific meetings during the year.

A Student is eligible to make Confirmation if:

- ★ he/she is a baptized Catholic or has made a Profession of Faith
- ★ he/she has received the Sacraments of Penance and First Eucharist
- ★ he/she has successfully completed a Diocesan approved program AT LEAST the previous year before the year of sacramental preparation
- ★ the student will be at least 15 years of age by April 1st
- ★ the student has successfully met the minimum attendance requirements in the regular Faith Formation class or is in the process of completing the Home Study Program

Since there will be guest speakers and assignments that can only be adequately completed with their peers, Confirmation cannot be offered as part of the Home Study Program.

Please refer to the calendar for the dates of the Confirmation classes.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

These classes are for actively participating Catholic adults, 21 years of age or older, who have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and Eucharist. These classes generally begin during the Easter Season and last for eight weeks. Adult Confirmation usually takes place at St. Mary’s Cathedral with the Bishop. Call the Director of Faith Formation for further information.

MARRIAGE

Couples considering marriage begin preparation twelve (12) months prior to the anticipated date. Preparation includes classes in Natural Family Planning, a weekend retreat, talks and discussions, and FOCUS.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS (RCIA)

The Rite of Christian Initiation is a spiritual journey for people:

- ★ who are inspired by the Holy Spirit to believe in the Lord
- ★ who are interested and have a desire to become Catholic Christians
- ★ who were baptized but received no further Catholic formation
- ★ who have married or are marrying practicing Catholics and want to understand and share in their Catholic faith

This program meets year-round on Wednesdays from 7:00-9:00 PM. Call the Director of Faith Formation for further information.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

FAITH FIRST

Even as adults, we cannot know everything about our faith. Adult sessions are offered periodically to accommodate busy lifestyles as it may be impossible for adults to attend regularly scheduled sessions. These sessions will be listed in the church bulletin.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY GROUP

In our Bible Study groups we will focus on specific biblical books to provide meaningful insights that explain Scripture while helping participants make connections to their own lives. These sessions will be listed in the bulletin.

WELCOME BACK!

This program is for Catholics who have been away from the Catholic Church, and who want to return to the sacraments and to regular church attendance. These six week sessions meet in January and again during the Easter Season. Watch the bulletin for dates and times.

HARVESTING OUR TEARS Grieving Our Loved Ones

This eight-week program is designed to help those grieving the loss of a loved one (no matter how long ago that may have been) through Scripture, prayer, and informative discussions based on our Catholic faith. The class sessions will be listed in the bulletin.

DIVORCED BUT NOT ALONE

This program is designed to help clarify what the Catholic Church states about divorce: receiving Communion, dating, remarrying, annulments, etc. but to also help our divorced brothers and sisters find support and healing from divorce. Class meeting dates and times will be listed in the bulletin.

APOLOGETICS STUDY GROUP

Adults should be able to explain and defend Catholic doctrine using Scripture, history, and common sense. This group generally meets one Sunday afternoon a month, from 3:00-5:00 PM, to discuss topics relevant to our lives and how we, as Catholics, should respond. Meeting dates and specific topics will be listed in the bulletin.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP)

NFP is a scientifically-proven method that uses an awareness of women's fertility to either achieve or postpone pregnancy. It is all-natural, Church approved, and 99% effective in postponing pregnancy when used correctly. This program is open to all couples.

WOMAN'S STORY GATHERING

These gatherings provide women the opportunity to:

- ★ share Scripture, prayer, ritual, and reflection
- ★ provide a process for women to share their stories, struggles with and hopes for women's spirituality in our world
- ★ identify and affirm women's gifts in the Church and society
- ★ share women's resources and opportunities available in the community

Refer to the bulletin for other adult sessions that will be offered throughout the year on different days and times.

**Explore the Faith
Experience Community**