

St. James the Less Faith Formation

2017-18



Welcome!

We are blessed to be chosen for your place of religious formation.

Our hope for everyone is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and an understanding of His message to the world.

Through the cooperative effort of parents, catechists, and students, our children and families will grow in their love for God and knowledge of their Catholic faith.

9640 Kennedy Avenue, Highland, In 46322
(219) 924-4220

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WELCOME TO OUR PROGRAM

Welcome to St. James Faith Formation Program!

The children God has given you will grow in their lives and in their faith by the example and encouragement you, as parents, give them.

We, as a parish Faith Formation Program are glad to assist you, but we cannot replace you.

Your example of Christian living, attending Mass, and supporting your church through time, talent, and gift are very important.

Please accept God's call to you to be teachers of the faith to your children.

May God Bless You,
Father Keith, Pastor

Thank you for bringing your child to our Faith Formation Program.

We are looking forward to helping you with the great task of leading your child into a closer relationship with Jesus through the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

Catechists (sharers of the faith) and staff are ready to guide and pray with your child while you are praying with them at home and bringing them to church.

We are looking forward to a blessed year of Peace, Love and Joy!

In Christ's Love,
Emily A. Watroba
Director of Faith Formation

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In the Sacramental Rites of Marriage and Baptism, the Church clearly affirms that parents bear the responsibility to teach and practice the faith with their children.

Parents are the most influential factor in a child's faith formation.

Parents teach by their words, actions, attitudes and example. Prayer and participation in Sunday worship is necessary for children to grasp the essentials of our faith.

All families registered in our Faith Formation program are expected to regularly participate in Saturday/Sunday liturgy (Mass) and, as their schedules allow, other parish activities.

FORMATION PROGRAMS

• **TRADITIONAL**—This program offers a traditional classroom approach to teaching the essentials of the faith. It is taught by a Catechist with the use of a textbook and bible. Our textbook series is based on a spiral curriculum that integrates the fundamental themes of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with Scripture and Catholic Social Teachings. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen. This program provides lessons in the faith and delivers those lessons through experiential activities that encourage lifelong practice. These classes meet once a week for 1½ hours on Mondays at 4:30 or 6:30 pm.

• **GOOD SHEPHERD**—Level I - 3-6 year olds; Level II - grades 1-4; Level III - grades 5-8: *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* began in Rome over fifty years ago and is rooted in the Bible, the Liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori (hands-on learning). Children gather in a room specially prepared for them, called an atrium, which contains simple yet beautiful materials that they use to draw near to God. In the early church, the atrium was the place where Christians prepared to enter more fully into the community of faith. For the child, the atrium is a place of preparation for involvement in the larger worshipping community. More information can be found on www.cgsusa.org. These classes meet once a week on Mondays at 4:30.

• **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**—These sessions are incorporated in both of the programs chosen above. Preparation for the sacraments requires that children have attended at least two consecutive years of prior faith formation before receiving a sacrament, either in a Catholic school or a parish faith formation program. That means in order to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist in 3rd grade, the student would need to attend 1st and 2nd grade. Likewise, to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation in 8th grade, the student would need to attend 6th and 7th. Diocesan Guidelines require all students of the sacraments be taught by certified Catechists. Preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation happens in the 1st semester of 3rd grade. Preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist (3rd grade) and Confirmation (8th grade) happens 2nd semester. ***Sacramental preparation is a special time and should be given the time and emphasis that it deserves. It is required that at least one parent attend each sacramental preparation meeting for which your child is enrolled. It is important you are aware of the proper format so that you can help and reinforce the child's preparation at home.***

Reconciliation Requirements

- ▶ At least two consecutive years of prior faith formation
- ▶ Have received the Sacrament of Baptism
- ▶ Regular attendance at weekend Mass
- ▶ Parent/Student Meeting
- ▶ Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes, which includes six sacrament classes, incorporated to the regular class time chosen
- ▶ “Meet the Priest” question/answer session
- ▶ Reconciliation practice
- ▶ First Reconciliation-celebrated on a Saturday morning in the first semester of 3rd grade

NOTE: If your child has not made their First Reconciliation and is past third grade, please call the director at 924-4220.

FORMATION PROGRAMS

• SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION—con't.

Eucharist Requirements

- ▶ At least two consecutive years of prior faith formation
- ▶ Have received the Sacraments of Baptism and Reconciliation (First Confession)
- ▶ Regular attendance at weekend Mass
- ▶ Parent/Student Meeting
- ▶ Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes, which includes six sacrament classes, incorporated into the regular class time chosen
- ▶ First Communion Practice
- ▶ First Communion—celebrated on a Saturday morning in the second semester of 3rd grade (usually end of April; beginning of May)

NOTE: If your child has not made their First Communion and is past third grade, please call the director at 924-4220.

Confirmation Requirements

Three-year program, beginning in 6th grade and completion in 8th grade

- ▶ At least two consecutive years of prior faith formation
- ▶ Have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist
- ▶ Regular attendance at weekend Mass (*If you go to another church for Mass, please bring their bulletin, signed by the priest, to be turned into the Faith Formation office with your name on it.*)
- ▶ Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes
 - 6th—Learn about God, Jesus, the Church, Sacraments, and Morality in the Old Testament
 - 7th—Learn about Jesus Christ and His Life in the New Testament
 - 8th—Learn about the Church; its History & Doctrine, and the Sacrament of Confirmation*
- ▶ Complete community service as outlined on the next page

These additional requirements are for eighth grade only:

- ▶ Parent/Student Meeting
- ▶ Nine sacrament classes*, incorporated into the regular class time chosen
- ▶ Attend Sponsor & Confirmandi Session
- ▶ Attend Confirmation Retreat
- ▶ Interview with Mrs. Watroba
- ▶ Complete & turn in required documents
- ▶ Confirmation Practice
- ▶ Sacrament of Confirmation—celebrated on a weeknight (usually in May) in the second semester of 8th grade

NOTE: If your child has not made their Confirmation and is past eighth grade—or—if you are an adult, have received your other sacraments, and wish to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, please call the director at 924-4220.

FORMATION PROGRAMS

• SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION—con't.

Community Service Requirements for 6th, 7th & 8th Grade

Candidates should actively serve others; it is important not only to listen and understand the Word of God but also to apply the lessons learned. To serve others is a true gift for both the recipient and the giver. This is essential to following in Jesus' footsteps and living as Catholic. The connection between Confirmation and service is that each confirmed Catholic has a responsibility to serve as a living example of Jesus' teachings to serve one another. This is also an opportunity for the candidates to explore ways in which they can be of service to our parish and to our community at large.

The following are the Community Service Requirements at St. James:

6th Grade: Complete two (2) service projects *

7th Grade: Complete four (4) service projects *

8th Grade: Complete six (6) service projects *

* *Service Projects can be selected from our list or from the outside community. **However, we ask that at least half of the electives are within our parish community (only because we need the help!).** If you do any type of community service outside of St. James, a "Service Project Certification Form" needs to be filled out and signed by the adult supervisor of the activity and turned into the Faith Formation office in order to get credit. Forms are available in the Faith Formation office & online.*

Guidelines:

- ▶ Service should reflect work done beyond the usual chores required at home.
- ▶ Service should primarily be related to the Catholic faith through projects at the parish or in ministry to the poor, disabled, elderly, or homebound.
- ▶ The service should not have financial rewards. *(No payment for services)*
- ▶ House chores are not considered service projects.
- ▶ Service projects should be of at least one hour in duration; some exclusions apply.
- ▶ Service should be done with a willing heart and carried out in a generous spirit.
- ▶ It is the candidate's responsibility to fulfill the service project requirement.

FORMATION PROGRAMS

- **RCIA**—Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This process is for children over 7 who have not been baptized and/or for children older than 3rd grade who have not received their sacraments of Reconciliation or Eucharist, or had any formal instruction. Please call the Director or email dre@stjameshighland.org with any questions.
- **YOUTH MINISTRY**—We would like to have two levels of Youth Ministry here at St. James; consisting of high school students and middle school students in grades 6-8. We are currently looking for adult leaders to fill these positions. Please contact Emily Watroba at 924-4220 if you think you might want to fill one of these areas.
- **ADULT FORMATION**—The General Directory for Catechesis, which is a publication from the Vatican through the bishops, instructs us that Adult Faith Formation is to be a primary focus in each church. It is the ongoing formation that enables the adults to be a better example for the children as well as for others in the community. It is the basis for all other catechesis in the parish. We will be presenting different opportunities for Adult Formation throughout the year, which will be offered & detailed in our parish bulletin.
- **SPECIAL EVENTS**—When people are confirmed, it is not supposed to be the end of their learning about their faith and Church. In an attempt to help all generations continue to learn about the Church and some of her traditions, we will be offering Special Events (e.g. Vacation Bible School, Mardi Gras, St. Joseph's Table, etc.) throughout the year. These events are open to all ages—from little people to senior citizens.

Watch the “Faith Formation News” bulletin board and our parish bulletin for information.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

• **REGISTRATION**—It is *imperative* that we receive your registration **when registration is offered** (last two weeks of classes) in order to be able to order books, place catechists, and get ready for fall. It is required that you **register in person** so that if changes need to be made they can be done immediately and your child will not lose their place in a session. Class choice is on a first come basis, therefore if a class becomes full, another choice will need to be made.

If you find it necessary to change your child's assigned class, you must contact the office as soon as possible. *There will be no changes or registrations accepted the first week of classes.* Any additional changes may only be made in emergency situations; extra-curricular activities are not considered emergencies.

• **SCHEDULE**—While we believe it is important for students to be involved in extra curricular activities (sports, scouts, lessons, etc.), we also believe it is important to be present at formation classes for the entire 1½ hour class time. **IF YOUR CHILD/REN WILL MISS MORE THAN 15 MINUTES OF CLASS TIME, WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT BRING THEM, BUT INSTEAD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO GET THE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT FOR THAT DAY (see "HOMEWORK" policy on page 9).**

Our schedule is as follows:

Monday	4:30—6 pm	K-8 Traditional & Good Shepherd Levels I, II & III
Monday	6:30—8 pm	K-8 Traditional

Faith Formation is in session from September through May.

Check email or texts and www.cancellations.com for class closings due to severe weather.

<u>TUITION</u>—	<u>Before June 1:</u>	<u>After June 1:</u>
	\$ 80.00 for 1 student	\$ 90.00 for 1 student
	\$130.00 for 2 students	\$150.00 for 2 students
	\$160.00 for 3 or more	\$190.00 for 3 or more

A payment plan is offered, if needed, and the first payment is due at registration. All other payments are due on the 15th of the month, September through March.

Non-parishioner tuition is twice the above rate, with half due at registration to reserve a spot. (Non-parishioners, see policy on pg. 8)

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- **AIDES**—For the safety and well-being of adults and children, it is highly recommended and preferred that there be 2 “adults” in each classroom. The aides may be teens or parents; 1 person all year or signed up on a rotating basis.

- **ATTENDANCE**—It is extremely important that children attend each class session. One lesson builds upon the next, thereby expanding knowledge and aiding faith development. Please follow the listed attendance procedures:

—ABSENCE: **All absences should be reported to the Faith Formation Office before 2 pm, if possible**, and will require make-up (see **HOMEWORK policy on page 9**). Any absences not reported will receive a phone call for safety reasons.

Any child having three or more unexcused absences (no homework turned in) will meet with the Director for evaluation to ensure knowledge of subject matter missed.

—ARRIVAL: All students are to enter the building through the main doors of the church no earlier than 10 minutes before class time for safety reasons. Students are to **check in with the adult/director in the vestibule** to make sure their catechist has arrived and to be made aware of any changes.

—DISMISSAL: Parents of children 3 years old through 3rd grade are requested to come into the vestibule to pick them up. Fourth grade and older will be dismissed from their rooms and proceed to their rides. If you are carpooling, please make sure that all children know who is picking them up. **PLEASE BE PROMPT WHEN PICKING UP YOUR CHILD/REN.** They become distressed being the last one picked up. If you won't make it in time, please call us so we can keep them in the office and assure them someone is on the way.

—**LATE ARRIVALS/EARLY DEPARTURES ARE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED, UNLESS IT IS AN EMERGENCY.** They are very disruptive to the class, and the child misses out on the opening or closing parts of the lesson. It is for this reason we have set up the homework policy (page 9). If this is a continuing problem for you and your child, perhaps you need to sign up for a different session time.

For those families who decide it is absolutely necessary for their child/ren to arrive late or depart early, you must notify the Faith Formation office beforehand. For early departures, a parent/guardian must come in and sign them out. If the student will miss more than 15 minutes, homework will be given.

Late Arrivals (Tardies)—Any child arriving late (after the adult has left the vestibule) must stop at the office for a “Late Pass” in order to be admitted to class. *If a child is late three times, it will be counted as one unexcused absence.*

POLICIES & PROCEDURES, con't.

• **CELEBRATIONS**—The Catechist has the right to decide whether or not they will have a Christmas celebration as a class and whether or not they will have an end-of-the-year party. If they decide to have one and ask you to send something, please be attentive to the items that are requested. He/she will make a list of items desired based on the allergies or health conditions of the youth in Faith Formation.

BIRTHDAYS—*Optional*—If your child would like to celebrate a birthday with his/her class by bringing in treats, please check with their Catechist so they can inform you of any allergies and so arrangements can be made to have the treats in a non-carpeted area.

• **CLASS CANCELLATION**—Cancellations due to weather or other circumstances will be sent by text (with your permission) or by email, and posted on www.cancellations.com.

• **COMMUNICATION**—Communication between parents and the Faith Formation Office is very important in order for our program to run smoothly. We do our best to inform you of everything that is happening. **See EMAIL on page 9. We also ask that any problems or concerns be directed to our office. If we do not know the problem, we cannot provide a solution.**

• **CUSTODY POLICY**—In the event of a separation or divorce of parents, it will be assumed that both parents have access to the child/children. If this is not the case, a copy of a court order stating otherwise must be provided.

• **DISCIPLINE**—Your child is expected to conduct him or herself in a manner which shows respect for his/her trained catechist and staff, fellow students and the property he/she uses.

a) If your child exhibits uncontrollable behavior, he/she will be removed from class to spend the rest of the time in the Faith Formation office.

b) If this situation occurs twice and it appears that we have an unchanging behavioral problem, the child will not be readmitted to class until a conference with the parent, child and Director takes place to determine what would be the best learning environment for the child.

Students are PROHIBITED from bringing in any item that does NOT pertain to Faith Formation class. This includes toys, phones, or any other electronics. See page 9.

• **DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE**—Saint James Faith Formation does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, or physical/mental disabilities. We are willing to assist parents in any special needs situation. If we are not prepared to handle the need adequately, we will direct parents to programs within the Diocese of Gary addressing those needs.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES, con't.

- **DRESS CODE**—It is expected that children and adults will dress appropriately, reflecting good taste and proper modesty while attending sessions, prayer services in Church, and any other Church-related activities. **PLEASE FOLLOW THE DRESS CODE IMPLEMENTED BY YOUR SCHOOL.**

Students referred to the office for a dress code violation will be asked to fix the problem. They may be supplied with alternate, acceptable clothing to wear for class. If the problem cannot be resolved, parents will be contacted & asked to bring a change of clothing to the church.

- **ELECTRONICS**—All electronic devices should be left at home. The office phone is available if there is a need. ***If these items are brought in, they will be confiscated and not returned until the child's parent comes to the Faith Formation office to collect them.***

- **EMAIL**—We use email for our main method of communication. ***THEREFORE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE US WITH AN EMAIL ADDRESS if you have one. All emails are sent by “blind carbon copy” (no one will be able to see your email address). This information will not be shared with anyone.*** To contact us by email, please do not use the church's general email (stjames4220@sbcglobal.net). That one is not checked on a daily basis. Please contact Emily at dre@stjameshighland.org or Lori at loriv@stjameshighland.org.

- **FACULTY**—All Catechists have completed a criminal background check and have completed or are in the process of completing the required Diocesan, “Protecting God's Children” program. They are also working towards or have attained Basic Formation status under the Diocesan policy on religious education certification. Catechists are instructed in such areas as theology, the Bible, discipline and teaching techniques.

- **HEALTH PROBLEMS/MEDICATION**—It is the parents' responsibility to give notice of any health problem or special need that may exist. We will NOT dispense medication to any student. If a child requires medication during class time, the parents must come to the office and dispense the medication themselves. Do not send medication with the child instructing them to take it when needed. Any special situations will be addressed on an individual basis.

- **HOMEWORK**—***HANDLED BY THE FAITH FORMATION OFFICE, NOT THE CATECHIST.*** You have the option of having the homework emailed to you. This means you will need to print it out for the student to complete and return to us. Other options are to send it home with a sibling or pick it up. When the homework is completed (preferably by the time they return), we are asking that the child hand it into the Faith Formation Office. **All homework is due no later than TWO WEEKS from the date of absence. Homework will be checked and returned to students as excused. If a child has 3 or more unexcused absences, he/she will meet with the director to be evaluated to ensure knowledge of subject matter missed.** We will be keeping a record of homework turned in. By having this plan in effect, we will be helping your child stay current with the others in class and not be confused when they return. Many times previous lessons are reviewed in order to set the theme for the new lesson.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES, con't.

- **NEW STUDENTS**—Those students who are new or transferring from another program must provide records of any sacraments they have received (Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation) **unless** received at St. James. A transfer form is needed from any program previously attended. This will keep our records up-to-date and accurate.

NO SACRAMENT MAY BE RECEIVED WITHOUT A BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE ON FILE AT ST. JAMES. If you have the original at home, we can make a copy for our files. If you do not have a copy at home, this can be obtained by calling the parish of Baptism. They can mail or fax it to us.

- **NON-PARISHIONERS**—We need a letter from your parish pastor giving you permission to attend our program. If it is a sacramental year (generally 3rd or 8th grade), we also need permission for your child/ren to receive sacraments here. This may mean that you will be getting a second letter from your pastor. **The child/ren cannot begin classes until we receive the pastor's letter.** Enrollment for non-parishioners is based on availability. Non-parishioners can register at our registration time but will be placed after parishioner's children are placed. The tuition is twice the parishioner rate.

If you decide after placing your family in St. James the Less Faith Formation Program that you want to become a member of the parish, the expectation is that you will be an active participating parishioner, using your time, talent & gift in order to support St. James Parish.

- **PARKING LOT SAFETY**—**For the safety of everyone, please drive slow, be careful, and use extra caution when driving or walking in the church parking lot. It is expected you will obey the stop sign, 15 mph speed limit, and any directions given by our on duty parking lot personnel.**

- **PRAYERS**—In the child's folder, there will be a list of prayers that the children should be learning by grade. It will outline prayers that should be talked about & memorized when children understand the meaning of each prayer. Memorization should only come after the children have an age appropriate understanding.

As the children advance in age/grade, they need to keep in mind the prayers from the years before; for example, children in third grade should still be able to make the sign of the cross and say the Glory Be prayer that they learned in kindergarten, in addition to the prayers from first and second grade.

- **TEXT MESSAGING**—Providing we have your permission (signed & dated form), we will be using text messaging in case of emergencies, class cancellations, and for other pertinent reminders. At registration, we ask for the Text Message Permission Form to be signed and dated as to whether or not you would like to use this form of communication for the above mentioned reasons.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Faith Formation program. Their service is essential to passing on the Catholic Faith to the youth of our parish. In addition to adult volunteers, we welcome high school students needing community service.

We have a number of volunteer opportunities available, including the following:

Catechists
Substitute Catechists
Classroom Aides
Hall Monitors
Parking Lot Monitors

All volunteers (18 years & older) are required by the Diocese to complete VIRTUS TRAINING, beginning with a 3-hour workshop on "Protecting God's Children," which will be offered at St. James.

PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING—IT CAN'T HAPPEN WITHOUT YOU!



WEBSITE INFORMATION

Church website: www.stjameshighland.org

Touch Faith Formation to show drop down menu & then click on link.

Faith Formation **Office Hours**, **Class Times**, & **Staff Email** on Faith Formation home page.

Current available links:

Staff/Hours/Contact

Adult Formation

Calendar

Confirmation — Confirmation Requirements for 6-7-8 graders
Community Service Requirements for 6-7-8 graders
Service Projects List
Service Project Certification Form
Choosing Your Sponsor
Sponsor Eligibility Certificate
Patron Saint Report
Patron Saint Listing
Patron Saints by Month
Letter to Mrs. Watroba
Personal Creed

Handbook

Ongoing Donations

Prayer Schedule/Prayers

Programs Offered

RCIA

Registration

Sacraments — Sacramental Preparation
Reconciliation Requirements
Eucharist Requirements
Confirmation Requirements for 6-7-8 graders

Special Events

Volunteers

Youth Ministry

Feel free to explore the rest of the church website.
If you don't find what you are looking for on the web, give us a call.

Office Hours:

SEPTEMBER—MAY

Monday-Friday: 9:30 am-4:30 pm
& while classes are in session

SUMMER HOURS:

By Appointment Only

Pastor:

Rev. Keith M. Virus

Director:

Emily A. Watroba
dre@stjameshighland.org

Secretary:

Lori Vetroczy
loriv@stjameshighland.org