

St. Agnes Children's Faith Formation Program

Family Handbook



"God always knocks at the door of hearts. He likes to do this. It comes from God's heart.

But, do you know what God likes best?

*To knock on the doors of families and find families that are united,
to find families that love each other,
to find the families that bring up their children and
educate them and help them to keep going forward and that
create a society of goodness, of truth, and of beauty."*

- Pope Francis

St Agnes Catholic Community

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WELCOME

Dear Parents and Children,

Thank you for choosing St. Agnes to grow in faith with your children! The catechetical team and I hope this handbook will provide you with valuable information about St. Agnes' Children's Faith Formation (CFF) Program. It is important that you read it and discuss it with your family. After you have done so, please sign and return the insert to Grace at the Parish Office.

We ask you to keep this handbook in a convenient place and to refer to it as needed. We welcome any questions you have and look forward to serving you and your family.

Sincerely,

Grace Salceanu
Director, Children's Faith Formation

Office Information

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PHILOSOPHY

St. Agnes believes that catechetical ministry is a share in Jesus' own mission of proclaiming the Reign of God. Catechesis is that activity which enables faith to become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction—especially sharing God's Word in Scripture and sharing the tradition of the Catholic Church. Catechesis is a life-long process for each individual as well as the work of the entire Catholic Christian community.

The Church teaches that the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of the children rest first and foremost with the parents. Parents may share this responsibility with others, but they do not relinquish it.

The Church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the ministry of catechesis. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that those catechized (children, youth, adults) can understand. Catechists must do more than merely teach about the faith. They help children/youth build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the Word, building a sense of community, leading to prayer and worship, encouraging loving service to others and through the example of their own lives.

Our catechists are all volunteers, from many walks of life. They are people who have answered a call to minister to our children/youth and who have prepared themselves in a variety of ways to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is important enough to share.

In conclusion, the catechetical process seeks to open children/youth to the discovery of the goodness and beauty of God as reflected in themselves and their world, and help them to experience this world within the Catholic Christian community. It seeks to help them grow further in their faith, hope and love; the understanding of and commitment to our catholic tradition, our personal relationship with Christ nurtured by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

GOALS

The goals of the Children's Faith Formation Program at St. Agnes are:

- To cultivate a personal relationship with God and an ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ, the Center of our Christian life
- Full participation in the life and mission of the Catholic Community

PARENTS' ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Our staff is eager to work with parents/guardians to help them fulfill this responsibility and asks each parent's cooperation in the following ways:

- Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your children/youth. The schedule is as follows:
 - Saturday – 4:00pm
 - Sunday – 8:30am, 10:30am with Children's Liturgy of the Word, and 6:00pm
- Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- Share your faith and what it means to you with your children.
- Pray with your children and help them learn and memorize the traditional prayers of the Church such as, the Our Father and Hail Mary.
- Attend all parent meetings.
- Familiarize yourself with the scheduled catechetical sessions and events for your children/youth.
- Read and act promptly on all communication from the Children's Faith Formation Program.
- Assure your children's punctual and regular attendance at all sessions.
- Become a CFF teacher/volunteer!

CHILD'S ROLE

Children also have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the catechetical sessions at St. Agnes. They are expected to:

- Be respectful of the catechist and other children.
- Listen carefully, follow directions, and participate in the session activities.
- Complete homework assigned, and share what they have learned and experienced with their families.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

St. Agnes welcomes all children and youth, baptized or not, to participate in the Children's Faith Formation (CFF) Program.

GRADES 1-8: CFF sessions are held from mid-September through early May on Sunday mornings from 9:15 – 10:15am.

CFF for Children/Youth with Disabilities is provided in regular or specialized religious instruction, particularly with regard to preparation for the sacraments. Please contact the Director regarding the specific needs of your child/youth.

GRADE LEVEL THEMES

In order to provide a complete catechesis appropriate to children, St. Agnes uses the following Lectionary based catechetical series:

Grades 1-6: [Pflaum Gospel Weeklies](#)

Grade 1 – *Good News*

Grade 2 – *Good News*

Grade 3 – *Good News*

Grade 4 – *Venture*

Grade 5 – *Venture*

Grade 6 – *Venture*

Grades 7-8: [Called to be Catholic](#) and [Confirmed in the Spirit](#) - Loyola Press; *Have Faith* – 23rd Publications; [Sunday Prayer for Teens](#) – Liturgy Training Publications

A calendar of all program dates is given to parents at the Orientation Session at the beginning of the new program.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The first step in the sacramental preparation process for new families is a meeting with the Coordinator of the program. All parents are expected to assist in the sacramental participation of their children and to attend the parent meetings for this purpose.

FIRST EUCHARIST (FIRST COMMUNION): Preparation is a one-year process beginning in the second grade. *** Parents of children preparing for the sacraments of First Eucharist and First Reconciliation join their children in the sessions beginning in January. ***

Sessions are also available for older children who would like to prepare for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation.

FIRST RECONCILIATION: Children are prepared to celebrate this sacrament before they receive their First Eucharist; **Text used:** *Growing Up Catholic – Reconciliation & Eucharist*, © PastoralPlanning.com 2008. All rights reserved. Visit www.GrowingUpCatholic.com

CONFIRMATION: Preparation is a two-year program for young teens. **Text used:** *Loyola Press – Called to be Catholic* and *Confirmed in the Spirit*.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN is a process for children above the age of 8 (for St. Agnes) who are not yet baptized in another Christian tradition. It requires full participation of the parents. Children who complete this process will receive the three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

INFANT/YOUNG CHILDREN'S BAPTISM: Baptism upon completion of the Parent Baptism Preparation Program. Contact the Parish Office at 415-487-8560 for more information.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORLD: Is celebrated year-round during the 10:30am Mass for children already in school - Grades K-6. After the Opening Prayer children who are attending Mass are invited to come forward and join a catechist to read the scriptures of the day and talk about the readings in the Chapel of St. Agnes Church. The children will rejoin the community during the offertory collection, in time for the Eucharistic prayer and communion.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A. REGISTRATION

All families currently registered are invited to register online and newcomers to the parish are asked to call the Rectory so that we can properly welcome your family into the community!

B. FEES

These fees help us cover the expenses of books, materials, and refreshments for the year. Scholarships are available and financial need should not stop anyone from participating. Everyone is entitled to catechesis regardless of their ability to pay registration fees.

Children's Faith Formation Classes

One Child	\$150.00
Two Children	\$200.00
Three+ Children	\$245.00

First Reconciliation & First Eucharist (Communion): \$200/child*

Confirmation: Year 1: \$150/child; Year 2: \$200/child**

**This includes the cost of the photographer*

***This includes the cost of the retreat*

To register as a non-parishioner, there will be an additional fee of \$50/child.

C. BAPTISMAL INFORMATION

A baptismal certificate is required for all children who are preparing to celebrate First Reconciliation / Eucharist and Confirmation or who are being registered for the first time.

D. CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE

Please notify the catechetical office of any change of address or telephone number (work or Home) immediately so that the catechetical staff will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your child/youth.

E. EMERGENCY CARDS

Each child/youth must have an emergency card on file in the office. Please see that the information listed on the card is kept accurate at all times.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY

When you register in our Children's Faith Formation program, your family will be added to the catechetical database. The CFF Office will not release any information about you or your family to any individual or special interest group without your permission.

F. ALLERGIES AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

Please notify your child's teacher in writing of any medical condition/allergies, or special learning needs that we should be aware of. If your child has special learning needs, please share with your child's teacher how your child best learns and how those needs can be met.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Supervision is provided up to 10 minutes before and after the catechetical session. Children/youth should not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before their session.

At the end of the session, children should wait in their classrooms for their parents to pick them up. All children/youth should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after being dismissed.

A. BY CAR

Children/youth should be accompanied to their classroom on the 3rd floor of the Mark Salkind Athletic & Academic Center at 1639 Oak Street. Parents must sign children in and out of CFF sessions. We strongly recommend parents park at the John Adams lot of CCSF on the corner of Masonic and Hayes so that parishioners attending the 8:30am Mass do not get blocked in tandem parking in the garage.

B. BY FOOT

Parents/guardians should establish a safe route to and from the parish with their children/youth. When children enter or leave parish grounds on foot, they must use the marked crosswalks.

Roller blades or skateboards are not permitted on parish grounds.

ATTENDANCE

A. ABSENCES

Promptness and attendance at every class is important for the sake of continued understanding and for the development of faith in our children. If it is necessary that your child/youth miss a session, please alert the CFF coordinator or catechist in advance. If your child cannot attend on a regular basis, please call and discuss the situation with the Director.

B. VISITORS

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child's catechetical session.

OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Off-site activities such as service projects and retreats may occasionally be scheduled by the Director. No child/youth may go on an off-site activity unless a completed permission form signed by a parent or guardian has been submitted to the Director's office. Separate permission forms are required for each off-site activity unless it is a progressive learning session held at the same site.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Parents/guardians and CFF staff work in partnership in helping children/youth grow in faith, therefore good communication is essential. If a parent/guardian wishes to talk to a catechist they may do so after the session or they may make an appointment with the catechist by calling the Director's office. Parents/guardians may also email, call the Director at (415) 487-8560 x 225, email Grace@SaintAgnesSF.com or make an appointment to visit.

Catechists and/or the Director will communicate with parents/guardians by email, phone, mail, or by sending notes home with the children/youth.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

One of the catechist's first concerns is to maintain an atmosphere in which the children/youth can form a community, share faith, and enjoy an optimum-learning environment.

As part of a Catholic Christian learning environment children and youth are expected to:

1. Behave respectfully and courteously toward all catechists, adults, and other children/youth. Inappropriate behavior includes disrespectful verbal and body language.
2. Participate positively and be attentive in the catechetical session.
3. Respect parish property and the property of others.
4. Follow the rules of the program and the class.

Parents/guardians will be called if their child/youth repeatedly disrupts the class session. The Director of Children's Faith Formation, in consultation with the pastor, is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations.

HARASSMENT/PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

St. Agnes Parish believes in the sanctity and integrity of all persons: that we are all created in God's image and are of inestimable value. Any form of harassment is completely contrary to this belief and St. Agnes is committed to providing an environment free of harassment. As mandated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, teachers and any adults who work with children, volunteer or paid follow by the *Archdiocesan Policies and Procedures Regarding Child Abuse and Harassment, Guidelines with regards to Ministry with Minors*.

From former Archbishop, George Niederauer: *"Beginning in the school year 2008/2009, I promulgated new programs for children and teens in our Catholic Schools and in our parish Religious Education programs:*

- *Talking About Touching* K - 3rd Grade
- *Shield the Vulnerable(online training)* 4th-5th Grades
- *Shield the Vulnerable(online training)* 6th-8th Grades
- *Shield the Vulnerable(online training)* 9th-12th Grades

We affirm parents as the first educators of their children. All of the above programs have opportunities for parent involvement. So, we encourage parents to take the online KID SAFETY training course with their children or at a separate time."

Letter from Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone on the Protection of Children

My Dear People,

Protecting children and youth is an important part of our mission of preaching the good news. It is one of the ways we practice the commandment of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you." I am pleased to report that year after year we successfully complete an audit of our Child and Youth Protection programs done by Stonebridge Business Partners, a national compliance audit firm acting on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Passing such an audit reflects the quality of the programs to be sure, but most of all, it reflects the commitment, dedication and hard work of all the adults involved with children in our parishes and schools. I am grateful for your support.

In June of 2002, the Bishops of the U.S. signed the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," and have reaffirmed their commitment to that charter regularly in the years since then. I pledge my personal commitment to the Charter and to the maintenance of programs to ensure the safety of all children entrusted to the care of the Church. We will continue to provide training and background evaluation for adults and training for all of our children, as evidence shows this process is working.

We also have outreach programs in place to support the survivors of abuse and their families and this support will continue. My prayers are with all of our parents, educators, and other adults concerned for the safety of children. May God richly bless each of you.

Yours in Our Lord,

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco

EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURES

The safety of the students and catechetical staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well-being of both students and staff members. In case of emergency/natural disaster the Emergency Procedure Plan will be followed.

In the case of an emergency/natural disaster, catechists will remain with the children until either a parent or designated person picks the children up. A checkout system will be provided for parents/guardians to sign out their child.

A. MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT/SUDDEN SICKNESS

In the case of accident or sudden sickness, the Director or catechist will give appropriate care and notify the parents/guardians. No medication may be given by the Director of Children's Faith Formation or teachers without written parental consent.

B. CHILD ABUSE

As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect, or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

C. CHILD PROTECTION

St. Agnes Parish is committed to the protection and safety of all children entrusted to its care. During all scheduled parish activities/programs, at least two adults are required to be present. As mandated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, teachers and any adults who work with children, volunteer or paid, are required to be background checked and follow the Archdiocesan Policies and Procedures Regarding Child Abuse and Harassment and participate in a Child Protection Workshop, Virtus.

D. DANGEROUS MATERIALS

The Coordinator or designated persons have the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of the participants of the catechetical program. This includes the right to inspect property of any individual suspected of possessing alcohol, drugs, weapons or other illegal materials. If alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons or other dangerous materials are found, parents/guardians, the pastor and public safety officials will be notified as appropriate.

E. GANGS

The parish catechetical program is a gang-free environment. No evidence of gangs or gang-related activities will be tolerated. Persons participating in any gang or gang-related activities while on parish property or in conjunction with program-related activities will be subject in immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

RIGHT TO AMEND

The Director of Children's Faith Formation and the Pastor of St. Agnes have the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

This family handbook has been approved by

Rev. Raymond Allender, S.J.
Pastor of St. Agnes Church

Grace Salceanu
Children's Faith Formation Director

Date : July 15, 2018