

Parent Handbook




St. William Child Christian Formation

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www.swparish.org

 SW Parish Formation Ministries

Welcome to St. William's Child Christian Formation (CF)

This handbook is for you as a parent of an elementary age child who is registered in St. William's Child Christian Formation. For the most part, this information does not talk about 'rules', nor is it considered hard and fast policy. Rather, this handbook is a way of helping you know our expectations. These expectations help all of us as we blend the many diverse St. William families into one Formation community. We want to work *WITH* you in helping your child get to know Jesus.

You will need to know much of this information, whether your child attends CF on Sunday morning or Tuesday / Wednesday afternoon/evening. If a point is for a specific day, it will be clearly marked.

Please remember that our catechists are all volunteers who graciously donate their time and talent to share their love of Jesus with your children so that they may have a Catholic faith formation experience.

The CF Office welcomes your feedback and suggestions for changes, additions, and corrections to this booklet.

Kay Hokans
Director of Child Ministry

Please provide us with your e-mail address if you have one. It saves us time and postage when we can communicate via e-mail.

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	4
Expectations	5
General Information	
CF Staff	6
CF Office & Supplies	6
CF Classes	7
Sacramental Prep	7
Special Needs Children	7
Registration Fees	7
Use of Photos	8
“Safe Environment Education” Curriculum	8
Donations	8
Class Notes	
Two Rules	9
Student Folders	9
Absence Policy	9
Cell Phones	9
Make-up Classes	9
Early Pick-Up	9
Starting Time	10
Entrance Doors	10
Dropping Off and Picking Up Children	10
Dismissal Do’s and Don’ts	10
Playground Use	11
Service Projects	11
Hot Dog Party	12
Treats	12
Bathroom Breaks	12
Appropriate Dress	13
Snow or Storm Cancellations	13
Discipline Procedure	14
Parent Involvement	15
Parent Prayer	16
Volunteer Parent Help Form	19-20

MISSION STATEMENT for Child Ministry

Child Ministry at St. William Parish seeks to work with parents in helping their children develop a faith life while learning a basic understanding of the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. It includes the formation of preschool and school age children grades K3-6.

We do this by:

- † Teaching about the Catholic Church so students gain an understanding of what it means to be a Catholic Christian.
- † Promoting a liturgical life through liturgy, sacraments, and prayer.
- † Participation in service. It is our responsibility to care for ALL of God's creatures as well as his creations.
- † Encouraging students to be part of the broader community that is St. William's.
- † Talking about moral decision-making and learning the difference between making good choices and bad choices according to Gospel values.
- † Understanding that we all have a special "calling" from God.



EXPECTATIONS

WHAT WE EXPECT OF STUDENTS:

Attend Mass every Sunday and pray regularly

Attend classes

Come with a positive attitude

Listen, talk, and act appropriately

Participate

Follow CF procedures

Keep hands (feet, whatever) to self

(we call it our 'no touching' policy!)

****We have a zero tolerance policy for violence against another person or for bringing on the premises any object that could be a weapon. Any child in violation will immediately be sent home and will require a meeting with parents to decide if further disciplinary action is necessary.**

WHAT WE EXPECT OF PARENTS:

Attend Mass weekly and pray regularly as a family.

Continue to enrich and educate yourself as a Catholic.

Display a positive attitude toward Church, church leaders.

Make CF a priority.

Take an interest in what your child is learning.

Do 'service' as a family; help with the CF class service project if requested.

Cooperate with dismissal procedures.

AS A FAMILY, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

Have your child enrolled in an up-to-date, dynamic faith formation program.

Have opportunities for your child to participate in Catholic learning, Scripture study and prayer, community-building and moral decision-making.

Expect supervised volunteer catechists who have an honest interest in helping your child learn.

Have your family's privacy protected (this includes data, record-keeping, and mail or e-mail addresses).

GENERAL INFORMATION

CF STAFF

CF is a part of Child Ministry and is staffed by two employees. You are welcome to approach either of us with questions or concerns.

Kay Hokans - Director of Child Ministry

(262) 547-2763 x206 khokans.cf@tds.net

Pat Sennott - Child Ministry Associate

(262) 547-2763 x225 psennott.cf@tds.net

Other Formation staff

Barb Gawlik - Director of Youth Ministry

Cindy Bergland - Director of Adult & Family Ministry

The Formation staff reports to the Pastor and is advised by the Christian Formation Committee, one of the standing committees of the Parish Council.

CHILD MINISTRY OFFICE & SUPPLY ROOM

*If you come in through the glass lobby and enter the school doors, the Child Ministry (CF) Office is on the right, next to the water fountain. There is a buzzer by the school doors that rings in the CF Office. The Child Minister's office and all catechetical resources are in this room. The catechists use this room before and after classes and for all of their weekly materials.



You may have the opportunity to come to this room for meetings, discussions, or resources.

***All CF parents and children must enter through the glass lobby.**

CHRISTIAN FORMATION (CF) CLASSES

CF classes are offered several times a week for most grade levels. Younger children (grades K3-K5) have CF classes on Sunday mornings while their parents are in church (registration is required). Children in grades 1-6 have options after school on Tuesday or Wednesday or Wednesday evenings. See a registration form for specific details.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION



The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are prepared for and celebrated here in second grade. It is considered to be a two-year program -- at least one year of religious education (Catholic school or CF) and current enrollment are prerequisites for the Sacrament program. If your child is older than second grade and has not received these Sacraments, please contact the CF Office. Baptismal certificates will need to be provided if we don't have one on file.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

We make every effort to include all children in our CF program. Children who have mild to moderate learning needs usually do well in class. Some children may require more attention than a volunteer catechist can provide in a classroom setting. We try to work with parents to determine the best learning situation for the child.

REGISTRATION FEES

There is no price tag for religious education. All children are welcome regardless of a parent's financial ability. Like all organizations, though, it costs money to make the program happen. Your registration fee covers only about half of our actual costs. CF exists because of parish support. Your contributions to the general collection ensure the continuation of this program. Payment arrangements can be made by contacting the Child CF Office.

USE OF PHOTOS

Occasionally we take group or individual pictures of CF classes and activities. These pictures may be used for posters, promotion or web site enhancement. On the registration form, we ask families to sign a permission statement so we can use photos in this way. Photos never list a child by name unless express permission is obtained from the parents.

“SAFE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION”

Curriculum for Sexual Abuse Awareness

Part of the Bishops’ directives for sexual abuse awareness programs includes implementing a curriculum in religious ed classes. We will inform you before we present this curriculum during CF class time.

Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the *adult Safe Environment training* so they can volunteer in various ways. See Kay for details.

DONATIONS OF TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE

CHURCH SUPPORT A minimum family contribution of \$20 weekly via the Sunday envelope will ensure the continuation of a good Christian Formation program.

TIME AND TALENT SUPPORT Your ‘talent’ is welcome in many ways. One way to be involved is to read and return the Helping Hands for Child Christian Formation volunteer form (see end of this document).



CLASS NOTES

TWO RULES FOR CF The children are reminded of two basic rules they are to follow while they are at Christian Formation: Love God, Love Others. All other rules and guidelines fall under those two categories. As part of this, we do enforce a ‘no touching’ rule.

STUDENT BAGS Each student will receive a workbook in a plastic tote bag. They should bring both with them to every class. *Please take it upon yourselves to replace their bags as needed. Lost or damaged texts must be replaced at your cost of \$18.*

ABSENCE POLICY If your child will be absent, please notify the CF Office or your child’s catechist. If there are two consecutive unexplained absences, someone from the CF Office may call you to make sure everything is okay.

CELL PHONES No cell phones may be used during class time. If a phone is used, the catechist will take the phone away until the end of class. If you must get in touch with your child, you may communicate through the CF Office.

(Tuesday / Wednesday) MAKING UP MISSED CLASSES

Tuesday and Wednesday students can make up a missed class by attending another time during the same week. Individual grades have the same curriculum presented at three different times during the same week – Tuesday 4:05, Wednesday 4:05 or Wednesday 6:30.

EARLY PICK-UP PROCEDURE If you absolutely must pick up your child early from CF (no earlier than 15 minutes before end of class time), please send a note to the catechist *each time* you wish to pick up early. The child will remain in his/her class until you come in and get them. Although it is sometimes necessary to pick them up early, please remember that this can disrupt the entire class.

(Sunday) STARTING CLASS TIMES



Please note the starting time for your child's CF class. On Sundays it is **8:50**. The reason class begins 10 minutes before Mass is so you have time to drop off your child and get settled in church. The catechists really do plan for classes to begin at that time.

ENTRANCE DOORS FOR CF

Please enter the school from the glass lobby only. All classes for Child CF are held in school classrooms.



(Sunday) DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP CHILDREN

Parents, please walk your child to their classroom before class and pick them up in their classroom afterwards. Our little ones should be with an adult at all times.

CF classes run until 10:00 or until Mass is over, whichever is later. If Mass ends early, please wait patiently in the hallway until 10:00. If Mass runs late, the catechists will cheerfully stay with the children until Mass is over. Catechists would appreciate it if you do not open the classroom door. They will open the doors when class is finished.

(Tuesday/ Wednesday) DROPPING OFF

Weekday CF students come in through the glass lobby and wait until a bell rings to signal the beginning of class time (4:05 or 6:30). Please have children arrive no more than ten minutes before the beginning of CF class.

(Tuesday / Wednesday) DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

Please carefully follow instructions from the CF Office regarding dismissal. We want to make sure that all children are safely reunited with their parents for their ride home.

Some do's and don'ts for dismissal pick up.

DO follow the weekly instructions for pick up. Pickups may be at your child's class room, in the glass lobby or in a car line. You will know ahead of time what to expect.

DO be patient with the volunteers who help with dismissal. We help make things go as safely, and as quickly as possible. If you are patient with us, we will be patient with you.

DO drive up to your child when in the car line – they will be in a pickup area and will be aided by a volunteer to get in the passenger rear door when possible.

DO pick your children up on time. The little ones often get frightened if their parents are not there on a timely basis.

DO NOT yell for your child to come to you in the parking lot even if you see them and they see you. We will instruct them to wait until you come to get them. Under NO circumstances will children be allowed to enter the parking lot without an adult next to them.

DO NOT walk into the car pick up area to get your child.

Share this information with anyone who may be picking up your child during the year.

PLAYGROUND USE

Students are only allowed to use the playground before or after classes if a parent is with them.

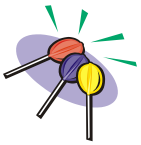
(Tuesday / Wednesday) **SERVICE PROJECTS**

Students in all grades are sometimes asked to participate in group service projects with their class. Grades 3-6 must complete at least one group service project. If you have ideas for service, be sure to mention them to your child's catechist or to the CF Office. Some of these service projects may be done outside of CF class time.

(Tuesday / Wednesday) **HOT DOG PARTY**

Once a year right before the start of Lent, children in Tuesday and Wednesday CF are treated to a hot dog party. Originally planned as an opportunity to break the monotony of a long winter stretch, it has evolved into an opportunity to help the poor. We also use the time as an opportunity to talk about Lent and to introduce our Lenten charity. Students look forward to this special event! Lots of parent volunteers are necessary to make this happen.

TREATS DURING CF TIME



Please let the catechist know if your child has any food allergies. We neither encourage nor discourage treats (see exception in next paragraph), but there are special occasions that children enjoy celebrating with food. If you send in a treat, we prefer that treats are the prepackaged store-bought variety.

(Tuesday / Wednesday) Small snacks such as crackers may be provided for students during the 4:05 session, as many of them come right from school.

BATHROOM BREAKS DURING CF

(Sundays) Students are encouraged to use the bathroom before CF class starts. Little ones are definitely “bathroom contagious” (if one goes, they all want to go)!

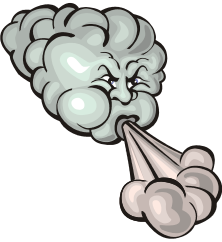
(Tuesdays / Wednesdays) While we don’t want to restrict students from using the bathroom, there are times when students take advantage of the opportunity to leave the classroom. If your child has any reason to use the bathroom more than once an hour, it would be helpful for us to know.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Anything that can be worn at school can generally be worn here. Wearing hats in the classrooms or in the hallways is not permitted by youth or adults. T-shirts with inappropriate sayings will not be allowed.

(Sunday) Girls are generally more comfortable in pants than in a skirt or dress. They may have occasion to sit on the floor and some of the rooms may be cool.

SNOW OR STORM CANCELLATIONS



If you think it is too snowy or icy to drive to CF, chances are the catechists think so too. We ask that you use your best judgment about driving in deteriorating conditions. If school is canceled, most likely so is Child CF – but check. If the weather appears to be worsening, CF may be canceled even if schools were not.

Ways to find out if classes are canceled:

- ✓ Check your e-mail – if we have your e-mail on record, we will try to send out an e-mail saying that classes are canceled.
- ✓ Call the CF Office (547-2763 ext 206) and listen to a recorded message.
- ✓ Check the on-line cancellations web sites for major local news media (we post on Channels 4 and 12)
- ✓ Check out our web site (www.swparish.org)

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

We meet for a little over an hour, one time a week, so we don't often have situations that require a lot of corrective discipline. Occasionally, however, the need does arise. Listed below is the progressive process we may try to use to handle difficult or disruptive situations:

1. The catechist first tries to handle the situation within the class room in a positive, creative, caring and prayerful way.
2. The catechist sends the disruptive student to the CF Office. The Child Minister and student discuss what happened and talk about ways to improve behavior. The child usually returns to class.
3. If disruption continues, the child is asked to leave for the remainder of the class and parents are notified.
4. If the disruptive behavior continues over several weeks, we may call a conference with the child, his/her parents, the catechist and the Child Minister.
5. A parent may be requested to sit with their child in class.
6. The child is asked not to return.

If you get a call about a disruptive situation involving your child, please know that we have attempted first to solve it here and are now asking for your involvement. Remember, all of our catechists are volunteers. Most are not trained or prepared to handle difficult classroom situations.

We want to provide a safe and welcome environment for ALL students, and we do that best when everyone – students, parents, catechists, and staff – cooperates and participates.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CF

Although we do not have too many parent / child events scheduled in CF, we want you to know that you are never excluded from anything we do. Parents are always welcome to be involved. You are invited to call or email the CF Office with any questions, talk with your child's catechist, or visit their class (with prior arrangement). Our prayer services on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, such as Stations of the Cross or CF Masses, are open to anyone in the Parish, especially parents.

MASS ATTENDANCE

In accordance with Church teaching, we strongly encourage that you and your child attend Mass each weekend. Celebrating the Eucharist is the ultimate prayer and the basis for all religious formation. The issues and topics discussed in Christian Formation often refer to Mass and Eucharist. Christian Formation makes so much more sense to students who attend Mass regularly.

Parents of all grade levels can help by praying with your child. In Christian Formation, we can teach children their prayers, but they learn and remember them only if they are heard and said in their every day family life. We teach all kinds of prayers here – ritual prayers, prayers of Thanksgiving, prayers to ask for things, blessing prayers. What do you teach?



Parents' Prayer for Their Children

O Lord,

We give you thanks for having given us children.

They are our joy, and we accept with serenity

the worries, fears, and labors which bring us pain.

Help us to love them sincerely.

Through us you gave life to them;

from eternity you knew them and loved them.

Give us the wisdom to guide them, patience to teach them,

vigilance to accustom them to the good through our
example.

Support our love so that we may receive them back

when they have strayed and make them good.

It is often so difficult to understand them,

to be as they would want us to be,

to help them go on their way.

Grant that they may always see our home

as a haven in their time of need.

Teach us and help us, O gracious God,

through the merits of Jesus, your Son and our Lord.

Amen.

† †

The CF Office appreciates your comments and feedback.



CHILD MINISTRY
Partners with you in your
child's faith formation journey

CHILD MINISTRY

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Here are some ways you can help in Child CF!



All adult employees and volunteers are required by Archdiocesan mandate to complete the “Safeguarding All of God’s Children” requirements in order to be with children. Requirements include a one-time sexual abuse awareness session, some reading materials and a completed background check.

📎 _____ **I would like more information on how to complete the “Safeguarding All of God’s Children” requirements.**

📎 _____ **Lobby Parent.** (Tues or Wed) Can you be a ‘Parent Presence’ in the glass lobby on the day your child attends, for 10-15 minutes before CF classes begin? This will allow the CF Minister time to help catechists prepare for their classes. The mere presence of other adults helps keep calm and order. Come once or come every week – as you are able. Just come on in and wait with us in the glass lobby.

📎 _____ **Extra Parent in Child’s Class.** Occasionally a catechist would like an extra pair of hands or help during class time. **Completion of ‘Safeguarding...’ required.**

📎 _____ **Substitute Catechist.** Can you fill in for a session if needed? Materials and lesson plans are provided. **Completion of ‘Safeguarding...’ required.**


Times You Might Be Available:


_____ Sun (8:50-10:00 a.m.)


_____ Tues (4:00-5:15 p.m.)


_____ Wed (4:00-5:15 p.m.)

_____ Wed (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

 _____ **Posters or Displays by hand or computer?** Can you draw or make posters, generate computer graphics, or come up with ideas for bulletin boards? We occasionally need help for displays or events.

 _____ **Hot Dog Party Help.** Just before Lent, Tuesday and Wednesday CF will have hot dog parties for the students during CF. Can you help? We'll call you before hand to confirm!

 _____ **Help Wherever.** Maybe you don't want to be a catechist but would be willing to help in other ways. Can we call you if we need help with ... whatever?

 _____ **Future Catechist.** Thinking ahead to the future, what things can you do now to possibly be a catechist in the future?

Clip out these last two pages and return them to Kay Hokans in the Child Ministry Office or return via e-mail to khokans.cf@tds.net.

Your Name _____

E-mail _____

What grades are your children in and what day do they attend CF?

CF GRADE(S) _____ DAY _____