

The Church of Saint Benedict

Avon, Minnesota

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Faith Formation Policies /
Handbook 2019 – 2020

Table of Contents

- I. Introductions Page 3**
- II. Registration Page 4**
- III. Tuition Page 4**
- IV. Program Requirements Page 5**
- V. Classes and Class Times Page 6**
- VI. Youth Ministry Page 7**
- VII. Attendance Page 7**
- VIII. Behavioral Expectations Page 7**
- IX. Baptism Page 8**
- X. Sacraments Page 8**
- XI. Community Meal Page 8**
- XII. Volunteering Page 8**
- XIII. Adult Opportunities Page 9**
- XIV. Communication Page 9**
- XV. Fundraising Page 9**
- XVI. Parking Lot Page 9**
- XVII. Safe Environment and Background Check Compliance Page 10**
- XVIII. Student and Parent Review of Policies Page 11**
- XIX. Calendar Page 12**

I. Introductions



Greetings and welcome! My name is Jason Prigge and I'm happy to be serving the parish community of St. Benedict for my sixth year as the Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, and Music Director. The past five years have truly been a blur but nothing short of amazing. Without a doubt I believe that we have an amazing program but even better kids. I love watching the real Jesus come alive in their hearts and watching the life-long relationship with Christ develop. It is my absolute goal and mission to be able to share my faith and to pass down to our young people what a personal relationship with Jesus looks and feels like and I do this by building relationships and connections. My two main philosophies are the following:

1. Before any curriculum is to be taught, we must build trust and a relationship. If we don't build trust or a relationship, what does one actually learn?
2. If I invest in my students and show real, authentic interest into their life – odds are they will do the same.

While I'm not in the office I love spending time with my family (Brittany, AJ, and Addison), traveling, music and Baseball, especially Baseball. I look forward to an incredible year with you and your students. If there is anyway, I can help, clear the air or minister to your family, please let me know. I'm thrilled to be serving you.

My regular office hours are: Wednesdays from 11:00 – 10:30 PM and or Thursdays from 9:00 – 9:00 PM.

Feel free to contact me anytime to set up an appointment or a meeting as my schedule will fluctuate often due to my many roles. My phone number is: 320.356.0763 (Call or text).

Hi, my name is Alaina Laing and I am the Ministry Assistant here at the Church of St. Benedict! While pursuing my dream of working in a parish I am going into my third year of college at St. Cloud State working towards my major in Elementary Education. In my spare time you can find me spending time with my family and friends, reading, hiking, playing piano or singing. I am looking forward to a great year getting to know you all and working with you and your family. If you ever need anything or have any questions don't hesitate to give me a call or text me at 320.356.0306.



Faith Formation Committee Members

Below are the ten members who make up our Faith Formation Committee. Each member serves on a three-year term. The Faith Formation Committee meets once a month, on the third Monday, from 5:35 – 6:30 pm in the Faith Formation Office.

Dana Crumley	Ann Fisher	Amy Kramer	Eric Larson
Sarah Middendorf	Kim Richter	Gary Schmitz	Michelle Sininger
Alexis Studniski	Beth Willenbring		

II. Registration

Families wishing to be enrolled in Faith Formation **must** be registered members at The Church of St. Benedict or one of the other parishes within our Area Catholic Community (Seven Dolores, St. Anthony, or St. Martin). If families are not a member of these four parishes, admittance may still be accepted upon meeting with the Faith Formation Staff (please see **Tuition** section of this handbook). It is expected that all students wishing to be a part of the Faith Formation program be formally registered. All students must have current emergency contact and allergy information on file. Those not formally registered will not be allowed to join a class.

Faith Formation registration is available online beginning August 15th at:

www.stbenedictavon.org/faith-formation

If you are unable to register online, please come to the Faith Formation Office (door #6).

III. Tuition

No student will ever be denied into the Faith Formation program for any financial reason. Tuition is to be paid online upon submitting the official registration form or by writing a check. Please note that students will **not** be enrolled unless payment has been received or arrangements have been made with the Faith Formation Office.

Our tuition is as follows*:

Parishioners (please see **Registration** section of this handbook)

Date Range	Per Family Without Sacraments	Per Family With Sacraments (Grades 2 and 11)
August 15 – September 1	\$85.00	\$120.00
September 2 – September 15	\$100.00	\$140.00
After September 16	\$125.00	\$160.00

Non-Parishioner

Date Range	Per Family Without Sacraments	Per Family With Sacraments (Grades 2 and 11)
August 15 – September 1	\$100.00	\$140.00
September 2 – September 15	\$125.00	\$160.00
After September 16	\$150.00	\$180.00

Please contact the Faith Formation Office to make any special payment arrangements.

*Please note that if you choose not to volunteer within our program, there will be a \$200 charge on top of the tuition prices listed above. Those who choose to become Catechists or Assistant Catechists will have their tuition waived (please see **Volunteering** section of this handbook).

IV. Program Requirements

2nd grade students who desire to receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, must complete grade level 1 of Faith Formation **prior** to entering Sacramental preparation. Families new to the parish or program are to arrange a meeting with the Director of Faith Formation. Parents will be **required** to attend the parent meeting in January and work with their students in preparing for the Sacrament at home. First Reconciliation will be in the season of Lent and First Communion will be the last Sunday in April (please see *Calendar* section of this handbook).

Students in **Grades 6-10** must be enrolled in the Faith Formation program prior to entering the Confirmation program in grade 11. Students in grades 6-10 must also complete **one** of the following options:

Option 1: Two weekend retreats

- Grades 6-8: Dunrovin
- Grades 9-12: Castaway and/or Dunrovin and/or Sr. High Conference (Diocese)
- Grade 10: CM TEC

Option 2: One weeklong mission trip

- Grades 6-8: Duluth, MN (YouthWorks)
- Grades 9-12: Minneapolis, MN (A Call to Service – St. Cloud Diocese)
- Grades 9-12: Trip Location Varies (YouthWorks)

Option 3: National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC – Offered in the *odd years*)

- Grades 9-12: Indianapolis, IN (November 21-24, 2019)

Option 4: 70 hours of local service + a parish presentation regarding Catholic Social Teaching (10 hours of each theme)

- Solidarity – Join forces with minorities and host sessions to get to know community members, Feed My Starving Children
- Life and Dignity of the Human Person – pray at Planned Parenthood, Gather items for Birthline
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable – Serve at Catholic Charities or the food shelf
- Call to Family – Spend time with family (play games, eat meals together)
- Community Participation – Visit the nursing homes, volunteer at the parish
- Rights and Responsibilities – Partake in the Mission Office at the Diocese or local politics
- Care for God’s Creation – Clean up the cemetery or parks

For dates and more information, please contact the Faith Formation Office. These program requirements were set in place with the approval of the Faith Formation Committee, Staff and Pastor since 2015. The events listed are above and beyond the price of our Faith Formation tuition, financial assistance and fundraising may be available by contacting the Faith Formation Office. Please note that refunds will **not** be available for these events as these events require advance payment. Thank you for

your understanding. *Please note that students in grade 10, if they chose option number 4 to complete their Confirmation requirements, they will be grandfathered to 30 hours of local service presenting which themes in which they helped serve as this is a new policy.*

Confirmation Candidates (Grade 11) who desire to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, must complete grade levels 1-10 of Faith Formation **prior** to entering Sacramental preparation **along with** meeting St. Benedict's Faith Formation requirements.

Students (Candidates) enrolled in Confirmation **must** attend a day long retreat as required by the Diocese in addition to our requirements. Options for this retreat are to be selected upon registering for Faith Formation. Students unable to participate in any of the available Confirmation retreats being offered are to 'make-up' the retreat by attending a **weekend** TEC or Dunrovin. Any cost for the make-up retreat is the responsibility of the student/family (Castaway does not count as a Confirmation retreat). Candidates are also expected to participate in all areas of parish life and provide works of service as assigned by the Faith Formation Director and or Faith Formation Committee.

Homework is a part of our Confirmation curriculum to ensure an understanding of the Sacrament and commitment to a life-long faith. Students will need to complete any assignments and pick a Confirmation sponsor in a timely manner.

V. Classes and Class Times

Pre-school through Grade 11 will meet Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 7:35 PM with the exception of a few special sessions beginning in September and ending in April* (please see *Calendar and Communication* section of this handbook).

There will be large group sessions for the following grades:

- Grades 1 & 2 will meet in the Youth Room at 6:30 PM for 15 minutes.
- Grades 3-5 will head to their respective classrooms at 6:30 PM.
- Grades 6-11 will head to their respective classrooms from 6:30 – 7:15 PM and then meet in the Church for 15 minutes.
- Grades Pre-School and Kindergarten will meet in the respective classrooms from 6:30 – 7:20 PM. We ask that parents with Pre-schoolers or Kindergartens provide the snack which will be provided at 7:20 PM in the Kindergarten Room. There will be a sign-up rotation on the first or second night of class.

Catechists will meet the first Wednesday of the month at 6:15 PM unless noted. Watch for email notification of where and when meetings will take place. Otherwise, Catechists must be actively present in the large group sessions.

Students who arrive early must be supervised by a parent until large group time or be in the supervised Gym (6:00 – 6:25 PM). Assigned Gym supervisors will be scheduled on a rotation basis (please see *Volunteering* section of this handbook). All classrooms and the Youth Room will be open 15 minutes prior to class start time.

VI. Youth Ministry

Our Faith Formation program is heavily influenced by a Youth Ministry approach. Meaning, we believe in building relationships before teaching any content (curriculum). We also believe that each one of us is called to Youth Ministry and to lead our young Church to take action and own their faith. Our students are not the Church of the past or future, but the Church of today and that is why we focus on enabling students with the tools to be leaders and how to have a personal relationship with Christ.

Each Wednesday we will offer Youth Group following class from 7:35 – 9:00 PM for grades 6-12. Anyone and everyone of any faith is welcome to join us for videos, discussions, games, community building, homework help, or to have a safe place to come and be who they really are. Plan on joining us!

We will also pay special close attention to our 6th grade students. Studies show that 6th grade is the average age for students to disaffiliate from the faith. We don't want to lose these students who are on the margins, so to combat the negativity and statistics on disaffiliation we will offer 6th Grade Youth Group on the second Wednesday of every month **during** class time. Attendance will still be taken but we hope to make a relaxed atmosphere where talking about our faith is normal and casual during this time.

VII. Attendance

In Order for our program to provide the best Faith Formation experience for our students, consistent attendance is mandatory and expected. Attendance will be taken each time there is a scheduled class, event, or Mass. Please make every effort to be on time. In the event of an absence due to illness or family emergency, please contact the Faith Formation Office so that your student will be excused. Do **not** contact the catechist. Students will be denied to move forward if not in attendance at 80% of the time with or without warning.

Students in **Pre-school through 2nd grade** will need to be accompanied to the Youth Room or their classrooms by a parent or guardian to sign-in. Students in **1st or 2nd grade** will need to be signed out of their regular classrooms and students in **Pre-K** will need to be signed out of the Kindergarten Room (please see *Classes and Class Times* along with the *Map* section of this handbook).

VIII. Behavioral Expectations

Everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and welcome others as we are all made in the image of Christ (Genesis 1:27). Anyone who disrupts class, harms another, or disrespects a person or Church property may be sent to the Faith Formation Office or be asked to be picked up and or be released from our program. Catechists are not responsible for poor behavior in class. Any issues regarding behavior **must** come through the Faith Formation Office. In the event that a student is to be released from the program, tuition is then forfeited and will not be refunded.

IX. Baptism

Please contact Toni Hudock to set-up your baptism. All parents will be required to go to a class if there is a desire to baptize. Classes are held at Seven Dolors on the second Saturday of every other month. Check the bulletin for upcoming sessions.

Toni Hudock: 320.845.5405 (faithformation@albanytel.com)

X. Sacraments

Any student who is in our program (especially those preparing for Sacraments) must be actively participating and receiving the Sacraments. Without attending Mass weekly or going to confession at least monthly – we miss an opportunity to know who Christ is. Students who frequently don't practice the faith or miss a lot of Faith Formation sessions may be asked to delay their reception of the Sacrament they are working towards (First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, Confirmation). It is the Sacraments which lead us to a life-long faith.

XI. Community Meal

The Community Meal is offered every Wednesday (as long as there is class) from 5:00 – 6:30 PM during the Faith Formation season (September – April). Classes (grade 4 – 11) will be assigned to help serve and clean up. Anyone and everyone is welcome to share in the meal and build not only a bigger community in our Church but in our community of Avon.

XII. Volunteering

It is our expectation that parents will volunteer to help with all aspects of the program. Without volunteers, our rigorous program would not be the same. As part of registration, we ask each family to sign-up for **two** volunteer roles such as the following; Catechists (Assistant Catechist)*, large group sessions, hall monitors, health supervisor, gym supervisor, youth ministry volunteer and community meal (servers, clean-up and dishwashers). All volunteers will be entered into Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP) and scheduled using the automated scheduler. If you are unable to be present on your scheduled night, it will be your responsibility to request a sub. Parents who choose not to volunteer will be asked to pay an ***additional \$200 on top of their tuition*** (please see ***Tuition*** section of this handbook). If there is a pastoral reason as to why you are unable to volunteer, please make special arrangements with the Faith Formation Office.

*Those who choose to be a Catechist or Assistant Catechist in our program will have their tuition fully waived and will not be required to volunteer in other capacities.

XIII. Adult Opportunities

There will be informal Basketball for young adult/adult men and women of any skill level in the gym during most classes. Young adults and adults are expected to sign a liability waiver prior to joining.

Young adult and adult opportunities will be listed in the bulletin and on the website along with email updates and or reminders.

XIV. Communication

We will communicate regularly through email but not limited to our website, bulletin, Facebook, calls and or texts. Please make every effort to update us with your current email address and phone numbers upon registering for Faith Formation. Information such as this handbook/policies, calendars and volunteer information will be distributed on the opening night of Faith Formation along with being available on our website: www.stbenedictavon.org/faith-formation

In the event of inclement weather or other unforeseen reasons (determined by the Faith Formation Staff), cancellations will be emailed, posted on our website and Facebook page. In the unlikely event that Faith Formation is canceled **three times or more**, we will make-up as many weeks into May as needed.

XV. Fundraising

It is our expectation that all families help in our fundraising efforts. The Faith Formation / Youth Ministry budget relies heavily upon a minimum of \$10,000 of fundraised income. Fundraisers include but are not limited to the following; Albany Car Show, Caramel Rolls, Heggie's Pizza Sales, Butter Braids, and the Fish Fry. Our students would not be able to have the experiences they have without great fundraising efforts. A good year of fundraising can also allow us to keep tuition stable or even lower it. Thank you for your efforts in advance.

XVI. Parking Lot

In the interest of safety for our students, parents and staff there is a speed limit of 10 mph. Student drop off and pick up will take place at doors #4 and 8. Please follow the arrows and route established and honor the STOP sign. Parking will be available in the lot and or street. Do not park in front of doorways or in traffic lanes. The alley between the Church and Parish Center will be blocked off between 4:45 and 11:00 PM for the safety of those traveling between buildings.

XVII. Safe Environment and Background Check Compliance

The Diocese of St. Cloud, as well as other Catholic Diocese in the United States, have created a Safe Environment policy to protect our youth and all members of our Catholic Community. All adults who have the opportunity and privilege to come into contact with minors or vulnerable adults in any capacity must review the Diocesan Safe Environment policy each year. Background checks will be done on all adults who work with minors. At this time, background checks must be done every five years. Each year, the youth and adults are educated on maintaining a safe environment in our parish. This training includes information on whom to contact with concerns, and how to report those concerns. Parents need to annually review these policies and complete the training. **All adults and parents MUST complete Safe Environment training and a background check by creating an account.** Please see which situation applies to you below:

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR NEW USERS

If you are new, or have a background check that has expired this year or before:

1. Go to stcloud.cmgconnect.org and fill out the information under *Register for a New Account* and complete the information requested.
2. Do the **Safe Environment Training (St. Cloud)**. It should take about 1.5 hours. You can not skip over material, however, you may pause and come back to it.
3. Following training, this will prompt you to have your background checked. The cost of this falls on the parish, not you.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR *RETURNING* USERS

If you have had your background checked within the last five years:

You should be good to go. If there is an issue, your background check is expiring or there is a need for you to complete some training, one of our Faith Formation staff members will reach out to you. Thank you for volunteering but more importantly, thank you for keeping our students safe.

XVIII. Student and Parent Review of Policies

Parents, please read and review the policies with your students **prior** to submitting your registration. By formally registering in the St. Benedict's Faith Formation program, you are acknowledging that you have read, understand and will adhere to all the policies, requirements and commitments of our 2019 – 2020 program. The Pastor, Faith Formation Committee and Faith Formation Staff reserve the right to make changes to this handbook as necessary. Your submission will be viewed as a signed agreement. Thank you and we look forward to a wonderful year of programming. We are truly blessed to be on this journey of faith with your family.

