



**ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA PARISH**  
CHURCHES OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL



## **FAMILY FAITH FORMATION**

**HANDBOOK 2020-2021**

**Grades 1-8**

**August 2020**

## Parish Pastoral Team

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## Parish Address and Contact Information

### St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish Office [www.montclaircatholics.org](http://www.montclaircatholics.org)

1 Munn Street  
 Montclair, NJ 07042  
 Phone: 973 – 744 - 5650  
 Fax: 973 – 744 - 7936  
 Email: [info@montclaircatholics.org](mailto:info@montclaircatholics.org)

### Immaculate Conception Church

30 North Fullerton Avenue  
 Montclair, NJ 07042

### Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

94 Pine Street  
 Montclair, NJ 07042

### Immaculate Conception Cemetery

712 Grove Street  
 Montclair, NJ 07043  
 Phone: 973 – 744 – 5939  
 Fax: 973 – 744 – 5659

### Immaculate Conception High School

30 Cottage Place  
 Montclair, NJ 07042  
 Phone: 973 – 744 - 7445

## Welcome to Family Faith Formation!

This handbook was designed to provide your family with valuable information regarding our Family Faith Formation Program for the 2020-2021 catechetical year for **children entering Grades 1-8 in September**.

We respectfully request that you read this handbook to gain a fuller understanding and perspective of our program, its components, guidelines and expectations, and registration information.

We sincerely appreciate your commitment and involvement with your children's faith formation and we look forward to an exciting year of faith formation for the young members of our parish!

If you have any concerns or questions, do call the Family Faith Formation Office at 973-744-5650 ext. 118 or send an email to [FamilyFaith@montclaircatholics.org](mailto:FamilyFaith@montclaircatholics.org).

## Program Overview 2020-2021

### Catechesis Within the Family

*"Parents have shared the gift of human life with their children and, through Baptism, have enriched them with a share in God's own life. They have the duty to nourish it. Their faith, their attitude toward other human beings, and their trust in a loving God strongly influence the development of the child's faith.*

*Parents are catechists precisely because they are parents. Their role in the formation of Christian values in their children is irreplaceable. They should speak naturally and simply about God and their faith, as they do about other matters they want their children to understand and appreciate."*

*-From the National Directory for Catechesis*

Faith formation is a *process* that begins in the home and becomes a lifelong journey. At your child's Baptism, you undertook the responsibility and commitment of raising your child in the Christian faith. By word and example, parents are the primary educators of the faith. Through participation at Sunday Mass, family prayer, and daily examples of love, forgiveness, and service to others, you teach your children what it means to follow Christ.

St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish is grateful and privileged to have the opportunity to *support* parents in this journey and *partner* with them in the faith formation of their children and in a growth of faith of their families.

### **Our Mission: "Building Families of Faith Together"**

St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish endeavors to provide a parish environment where families can experience God's Word (WORD), receive His grace in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the weekly celebration of the Eucharist as a parish family (WORSHIP), serve others (MISSION), and build God's kingdom (COMMUNITY) in our families and communities by following Jesus' example.

These four components – WORD, WORSHIP, MISSION, COMMUNITY – make up the basic structure of our Family Faith Formation program. They are inspired by the famous story from Luke’s Gospel, “*The Appearance on the Road to Emmaus*” ([Lk 24:13-35](#)). Two broken-hearted and disillusioned followers of Jesus depart from Jerusalem after Jesus’ death and burial only to encounter the *risen* Jesus on the road home to Emmaus on Easter Sunday. The risen Jesus suddenly appears and accompanies them on their journey. They do not recognize him. As they walk along, Jesus interprets for them all that referred to him in the Old Testament Scriptures and which now has been fulfilled in him (WORD). When it is almost evening, the travelers invite Jesus to stay with them. And while he was with them at table, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them (WORSHIP). Only at that moment did they recognize Jesus; and with their recognition Jesus vanishes from their sight! The followers realized that their hearts were burning within them when Jesus opened the Scriptures to them. Instead of continuing their journey home to Emmaus, they immediately return to Jerusalem to spread the good news (MISSION) of Jesus’ resurrection to the eleven and those that were with them (COMMUNITY).

The encounter with the risen Jesus *changed* them.

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, may we allow Jesus to accompany us on our journey of faith. May we all be open to hearing God’s Word, sharing in his sacrifice by celebrating the Eucharist with our parish family, and serving Jesus by serving others in our families and communities!

## Program Components

### Online Virtual Learning (WORD)

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish is committed to the safety and well-being of children and their families. To best serve the concerns of our parents, we have decided to offer an online/virtual learning program **for children entering Grades 1-8 in September** for the 2020-2021 catechetical year.

**Parents are encouraged to work with their children.**

#### Google Classroom

We are planning to use **Google Classroom** as the platform to place all learning session instructions, assignments, assessments and other materials. Please note that each *family* will need a single Gmail email address to access Google Classroom. **Please set up this Gmail address before registering online!**

#### Pflaum Publishing Materials

The online/virtual learning program will include the **Pflaum Gospel Weeklies e-books**. It will be complemented by hardcopy *Pflaum* materials that will be distributed to each child so there is the option of reading from the online *e-books* or the hardcopy materials. Many parents have expressed the desire to reduce the amount of screen time for their children and to have something in hand that may better engage the children.

The **Pflaum Gospel Weeklies** is a program with content that flows from each Sunday’s Gospel. The families learn their faith within the rhythms and seasons of the liturgical (Church) year.

Anchored by each Sunday's Gospel, the lessons provide a liturgical catechesis that connects the Gospel to doctrine, using current events, interesting activities, thought-provoking discussion questions, and examples of real young people making a difference in the world.

### **Benefits of the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies***

- Children and families will spend time coming to know Jesus Christ and his teachings
- The materials have a simple structure, understandable language and are doable for families!
- The materials connect the Gospels to Church teachings and doctrine
- The materials help the family apply the Gospel teaching to their everyday lives
- The materials include online assessments
- The materials are grouped by grade levels, each with an age-appropriate and specific focus: *Promise* Grade 1; *Good News* Grades 2-3; *Venture* Grades 4-6; *Visions* Grades 7-8
- Since each grade-level lesson is based on the Sunday Gospel, every child in a family will be working on the same Gospel theme allowing for one family discussion about the gospel
- Guidelines for family discussion on the Gospel are provided

From October through May, there will be *Gospel Weeklies* lessons for every Sunday of the month but the assignments for each Sunday will vary.

### **Zoom or Google Meet Gatherings**

The online/virtual learning program will also require that the children participate in periodic ZOOM or Google Meet sessions either for prayer, for brief learning sessions or as a review for information learned. Parents are invited to attend these sessions too! It is likely these will be scheduled on Sunday mornings after the 9:30 am to keep in line with what would have been our usual schedule. However, **final details and times of these sessions is to be determined.**

### **Sunday Mass Attendance (WORSHIP)**

The Mass is the central, communal and most beautiful act of worship of Almighty God. It is a precious treasure of our Church that has been part of its living tradition for almost 2000 years.

Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper on the night before He died. Gathered with His disciples, Jesus told them that He eagerly desired to eat this Passover meal with them. He taught them the importance of **humble service** through washing their feet. Then He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and, **through His divine power, transformed it into His own body, blood, soul and divinity.** He told them, "Whoever eats this bread and drinks this blood will have eternal life." He then instructed them to, "**Do this in memory of me.**" Since that day, the Church has carried out Jesus' command.

Attending Mass is essential to the formation of faith. It is our loving response to the God who has loved us first. The love God has for us connotes action, a self-gift. The love we want to have for God is a self-gift in return, of our time, energy, worries, hopes and joy. The Mass is the best place to thank God for the gift of Himself and for the other gifts that He gives us - life, family, friends, faith and love.

**We request that you attend weekly Sunday Mass with your children** to honor, praise and thank God within the community of His Church, to listen to His Word, to witness and participate in the miracle of the Eucharist, and to show Jesus that we love him and need him.

**Parents are encouraged to attend weekly Sunday Mass with their children either in Immaculate Conception Church (if you feel comfortable) -OR- via the live-streamed 9:30am Sunday Mass.**

Currently, the **maximum number of people permitted to attend each Mass is 100 persons** which is 25% of the total capacity of Immaculate Conception Church. Please see the [Parish Bulletin](#) to see the current average attendance for each Mass.

When attending Mass, all must adhere to the following safety and social distancing measures:

- Wear a face mask
- Enter through the front doors of Immaculate Conception Church (doors propped open)
- Maintain six feet of social distancing
- Sit in designated pews
- Avoid physical contact at the Sign of Peace
- Maintain six-foot distancing in the Communion line
- Receive Holy Communion in the hand
- Exit the Church in an organized manner maintaining six-foot distancing

### **Service/Outreach (MISSION)**

The word “mission” comes from the Latin word “*mittere*,” which means “to send.” At the end of Mass, we are “sent” into the world to love and serve the Lord. For the baptized and the Church, the term “mission” refers to **being sent to accomplish God’s mission.**

Through the **Sacraments of Initiation** (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), each of us is **empowered for mission.** We are sent forth from the baptismal waters to “walk always as a child of the light” and to keep the flame of faith alive in our hearts. In Baptism we put on Christ and are joined to His mission. In Confirmation, we are strengthened with the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit; and each week as we celebrate the Eucharist we are nourished with the body and blood of Jesus and **sent forth to love and serve the Lord in others.**

The curriculum will offer some opportunities to perform acts of service and outreach but this year we are **looking to our families to initiate, spearhead and share some projects where our families can become engaged!**

### **In-Person Gatherings (COMMUNITY)**

We are scheduling other liturgical services which will be held in Immaculate Conception Church and grade-level gatherings that will be held in Madonna Hall.

At all times safety and social distancing guidelines will be implemented to ensure the well-being of the children and families. These gatherings are subject to change based on any further restrictions imposed by the State of NJ and the Archdiocese of Newark.

**We recognize that some families may not be comfortable with sending their children to these gatherings.**

## Program Guidelines and Expectations

### Family Commitment

For our Family Faith Formation Program to be successful, we do need full and active participation from each family in their home environment.

Parents will be expected to:

- ♥ Ensure that their children regularly attend Sunday Mass or virtually attend the live-streamed 9:30am Mass on Sundays
- ♥ Be an active part of their children's faith formation and learning by praying with them and sharing their own faith through family discussions on the Gospel readings
- ♥ Ensure that their children are completing the weekly lessons with the best efforts possible
- ♥ Ensure that their children submit any assignments/assessments in a timely manner to the Family Faith Office
- ♥ Ensure that their children participate in any scheduled Zoom gatherings
- ♥ Open and read emails sent by the Family Faith Office and emails
- ♥ Attend any online/virtual Zoom Parent Meetings that may be scheduled throughout the year
- ♥ Open and read emails sent by the Family Faith Office

Children will be expected to:

- Listen to their parents and cooperate with their parents when doing the lessons
- Willingly attend Mass, either in Church or virtually, bringing an attitude of gratitude to God for all He has blessed them with in their life
- Pray daily
- Complete their weekly lessons with the best efforts possible and submit them on time

We also expect families – parents and children – to share their time and talent with the Family Faith Program by volunteering when the opportunities arise!

### Attendance, Accountability and Timeliness

This year attendance will be taken based on the completion of assignments that are handed in on a timely basis (late assignments will be marked absent). This is necessary to keep everyone on track and moving along in the Church year. By nature of the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*, there is a timeliness to the material as it corresponds to the Church year with its changing seasons.

Attendance will also be taken based on participation in any ZOOM gatherings.

## Sacramental Preparation: First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

### When does sacramental preparation begin?

A child must have been baptized and attended and completed one full year of a faith formation or religious education program before beginning preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

Enrollment in the sacrament preparation process may be delayed due to excessive absences and/or missed years of attendance.

Children traditionally enroll in the Faith Formation Program in 1st grade and First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are generally celebrated in 2nd grade. Preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist happens in addition to regular Faith Formation learning sessions.

### When will the sacramental celebrations take place?

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are currently planning to celebrate the **Sacrament of Reconciliation during the season of Lent in 2021** (February-March) and **First Eucharist in Fall 2021** for the eligible children. Dates are still to be determined.

### Preparation Guidelines

Guidelines will be outlined and presented to parents once the registration process has closed. There will be a Parent Meeting to discuss the sacramental preparation process. Details forthcoming.

## Communication

Communication between the Family Faith Office and the family is essential. We also rely on you to keep us informed of important developments in your family life that affect our ability to serve you.

We will communicate with families through various means: Google Classroom platform, Email and the Parish Bulletin

## Volunteer – Share your time and talent

The current pandemic has opened the door to new ways of doing things! We anticipate needing help in these areas:

- **Check in attendees** at sacramental celebrations or in-person gatherings
- **Usher attendees** at sacramental celebrations or in-person gatherings
- **\*Catechist (in a NEW way) for example:**
  - **Video record a Story**
  - **Video record a brief Catechetical Lesson**
  - **Zoom Grade Catechist** – Lead a brief Catechetical Lesson on a live Zoom Gathering
  - **Zoom Attendance Helper** – Co-host a Zoom gathering and take attendance, help manage

\*Note: Come in to the Family Faith Office to record; materials provided... let's talk!

As we move through the year, new needs may arise! We will communicate those opportunities through the Google Classroom platform or Email.

## FAMILY FAITH FORMATION REGISTRATION

### Who can Register for the Family Faith Formation Program?

The Family Faith Formation Program is offered to families who are *registered* parishioners, who *participate* in the sacramental life of the church, most especially the Sunday Eucharist, and who *actively participate* in parish life either *financially* (through online *E-Giving* or the use of *Envelopes*) or by taking an active role as *volunteers* sharing your time and talents with others in our parish community.

If you are not a registered parishioner of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish, you may call the Parish Office at 973-744-5650 for more information. The parishioner registration form may be found at: <https://www.montclaircatholics.org/registration/>.

### Registration Fees

The registration fees for Family Faith Formation 2020-2021 remain the same as last year:

- One Child \$200
- Two Children \$240
- Three or more Children \$275

### Documents

For each child enrolled in our Family Faith program, the parents/guardians must provide a copy of the child's baptismal certificate and records of any other Sacraments. If your child was baptized at Immaculate Conception Church or Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, there is no need to supply the copies as we have the celebrations recorded in our sacramental books.

Families transferring from another parish should provide documentation stating their children's participation and attendance in their former parish's faith formation/religious education program.

### Online Registration

Online registration will run from **August 10, 2020 through September 15, 2020**.

**Late registrations will not be accepted.**

Full payment is expected at the time of online registration and may be made with a credit/debit card or online banking account. If you prefer to register in person, please call ahead to the Family Faith Office at 973-744-5650 or send an email to [familyfaith@montclaircatholics.org](mailto:familyfaith@montclaircatholics.org).

**By registering for the program, it is assumed that you have read this handbook and agree to comply with the Program Guidelines and Expectations (Family Commitment; Attendance, Accountability and Timeliness).**

### Online Registration Link (click on link)

<https://giving.ncsservices.org/App/Form/2e1179d0-4c44-4182-aef5-137cdf9563a3>