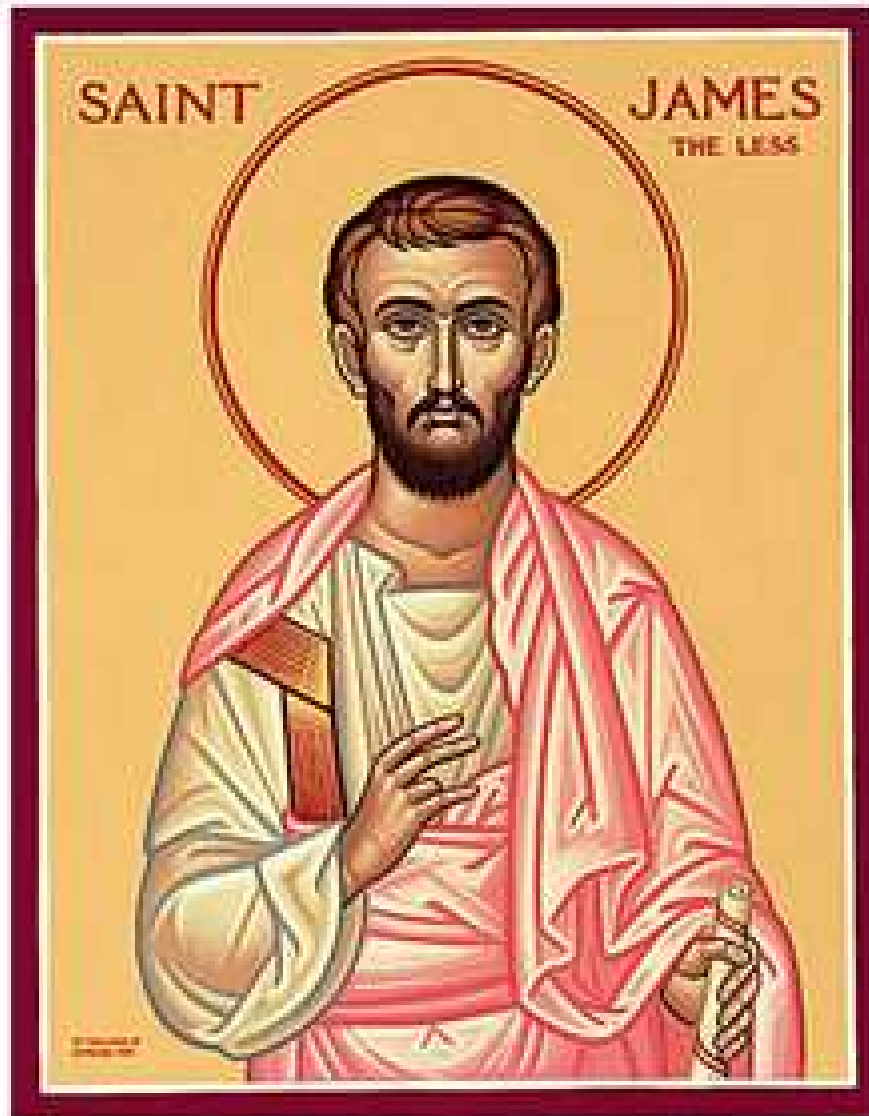


St. James the Apostle
Catholic Church



Faith Formation
Family Handbook
2014-2015

St. James the Apostle
Faith Formation Program
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Faith Formation Family Handbook

Mission Statement:

Upon saying His final farewell to His apostles, Jesus gave His new church the task to evangelize, that is, to bring the message of the Gospel to all the world (Acts 1:8). The Bishops of the United States have pointed out that the first goal of evangelization is to “bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others” (Go and Make Disciples). The family, then, is the first forum in which the mission of evangelization takes place. Hence, parents are recognized as having the primary responsibility for training their children in the practice of the faith (Gaudium et Spes #48).

Parish Faith Formation sessions assist in this sacred duty by providing opportunities for parents and children to develop their prayer lives and their formal understanding of the faith.

The Gift of Faith, which begins at Baptism, must be nourished throughout the entire life of each Christian. The family is rightfully called “the domestic church” and, as such, is the foundation of the wider church community. Religious Education within the Diocese of St. Petersburg serves all the domestic church by offering the guidance and instruction whereby each individual can come to his/her full potential as members of the People of God. Sincere cooperation between the parish and its member families will bring about the goal of evangelizing youth and children; namely, that they grow in understanding and accepting Catholic Doctrine, in their active participation in and awareness of Catholic Liturgical and Sacramental Life, their embracing of the fundamental principles of Catholic Morality and the life of Catholic Prayer (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Registration/Fees

Faith Formation Sessions:

- 1) Faith Formation has an open registration policy throughout the year.
- 2) Families who wish to enroll children in Faith Formation must be registered parishioners using weekly envelopes.
- 3) Parish registration card must be filled out at the time of registration, if not already a registered member.
- 4) If Sacraments will be received this year, a copy of the Baptismal certificate must be provided at the time of registration, if not already on file.
- 5) Faith Formation participants must be at least 4 years old by September 1st of the year in which the child is enrolling.

Faith Formation Fees:

The cost of the program is \$55.00 for 1 child, \$80.00 for 2 children and \$105.00 for 3 or more children. The fee pays for the books and supplies and offsets the costs of teachers' manuals, DVD's, resources, catechist training and background screening. Families with several children may wish to pay in installments. A minimum fee of 50% is needed at the time of registration. If a family is unable to pay anything, please speak to Maria Giral or Barbara Ferreris. No family will be refused because of an inability to cover the fees. Any waivers of fees will be confidential.

Sacrament Preparation Fees:

The fee for the materials for the sacraments of First Reconciliation/Eucharist is \$60.00. The fee pays for the books, workshop and take home materials, Jesus Day Retreat, certificates, reception, and other incidental expenses.

The fee for the materials for the sacrament of Confirmation is \$130.00. This includes a fee of \$50.00 for workshop and take home materials, textbook, Bible, certificate, reception, and other incidental expenses, and a fee of \$80.00 that pays for the overnight retreat at St. Leo Abbey Retreat Center in St. Leo, FL.

Sacramental Preparation

Baptism:

- 1) 0-6 years, contact the Parish Office for more information regarding Baptism.
- 2) 7-17 years, contact the Director of Faith Formation for more information regarding RCIA Adapted for Children.
- 3) 18+ years, contact the Director of Faith Formation for more information regarding RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults).

The process of Sacrament Preparation at St. James is consistent with the guidelines established by the Diocese of St. Petersburg. For all those 7 years of age or older, the process consists of no less than one year of Faith Formation sessions, followed by a second year of immediate preparation for reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Placement in all Sacrament Preparation processes is based on the following criteria in accordance with diocesan guidelines.

First Reconciliation/First Communion/Confirmation:

- 1) Families with children 7 yrs of age or older who have not received First Reconciliation/First Eucharist are eligible to enroll for Sacrament Preparation.
- 2) Families with children in the eighth grade or older who have not received Confirmation are eligible to enroll for Confirmation preparation.
- 3) Families of candidates must be registered in St. James the Apostle Parish.
- 4) Proof of Baptism must be provided at the time of enrollment in the Sacrament Preparation Process.
- 5) Children must have completed one year of faithful participation in Faith Formation sessions or Catholic Parochial School **immediately prior** to enrollment. Concurrent enrollment in a Catholic Parochial School or Parish Faith Formation session is required.

POLICIES

Mass Attendance:

Parents, when you had your child baptized, you agreed to raise them in the Catholic faith. That means you have the responsibility of attending Mass with your child every Sunday. Faith Formation sessions do not give your child all the knowledge they need, they need the knowledge and grace that is received from Mass. “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God.” *CCC 1074*

Attendance:

- 1) Attendance records are in keeping with diocesan policies, and help determine eligibility for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.
- 2) **Faithful attendance to all scheduled meeting times is expected. For Sacramental Programs regular attendance is required for successful completion of the process.**
- 3) Children are expected to make up any missed work due to absences.
- 4) Tardiness is a distraction to both children, parents and catechists and robs everyone of valuable faith sharing time. Children and parents need to be respectful when entering a group that is already in session.
- 5) All absences require either a written excuse presented to the Catechist, or phone call to the Faith Formation office. Absences can be considered excused only if oral or written communication is provided to the Faith Formation Coordinator.
- 6) Children who are chronically absent, without speaking to the Catechist or Coordinator will be dropped from the program.
- 7) Regular attendance at Faith Formation sessions is at least as important as regular attendance at school.

Dress Code

Children/Youth attending Faith Formation sessions are expected to adhere to the dress code standards outlined by the Pasco County Public School system.

Behavior:

- 1) Children/Youth are expected to model their behavior after Jesus Christ who instituted two Great Commandments: “You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind; and to love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 11:27)
- 2) The following are some guidelines for behavior based upon these simple principles:
 - a) Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
 - b) Talk respectfully, no name calling, teasing, cursing, etc.
 - c) Follow directions the first time.
 - d) Bring required materials, supplies and completed assignments to each session.
 - e) Behavior or language that intimidates, belittles, harasses (including harassment of a sexual nature) makes inappropriate references or physically harms oneself or others will result in disciplinary action.
- 3) Parents must remain with their child throughout the session.
- 4) The fact that a child has been registered in Faith Formation at St. James the Apostle Church indicates that its rules and guidelines have been read by parents/guardians, have been reviewed with the child(ren) by the parents/guardians and have been accepted by the parents/guardians and children. It is to be understood by the parents/guardians and children that severe disruptive behavior by a child will result in disciplinary action, and/or a parent/Catechist conference, and/or removal from the program. Severe disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) Refusal to obey directions of catechists or other staff members.
 - b) An established pattern of behavior which is disruptive to the learning environment of the session.
 - c) Threats, assault, battery, or physical injury to other children and/or other staff members.

- d) Use of profane or abusive language.
- e) Possession or distribution of obscene pictures, magazines, books, music.
- f) Theft, damage or misuse of St. James property, Bishop Larkin Catholic School or its students' property.
- g) False fire alarms.
- h) Possession or use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or narcotics.

In the event a child engages in inappropriate behavior any or all of the following may occur:

- a) Parental notification of infraction.
 - b) Meeting between parents and Catechist and Coordinator of Faith Formation.
 - c) Removal of child from Faith Formation process.
- 5) The Coordinator of Faith Formation is responsible for ensuring that all sanctions against children are implemented in a fair and consistent manner by the Faith Formation office and the volunteer staff.
- 6) In the event that a parent/guardian is not satisfied with action taken by a Catechist, they may contact the Coordinator of Faith Formation.
- 7) If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the Coordinator of Faith Formation's action, the matter may be taken to the Director of Faith Formation or Pastor for resolution.

Other Policies:

- a) The Faith Formation office keeps records of a confidential nature: Attendance, discipline, last grade completed, address, phone number, date of birth, sacraments received, marital status of parents, disabilities, and emergency contact information.
- b) The Faith Formation office abides by the Privacy Act and will not disclose personal information to third parties without written permission from the persons involved. Parents and/or guardians have a right to review any records kept by the Faith Formation office pertaining to their child for any reason.
- c) Catechists are provided limited access to personal information as is necessary for them to perform their ministry. Such information would include: last grade completed, disciplinary records, address, phone number, emergency contacts, disability, and other family information when it is appropriate.
- d) The Faith Formation office abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In

the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records when such records are requested. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide the Coordinator of Faith Formation with an official copy of the court order.

Communication:

- 1) The Faith Formation office, along with the Church Universal, strives to maintain open communication with all who participate in Faith Formation sessions. We also encourage catechists and parents to keep each other informed of child's progress through informal contact at the beginning and end of each session.
- 2) From time to time it may be necessary for parents to discuss issues of concern with the Catechist or the Coordinator of Faith Formation. In keeping with Church teaching and the Biblical tradition of subsidiarity, issues of concern should be resolved at the lowest possible level. Parents/guardians should attempt to resolve any issues with a Catechist by first contacting the Catechist and discussing the issue.
- 3) If satisfactory progress is not made, then the parents/ guardians may contact the Coordinator of Faith Formation to discuss the issue and request that action be taken. If the parent is not satisfied with the Coordinator of Faith Formation's action, then the matter should be taken to the Director of Faith Formation or the Pastor for resolution.

Hurricane Plan for Program Cancellation:

Should a tropical storm or hurricane be forecast to hit our area over a weekend, it may be necessary for Faith Formation sessions to be cancelled. The decision to cancel sessions will be based on the Pasco County School system's decision to cancel public school classes the Friday prior to Faith Formation sessions or the Monday after Faith Formation sessions.

Safety

The safety of children is most important to all involved in the parish Family Faith sessions. Please cooperate with the following procedures:

1. Fire Safety

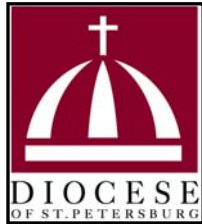
- a. Fire drills will be conducted twice a year. All children, youth, and adults will depart the facility.
- b. In case of a real emergency, families will be taken to a prearranged evacuation area.
- c. There is a map posted in each room with the preferred exit route and gathering place outside the building.

2. Natural Disasters

In the event of a natural disaster (tornado, hurricane, etc.) occurs, catechists will be warned (if possible) of the approaching danger. Children, youth and adults are to move to the center of the building away from windows.

Right to Amend

This handbook is primarily a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how we intend to go about our ministry. St. James the Apostle Faith Formation program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified, in writing, if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.



Code of Conduct for Adults

Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Youth
within the Diocese of St. Petersburg, FL
(Revised 11/2009)

Introduction

The Catholic Church in west central Florida is blessed with a great diversity of persons created in the divine image. We respect, honor and celebrate the Image of God revealed in human uniqueness, dignity and diversity, as suggested in Genesis 1:27: "On the sixth and last day of the creation, God created a man to His own Image: to the Image of God He created him".

We believe that every child is a gift from God from the moment of conception. We believe that the children enrolled in our schools, parish religious education programs and other programs must be treated with dignity, respect and care, as described in "A Sacred Trust, The Safety of Our Children" (National Catholic Education Association, 2003).

An adult involved in any role of a program is defined as a person who is at least 18 years of age and post high school, and who has been approved to work with young people by the pastor, principal, community organization leader or a designate. We serve all young people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, political beliefs or disabilities. All adults working with youth in any capacity must be approved through the proper background checks and be Safe Environment Program trained as required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

This code is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students, and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the sacraments, other liturgies, worship services, and ministries. This code is used in conjunction with existing diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

Professional Role

1. Adults recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful to anyone of any group.
2. Adults work collaboratively with the pastor, supervisors and associates in community, ministry, or school programs. These adults distinguish their own private opinions from those of the Catholic faith or their profession in all publicity, public announcements or publications.
3. Adults have a responsibility in all relationships to witness the chastity appropriate to their vocation in life, whether celibate, married, or single.

4. Adult leaders are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities working with youth. They are to be made aware of all diocesan policies for working with youth.
5. Adults are aware they have considerable personal power because of their position or ministry. Therefore, they will sustain respectful relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
6. Adults maintain appropriate professional boundaries, e.g., physical, sexual, relational and emotional. Appropriate use of time for working with, speaking with and engaging with children and youth is an important boundary. Adults are not to be available 24/7, but rather work within normal expected time frames.
7. Adults model healthy and positive behaviors with young children, adolescents, and other adults.

Professional Accountability

8. Adults must never engage in sexual intimacies or overt sexual behaviors with children and/or youth. This includes consensual and nonconsensual contact, covert or overt seductive speech or gestures that sexually abuses, exploits, or harasses another person.
9. Touching should be age appropriate and based on the need of the minor and not on the need of the adult. An adult is to avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
10. Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with youth is inappropriate and unethical.
11. Adults should never possess or use alcohol or drugs while supervising and/or participating in a youth activity.
12. Adults always meet with young people in areas that are visible and accessible.
13. One-on-one meetings with a young person are best held in a public area, or if that is not possible, then the door to the room is left open. Another adult is to be notified about the meeting whenever feasible. Notify parents of meetings.
14. It is always a preferred practice to have two adults present in the area where youth are present.
15. Driving alone with a young person should be avoided.
16. Adults are not to be alone with minors in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, other closed room, or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
17. Audiovisual, music, and print resources used in programs must be screened prior to use to ensure their appropriateness for the participants. It is never appropriate to use an "R" rated movie without parental consent or without screening for sexual content, nudity, language, violence, and themes or content which harm the dignity of the human person. Even "PB" movies should be reviewed carefully. Movies with ratings

stronger than "R" are never appropriate. Music lyrics should also be reviewed to ensure their appropriateness. Parents should be informed of movies that will be used in conjunction with any program.

18. The computer and Internet are acceptable and common means of communication and entertainment. Adults must never engage with sexually explicit and/or pornographic materials or chat rooms with children and youth. They should not use any computer software, games or any form of internet personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents.
19. Adults are trained to be aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
20. Adults are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and will make appropriate referrals.
21. Adults agree to adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.
22. Adults are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, harassment, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.



**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG, FL
January 2005**

The first premise of this code is that children and youth function best when behaviors and expectations are clearly defined. It is accepted that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children in all aspects of their development. This experience aims at developing upright citizens and good Christians, following the new commandment Jesus gave His disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

In Timothy 4:12, we read, "Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity." Timothy is urged to rely on the gifts he has received from God. This code urges our children and youth to rely on God's gifts to them, especially charity, chastity and purity. This calls the young person to acknowledge and promote one's personal dignity and the rights that go with it.

It becomes important for children and youth to know the difference between "right" and "not right" relationships. "Right" relationships foster personal, spiritual, and emotional growth, e.g., the ability to communicate, to forgive, to show affection, to be honest, vulnerable, dependable, etc. "Not right" relationships become harmful and hurtful, and even abusive. Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another's boundaries, uses power, tricks, threats, or violence to cross or change another's boundaries, or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) on another person.

This code is used in conjunction with existing local or diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

When engaging in formal and informal activities, functions, and programs, children and youth are expected to behave appropriately at all times, respecting the rights of others.

1. Christian behavior is expected at all times.
2. Respect for individuals, the community and facilities being used is required.
3. Cooperation and self-control are necessary when participating in programs and activities.
4. Dress must be in accord with the activity and appropriate for a Christian environment.
5. Unacceptable behavior and lack of cooperation will not be tolerated, but will be addressed appropriately. Examples of unacceptable behavior are as follows, though not limited to:
 - a. disrespect for adults and peers
 - b. use of vulgar language or gesture, use of racial slurs
 - c. damaging of property
 - d. fighting or intent to injure others
 - e. constant disturbance of others at work or in an activity
 - f. cheating

6. Possession of weapons, possession, sale or use of alcohol or drugs are forbidden.
 7. No child or youth has the right to treat another in any manner that will cause physical or emotional pain. Therefore, harassment of any kind is unchristian and unacceptable.
 8. Coercion or threats to do something physically hurtful or for the purpose of exposing someone or something about another is unacceptable behavior.
 9. Chastity is a virtue to be held in high esteem and promoted in practice. Sexual abuse of any sort, coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically touching the sexual parts of another's body, treating a person like a sexual object are unacceptable and abusive behavior. Consensual sex between students or initiated by minors to adults must never occur.
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References:

Diocese of Omaha, NE (2002). Sample Youth Code of Behavior.

Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002). Code of Conduct, Bishop Moore Catholic High School.
Code of Conduct, Annunciation Catholic Academy.
Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002)

McCarthy, Robert J. (2002). Protecting Young People, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers, Washington, D.C.

23rd General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco (1990). Educating Young People to the Faith.

Third Draft 03.06.03

Prayers/Doctrine to Know/Learn:

Children and youth of every grade level in Faith Formation at St. James the Apostle Catholic Church are taught the importance of developing an active, daily prayer life. They are taught to pray both formally and informally and to pray *always*. Formal prayers which have already been learned should be prayed frequently, and parents/guardians should help their child(ren) to learn new prayers by praying with their child(ren). Parents/guardians should also help their child(ren) to understand the meaning of the words to these prayers and to know what it means to *pray from the heart*.

PK	Sign of the Cross, Simple Meal Prayer
Kindergarten	Hail Mary, Glory Be, Guardian Angel prayer, (<i>And all of the above prayers</i>)
1 st Grade	Our Father, Simple Meal Prayer, Sacraments- Baptism (<i>And all of the above prayers</i>)
2 nd Grade	Act of Contrition, Mass Prayers, Sacraments- Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation (<i>And all of the above prayers</i>)
3 rd Grade	Apostles' Creed, Stations of the Cross, Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, Sacraments- Marriage, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders (<i>And all of the above prayers</i>)
4 th Grade	The Great Commandment, The Ten Commandments, The Sorrowful Mysteries, (<i>And all of the above prayers</i>)
5 th Grade	The Seven Sacraments, 20 Mysteries of the Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, Corporal Works and Spiritual Works of Mercy, (<i>And all of the above prayers</i>)
6 th Grade	Hebrew Scriptures
7 th Grade	Church and Sacraments
8 th Grade	Morality

A Parent's Prayer

**Loving God,
You are the giver of all we possess,
the source of all of our blessings.
We thank and praise you.**

Thank you for the gift of our children.

**Help us to set boundaries for them
and yet encourage them to explore.
Give us the strength and courage to treat
each day as a fresh start.**

**May our children come to know you, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**

**May your Holy Spirit help them to grow
in faith, hope, and love,
so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.**

**May their ears hear your voice.
May their eyes see your presence in all things.
May their lips proclaim your word.
May their hearts be your dwelling place.
May their hands do works of charity.
May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Lord. Amen**

The Role of the Catechist:

The role of our volunteer catechists is central to the ongoing life of our church. To catechize means “to echo or resound”. Our catechists are members of our faith community who have experienced God’s revelation and have responded to His call to see life through the eyes of faith. They lovingly give their time, talents, and treasures to our faith community in order to partner with the parish and the parents of our faith community in the handing on of our Catholic faith to our children. As members of our faith community, parents/guardians are invited to offer assistance to our catechists and/or the Faith Formation Office for the arising needs of our ministry. Please come and join this awesome ministry of loving and serving the Lord and His people.

A Catechist is faith, hope, and love attached to arms, legs, aches and pains, family duties and not enough time.

A Catechist is an ordinary person who is extraordinary because he or she teaches as Jesus did.

A Catechist is faithful to the past, open to the future, but especially dedicated to deepening the faith of the present generation.

~from the poem, “A Catechist Is”
by Monsignor John Francis Murphy

St. James the Apostle Catholic Church

Faith Formation Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

2014-2015

I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and accept the Policies contained in the Faith Formation Family Handbook including the local Parish Program Policies and Procedures, the Harassment Policy in Non-Employment Situations and the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Please check all that apply and sign/print/date as appropriate in the spaces provided.

_____ My Child(ren) and I/we will attend the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program as scheduled by the Parish.

_____ I wish to receive all additional (beyond handbook policies) materials related to the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program.

_____ I do not wish to receive the materials (beyond handbook policies) related to the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Student Name & Grade (Print)

Student Name & Grade (Print)

Student Name & Grade (Print)

Student Name & Grade (Print)

Date