



OUR LADY  
OF CONSOLATION

**FAITH FORMATION  
FAMILY HANDBOOK  
2017 - 2018**

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# Our Lady of Consolation Parish

*Children's Education & Formation / Youth Ministry*

Dear Parent/s:

This handbook is designed to help you in your Christian parenting responsibility of passing on our Catholic faith. By providing information in this handbook, we hope to assist you in your journey of faith and parenting.

Today's society demands that we consider not only educational and religious subject matter, but also legal issues and pastoral concerns. Therefore, you will notice information that addresses each of these topics.

This handbook provides much information and many guidelines. May it be a starting point for a meaningful and fruitful journey of faith for you and your family. On behalf of Our Lady of Consolation Parish, we thank you for your time and talents in passing on the faith to your family.

May God Bless You and Your Family!

## ***The Faith Formation Staff:***

Anne Marie DeSantis  
Director of Faith Formation  
adesantis@olcparish.net  
616-866-2577 ext 210

Jennifer Wysocki  
Administrative Assistant  
jwysocki@olcparish.net  
616-866-2577 ext 213

Joshua Hanson  
Middle School Coordinator  
jhanson@olcparish.net  
616-866-2577 ext 210

Nickie Wentworth-Holton  
High School Coordinator  
nwentworth@olcparish.net  
616-866-0931 ext 221

Jeanne Winkelmann  
Elementary Coordinator  
jwinkelmann@olcparish.net  
616-866-2577 ext 211

Shawn Marks  
Sacramental Coordinator  
smarks@olcparish.net  
616-866-2577 ext 220

Amy Oatley  
Adult Formation  
aoatley@olcparish.net  
616-866-8577 ext 212

Duane Parker  
RCIA  
dparker@olcparish.net  
616-866-2577 ext 212

4865 Eleven Mile Rd • Rockford, MI 49341 • 616-866-2577 • Fax 616-866-3668  
Email [olcformation@olcparish.net](mailto:olcformation@olcparish.net)



## **OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

The following information may be helpful as you prayerfully consider your pledge to Our Lady of Consolation Education Foundation.

The annual pledge period is 12 months long and runs from September 1 through August 31. Approximate yearly educational costs:

\$4,000.00 per child attending Our Lady of Consolation School

\$50.00 per person for each Adult Bible/Book Study, RCIA, Adult Formation Sessions, Vacation Bible School, Preparation for Sacraments

\$350.00 per child attending weekly Faith Formation programs.

Parents are told that there are certain requirements expected of them if they wish to enroll their child (children) at OLC. Those requirements are:

1. You must attend church regularly. (Not necessarily OLC).
2. Parents are expected to volunteer 10 - 20 hours per year of their own personal time, this can be to the Parish, school, Faith Formation or to Foundation activities which can be accomplished in a variety of ways.
3. There must be a demonstration of a Christian attitude by parents & children.
4. Parents are informed that the annual cost of educating a student in Faith Formation is approximately \$350.00 and that they should give prayerful consideration to the amount they are able to contribute.

Parents are asked to consider a Gospel tithe model for sacrificial giving. Such a model might be 5% to the OLCEF and 5% to OLC Church. This Foundation covenant encompasses only the Foundation portion of the tithe. This model emphasizes equal sacrifice not equal giving. Those who earn more can give more so that those who earn less can still afford a Catholic education.

No minimum pledge amount is required. Even with a pledge of zero, parents are expected to comply with the non-financial components of the covenant.

5. Parents are required to sign the Parents' Covenant (completed above) indicating their understanding of the covenant. Students cannot be admitted to OLC Faith Formation without parental signatures on the Parents' Covenant.

Donations to OLC Education Foundation are tax deductible in accordance with an IRS letter of July 6, 1993.

Donations to OLC Education Foundation can be made in one lump sum donation or made semi annually, quarterly, or monthly.

Periodically, for budget purposes, a review is made of donations received. Should some appear to be falling behind in their commitment, contact may be made to discuss the particular situation. However, in any event, no child will be asked to withdraw from OLC school or Faith Formation Programs should their parents fail to comply with their financial pledge made nor will any undue pressure, either direct or implied, be placed upon any family.

Unlike the financial pledge, the non-financial components of the covenant do require compliance. The requirements for regular attendance at church, and at parent sacramental meetings are not optional. In addition, the volunteer hours and the demonstration of Christian attitude by both parents and their students are expected.

Any pledge made is considered to be the parents' good-faith intention of giving to the Foundation. A pledge is not a legal obligation. Unforeseen situations may make necessary modifications to the pledged amounts.

Pledged amounts may be paid by third parties, e.g. grandparents. Use of company matching fund programs is encouraged. Activity & Retreat fees are not part of the pledge, are required, and are in addition to the covenant, but may be paid through the electronic credit/debit card process. Electronic giving is the preferred mode of payment for pledges.

This giving-based Foundation program enables us to offer Catholic education to a wide range of people, regardless of their financial means. Our hope is that people will maintain their giving to the Foundation even when they no longer benefit directly from parish educational programs. Only through continued financial commitment to sacrificial giving can we preserve the benefits of the Foundation and the cause of Catholic education for years to come.

# FAITH OF THE PARENTS

Parents hold a privileged role and responsibility in family life (CCC 2221-2230). Before the Christian community, parents present and name their child and ask the Church for Baptism—the gift of faith and life of grace. In doing so, they accept the responsibility of “training them in the practice of the faith, to bring them up to keep God’s commandments [and to] love God and our neighbor”. Only after acknowledging this responsibility do parents sign their infant child with the cross of salvation, claiming the child for Christ. Through this sacrament, parents ritually express their personal commitment to God, to the community of faith and to their child. They can do so only because they first have faith. It is the promise of this living tradition, of God present in the community of faith—as parish and as domestic church—that is the foundation of hope and our ability to transmit faith from generation to generation.

For our children to have faith, our parents must first have faith (General Directory for Catechesis 226). The adage, “faith is caught, not taught,” is true especially for the domestic church. Simply put, parents teach most effectively by example. They profoundly affect the faith of their children by attending first to their own faith and religion. Each parent is obliged to live the baptismal vocation as priest, prophet and servant-ruler in the home, in the workplace and in the marketplace.

Parents with children and youth participating in our programs are challenged to live as stewards of God’s bounty. Once we accept that God has given us everything we have, we must then begin the journey of returning a portion of our gifts back to God. This not an easy thing to do, especially in a society that places endless demands on our time and our resources. Steps along the stewardship journey include:

- Striving to spend more time with God in prayer, Mass attendance, and Eucharistic adoration so that we will have a fuller understanding of how God wants us to use our many gifts.
- Seeing the parish as a place where we can serve, rather than a place meant to serve us.
- Determining the percentage of our income that we currently return to God, so that we can accurately know how much we really give.
- Making a commitment to put God first on our calendar and in our budget.

## **REGISTRATION FOR FAITH FORMATION**

Your child’s registration does not automatically roll over from year to year. You must register your child for classes with each new school year. Student registration is online for Faith Formation at the the church website: [www.olcparishrockford.com](http://www.olcparishrockford.com).

### **To complete your child or teen’s registration:**

- One parent is required to attend the Elementary Parent Orientation Class & Middle School and High School Open house meeting in September.
- Your child/teen’s registration will be processed when you complete the **online forms**, that is located on the parish web page, once **ALL** registration forms are submitted your child will be placed in a class. Class size maybe limited.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**ACCIDENT REPORTS** - If any student, teacher, parent/guardian or sibling is injured on our property, such accident must be reported immediately to the Program Coordinator and a written report filed with the Michigan Catholic Conference.

1. **COMMUNICATION** - In the case of an unscheduled special event, or change of schedule, notification will be sent home in advance through a Faith Formation email, on the parish app and our text app Remind. To signup for for Remind -text -olcf@mail.remind.com
2. Many announcements are also posted in the church bulletin and on our website at [www.olcparishrockford.com](http://www.olcparishrockford.com).

**DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY** - Parents of Elementary students are required to sign in their students upon arrival to class and to sign out their child at class dismissal. Only those individuals you have listed on your student's dismissal form will be permitted to sign out your child/children.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY** - All students are expected to share in the faith learning experiences of their class. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him/herself or for others, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue.

1. Classroom rules are to be posted in each classroom weekly.
2. At the first incident of misbehavior, the children or youth will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior (1st warning). Minor problems with behavior are to be handled directly between the catechist and student immediately.
3. After the second incident, the children or youth should be sent to the program coordinator for counsel regarding appropriate behavior (2nd warning). When sending a student, he/she must be escorted by the aide and never sent alone. If an understanding about appropriate behavior can be reached, the student may return to class.
4. After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the children or youth will be sent to the program coordinator to complete classroom work. The parent/guardian must be contacted either by the student in the presence of the program coordinator, by the catechist following class, or by the program coordinator. The problem should be explained to the parent and help elicited for changing the behavior by the next session.
5. When the situation improves, some notice (written or verbal) to the parent is necessary. *If the student's behavior continues to disrupt learning, it may be necessary for the children or youth to receive home instruction;* the director, program coordinator, catechist and parent would make this decision jointly.

**DISPENSATION OF MEDICATION** - If a student is required to take prescription medication during Faith Formation class time hours a parent/guardian must be present to administer it.

During middle school/high school retreats, only the program coordinators may administer medication in compliance with the following:

1. Written authorization by the parent or guardian including the name of the medication, the specific dosage and exact time the dosage is to be given, and a list of possible side effects and any restrictions.
2. The medication must be in the prescription container and must contain the physician's name and office phone number.



3. Please refer to retreat communications for further medication procedures.

**MEDICAL INFORMATION** - Student health information is kept strictly confidential. ***Please make every effort to alert us to special needs or family situations which might adversely affect a child's ability to learn and enjoy a positive experience.*** Only those things necessary to a student's success in the classroom are shared with the teacher. In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted by phone at the emergency phone number provided on the student's class registration form.

**FEES** - Our Lady of Consolation Parish Faith Formation programs are funded in a significant way through the Our Lady of Consolation Education Foundation. No tuition is charged for parish educational programs. In addition, there is not a registration fee for children/ Youth participating in our education programs. Please prayerfully consider a pledge to the Education Foundation. On occasion fees for youth ministry events and retreats may be requested.

**SEVERE WEATHER POLICY** -

1. If Rockford Public Schools close or dismiss early because of severe weather, all Faith Formation classes are cancelled for the remainder of the day. A "Class Cancellation" sign will be posted at all the entrance doors. In the event of severe weather the decision to cancel Faith Formation classes will be made by 3:00PM.
2. When under a "severe weather *watch*", we will be monitoring conditions. Families should use their own discretion on class attendance. When under a "severe weather *warning*" classes will be cancelled.
3. Announcements will be made over local news stations WOOD-TV8 and WZZM-13 (listed on their websites and television stations). For WOOD-TV8 website closing listings, go to [www.woodtv.com/weather/closings](http://www.woodtv.com/weather/closings), and look under "churches". For WZZM-13 website closing listings, go to [www.wzzm13.com/closings/](http://www.wzzm13.com/closings/), and "church/school/ other" closings are all listed together. A text alert will go out on our text app, Remind. To signup for Remind - text -olcf@mail.remind.com
4. Should severe weather develop during class time, students will be kept in the building until picked up by parents or until the severe weather passes.

**Students with Disabilities** - Some of our parish children have special educational needs. In some cases, Faith Formation Catechists simply need to be appraised of reading difficulties, medical problems, or behavioral techniques that are more effective than others. Students with more challenging special needs will have a program adapted to fit their needs. We welcome all children and look forward to helping them prepare for the reception of the Sacraments. ***Please contact the Director of Faith Formation to set up a meeting time to insure that your child has the opportunity to learn about our faith to his/her fullest potential.***

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

There are many ways you can help. Some areas are: teaching, substitute teacher, office work, special projects, and childcare during class time for our catechists. Please contact the Faith Formation office for more details.

**TRAFFIC CONTROL** - Your child's safety is very important to us. With an average of 300 students attending on class nights, please drive slowly and carefully in the parking lots. Entrance into the church building is as follows:

**Elementary school students** please enter and exit the building at the main church entrance. No elementary student is allowed to enter or leave our building before or after classes without the escort of an adult. Students must be escorted to and from their classrooms by a parent or the adult in charge of their carpool. Sign-in and sign-out is required. Parents are asked to be punctual picking up children. This helps to avoid having frightened children. The building will be secure during class times.

**Middle school students** who attend on Sundays need to enter the building through the doors located on the north side of the building (near the outside statue of Mary in the courtyard); all other entrance doors will be locked. Those who attend on Wednesdays will go to the Kateri Lodge.

**High school students** attend Faith Formation classes on Sunday and Wednesday nights at the Kateri Lodge.

**Kateri Lodge students on Wednesday evenings**, please observe the orange cones and line up along side of the building. If you have multiple children in our program, please pick up your elementary students first then proceed to the Kateri Lodge to pick up your middle school and high school students.

# STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**There are many ways you can help and participate in our Faith Formation programs.**

Volunteers are needed at every level and with every age group. Volunteer time can be anywhere from 90 minutes a week to serving once a month, or helping with special projects and workshops.

**We have a special request for Aides to assist youth with special needs.**

Would you like to assist a child and be an aide in the classroom? Please contact Anne Marie DeSantis, Director of Faith Formation for more information.

**Listed below are a few of the opportunities to share your time and talent with OLC parish families.** Please prayerfully consider how you might become involved in the community with your family.

<b>Elementary:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly Co-Catechist <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare during class time: <input type="checkbox"/> First Eucharist Workshops <input type="checkbox"/> Office tasks during class time <input type="checkbox"/> Faith in Action events <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute Classroom Aide <input type="checkbox"/> Special needs aide for youth  <input type="checkbox"/> Evening Kindergarten Co-Catechist  <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon 1st Grade Spanish Immersion Aide		<input type="checkbox"/> Service Project Coordinator <input type="checkbox"/> RCIC Catechist <input type="checkbox"/> Drop off donations at Kids Food Basket <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Rosary leader during class time
<b>Sunday Liturgy:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Liturgy leader <input type="checkbox"/> Reader/Lector <input type="checkbox"/> Communion Minister <input type="checkbox"/> Altar Server (5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Usher <input type="checkbox"/> Greeter <input type="checkbox"/> Sacristan	<b>Special Events:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Annual OLCEF Fundraiser <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Bible School <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare for Meetings & Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Year End Appreciation <input type="checkbox"/> Parish wide Catechesis Events <input type="checkbox"/> Lenten Stations of the Cross <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Discipleship	
<b>Middle School:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly small group Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute small group Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Retreat Chaperone <input type="checkbox"/> Aide for youth with special needs <input type="checkbox"/> Service Project Chaperone <input type="checkbox"/> Aide for youth with special needs	<b>High School:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly small group Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Setup/Cleanup Special Events <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events Photographer/ Video <input type="checkbox"/> Retreat Chaperone	

***As parents you are stewards of God's most wonderful gift - the life in Christ of your children. The parish faith formation program exists to support you in your role and it is a privilege to partner with you in the faith development of your family. Thank you to all who have a hand in assisting in building God's Kingdom!!***

## **VIRTUS TRAINING – PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN**

Any volunteer over the age of 18 who has regular contact with children/youth must attend a Protecting God's Children Awareness session. This training session only needs to be taken once and is good for any area you may want to volunteer with our youth. This includes youth ministry volunteers, chaperones for retreats, small group leaders, catechists, nursery workers, coaches and much more. Sessions are offered on a regular basis at various parishes in the diocese. For more information go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) or contact the Faith Formation office.



**MEDIA RELATIONS/PROMOTIONS RELEASE FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Street City State Zip

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASE**

***IF PERSON BEING USED IN THE MATERIAL IS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN MUST SIGN THIS FORM.***

I/we give my/our permission to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan, (the Diocese) and all entities, representatives, employees, and agents operating under its authority to use, without prior notice, my name or my minor child's name, city and state, and/or audio, video(s), photo(s), and/or any other likeness and to use statements made by or attributed to me or my child relating to the Diocese, without compensation, for web, social media, publicity or similar promotions for the Diocese. I waive my right to inspect or approve such publications, including any written copy that may be created in connection therewith. ***I/we agree that my/our signature(s) below releases any and all claims against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids, or its associated entities related to or arising out of the Diocese's use of the stated items as media relations/promotional material(s).***

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I grant permission for release

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not grant permission for release

Signature of Individual (if 18 or older): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_  
(if individual is under 18 years old)

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

If individual referenced above is under 18, please indicate your relationship to that person:

\*Once completed, please return this form to your parish/school administration office

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The Director of Faith Formation, Pastor, Sacramental Coordinators, and Catechists are responsible for planning and implementing programs that assist parents in fulfilling their role as primary educators in the Religious Education of their children.

**PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST IS A TWO-YEAR PROGRAM AND BEGINS IN THE FIRST GRADE. Students will need to complete all first grade work before being placed in a second grade class.**

### **The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

The catechesis of children preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation precedes the reception of First Eucharist. The Sacrament normally, but not exclusively, takes place during the second grade level.

#### PROVISIONS:

Children must complete the first grade curriculum.

Children must attend weekly classes during first and second grades.

Parental involvement in the preparation program is essential and required.

Readiness for the celebration for First Reconciliation will be determined by the parents, catechist and pastor in consultation with each one another.

### **The Sacrament of Eucharist**

The catechesis of children preparing for the Sacrament of Eucharist will usually, but not exclusively, take place during the second grade level, and will be separate from the catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

#### PROVISIONS:

Children must complete the first grade curriculum.

Children must attend weekly classes during first and second grades.

Parental involvement in the preparation program is essential and required.

Readiness for the celebration for First Eucharist will be determined by the parents, catechist and pastor in consultation with one another.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The *National Directory for Catechesis* reminds us that "persons with disabilities, especially children, are particularly beloved of the Lord and are integral members of the Christian community just as with each of God's human creations, each person with a disability has catechetical needs that the Christian community must recognize and meet. All baptized persons with disabilities have a right to adequate catechesis and deserve the means to develop a relationship with God." [49]

We welcome all children to our Faith Formation programs. They may be prepared for reception of the sacraments as readiness is discerned. Understanding your child's needs is the first step as we walk with your child on their faith journey. Please contact Anne Marie DeSantis, Director of Faith Formation, to set up a meeting time to insure that your child has the opportunity to learn about our faith to his/her fullest potential.

# SACRAMENTS

**Sacrament Preparation** - Preparation for the sacraments of initiation for children and youth at Our Lady of Consolation Parish is a comprehensive program designed to help guide young people as they continue their journey of Christian Initiation into the Church. Preparation for sacraments is not only about cognitive learning, but also about a time of spiritual preparation for the entire family.

**Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist** – Preparation for Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist is a **two year program and begins in the first grade**. Students will need to complete all first grade work before being placed in a second grade class. In addition to weekly classroom preparation, students and their parents will gather several times throughout the year for parent/child sessions and workshops. These mandatory events will cover additional information and activities to insure that each child is fully prepared to celebrate the Sacraments of 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation and 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist.

**The Sacramental Calendar listing all of the dates and times of these Parent/Child Sessions and Workshops can be found on the Parish website: [www.olcparishrockford.com](http://www.olcparishrockford.com).**

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Attendance Policy** – Please notify the Faith formation Office ahead of time if your child is going to be absent for any reason. Any class work that your child has missed will need to be made up at home and checked in by your child's catechist the following week. If a child has **more than three absences** in a semester and fails to turn in make up work, a meeting with one of the priests may be requested. At this meeting, it will be determined whether the child has an understanding of the material they have missed and if there are any further steps that will be taken to be sure they are fully prepared to participate in the Sacraments.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Shawn Marks in the Faith Formation Office at 866-2577, ext. 220 or email: [smarks@olcparish.net](mailto:smarks@olcparish.net)

**Sacrament of Confirmation** - Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, a person celebrates the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and a renewed commitment to the tenets of the Catholic Church. We strongly believe that Confirmation is a milestone along the lifelong journey into an ever-deepening, maturing faith, rather than the culmination of religious formation. At OLC, 8th grade is considered a preparation year that consists of two major components: a series of interactive on-line modules for all Candidates and Sponsors to complete at home and subsequently meet to discuss in greater depth at several "Gathered Sessions"; and "Growing in the Spirit" sessions where Candidates further explore the Holy Spirit in Scripture and as God's presence in their daily lives. **Confirmation preparation begins on Sunday, September 17, or Monday, September 18, with a PARENT and Candidate Orientation.** *Growing in the Spirit* sessions meet regularly on Sunday evenings 6:00-7:30PM or Wednesday evenings 6:30-7:45PM. *Gathered Sessions* (Candidates and Sponsors) meet occasional Sunday afternoons 1:15PM-2:45PM or Monday evenings 6:30-8:00PM. ***In addition to attending ALL required sessions, Candidates must attend one retreat and complete service hours.***

Preparation Sessions below.

**For Sacramental Calendars please visit our church website: [www.olcparishrockford.com](http://www.olcparishrockford.com).**

## ELEMENTARY (Grades 1-5)

To ensure that the beliefs of our faith are introduced and reinforced for the young people as they grow, develop, and mature as Catholics the *BLEST ARE WE* curriculum has been chosen for grades 1, 3, 4 and 5. Second grade will study the GO SEEK AND FIND curriculum from St. Mary's Press. Our Catholic faith tradition and its foundational elements are the basis of the scope and sequence. The doctrinal content is organized according to the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—Creed, Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer. The entire scope and sequence is available in the faith formation office or online at <http://blestarewe.com/scope-sequences/>.

### **CLASS TIMES -**

Our program is offered Wednesday. Two sessions are offered: from 4:45-6:00 p.m. or 6:30-7:45 p.m. Due to space and volunteers available to teach class size is limited.

**INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES** - Each week the students work with one lesson from the textbook. Additional activity pages, crafts, or other special projects often accompany the book work. Once a month the students will take part in a Faith in Action event.

Each student in grades 1, 3, 4 and 5 will receive an eBook to be accessed from home. If absent students will be expected to complete at home the chapter covered during class time.

Second grade students will receive a back pack with their Bible and student worksheets that will be brought back and forth between home and class.

### **Kindergarten Faith Formation:**

Faith Formation for Kindergarten students is offered on Wednesday afternoons and evenings at a 4:45- 6 pm session and 6:30-7:45 pm session.

The Blest Are We Kindergarten curriculum is used. The year will focus on learning about all aspects of God's Love:

God's Love Creates the Universe  
God's Love Makes Me Who I Am  
God's Love Gives Me People to Love  
God's Love Gives Me Jesus  
God's Love Teaches Me to Love

The weekly activities touch the children's hearts with the message of Scripture and lay a firm foundation for young learners.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade Spanish Immersion Faith Formation Class**

A first grade class for Spanish Immersion students is offered on Wednesday afternoons at the 4:45- 6 pm session. The students will use the same Blest Are We curriculum as the other 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes. The books have the complete text in both Spanish and English side by side. The student book has 20 Chapters that follow a 3-step lesson. This program introduces the children to the Scriptures, doctrine, and tradition of the Catholic Church.

Space is limited.

**PRAYERS** - Catechists introduce and review prayers according to the diocesan curriculum guidelines. The help of parents by praying with their children at home will insure success with learning of our basic prayers. Once prayers are memorized, children will be able to participate more

**SERVICE** - All Christians are called to care for their neighbor's needs. Catholic social teachings are integrated throughout the curriculum. Through their classes children may participate in several of our parish outreach efforts.



# MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL WEEKLY PROGRAMS

## WEEKLY PROGRAMS

All middle school students grades 6-8 are invited to join us on either (or both) Sunday nights from 6-7:30 PM or Wednesday nights from 6:30-7:45pm. On Sundays we meet in the Holy Family Center and on Wednesdays we meet at Kateri Lodge.

Our Middle School Faith Formation program is designed to bring the youth into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ through a small group format. Using the Life Teen curriculum, each week we will explore different aspects of our Roman Catholic Faith. Our weekly focus will cover a wide range of topics including the Mass, the Blessed Mother, the Saints, vocations, current events, and social issues today's youth may face. Each night of Middle School Faith Formation will include prayer, either a game, ice breaker, or fun activity to get the youth acquainted with the topic, a talk, small group discussion, and time to grow together in fellowship.

**\*New this year:** 6th and 7th grade will continue using the Life Teen curriculum and 8th grade has become a Sacramental year focusing on the Sacrament of Confirmation. All three grades will continue to meet at the same time but the 8th grade students will go deeper into the Sacrament of Confirmation as they learn about the Holy Spirit in Scripture and the lives of the Saints as well as Theology of the Body. For more information, please see the Sacraments page of the Handbook.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREATS

**NET Retreat (December 3, 2017)** : NET Ministries USA will be returning to OLC to put on a one day retreat for our middle school youth! The theme is "Fully Alive" & will teach the youth about true happiness in Jesus! This retreat will include Mass, Confession, skits, ice breakers, music, and food! Please check the website and bulletin for permission form forms & more information!

**Overnight Retreat (March 16-17, 2018)** : The overnight retreat is a longer retreat designed to further deepen our middle school youths' relationship with Jesus Christ. The extra time on an overnight retreat gives youth an opportunity to get away from the busy world in order grow with one another in our faith. This retreat will include Mass, Confession, great speakers, music, praise & worship, small group time, ice breakers, games, & more! Please check the website and bulletin for permission forms & more information!

## OTHER MIDDLE SCHOOL EVENTS

Various social events and service project opportunities will be offered throughout the year. These include:

- **Epiphany Party (January 7 & 10)**
- **Exalt Night with Abacus (Date TBD)**
- **End of the Year Celebration (April 29 & May 2)**

# HIGH SCHOOL WEEKLY PROGRAMS

**S.T.E.P.S. (Serve, Tithe, Engage, Participate, Share)-** All high school students are invited to join us on either (or both) Sunday Nights from 6:00pm until 8:00pm or Wednesday Nights from 6:30pm- 7:45pm. We will be meeting at Kateri Lodge both nights.

S.T.E.P.S. is a youth group setting using The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth by St. Mary's Press. This book is an excellent program that allows for deep discussion within the many aspects of our faith. Catholic Apologetics, real life situations and current events are incorporated into the program to help the teens engage in their faith more fully. Each week activities are planned that help the teens grow in their faith, from science projects to games, you never know what we are going to be doing next. As we all know, food is the way to a teenager's heart, so there are many opportunities for the teens to feed their stomachs as well as their souls.

## HIGH SCHOOL RETREATS

Retreats are an amazing way for teens to experience and invite Jesus Christ into their lives without the distractions of their daily routines. These unique experiences promote true encounters with Jesus for many people and allow for an amazing spiritual growth.

**FALL RETREAT (December 9, 2017):** this retreat is will be held on Our Lady of Consolation Parish property. The purpose of this retreat is to show the teens that you can have an amazing spiritual experience at home.

**THE PRESENCE KALAMAZOO ( February 9-11, 2018):** this retreat will be held at Hackett Catholic Central High School in Kalamazoo. This retreat is completely centered on the presence of the Jesus in the Eucharist. With perpetual adoration, amazing speakers, fun breakout activities and daily Mass, this retreat helps teens become fully engrossed in the presence of Christ in their lives.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

**PEER MINISTRY:** Peer ministry is an amazing service group that helps plan and lead HSFF lessons, assists at retreats for both high school and middle school and serve as mentors to their peers both in the high school faith formation program and at school. Peer ministry is not for the weak of heart though. This ministry requires attendance at several meetings as well as participation in several events. Please prayerfully consider the time commitment of this ministry before applying.

## OTHER YOUTH MINISTRY EVENTS

Various social events are offered throughout the year, including but not limited to a True Christmas Party (1/7 & 1/10), Movie Night (2/21), and Last Class Celebration (4/29 & 5/2).

**GRADUATION BRUNCH:** Graduating seniors are celebrated at this amazing Mass & brunch. Juniors are expected to help serve the seniors as well. This year's graduation brunch will be held on May 20th.

## **PARISH FAITH EVENTS**

Throughout the year Faith Formation will host special nights for our entire parish to join together and explore various facets of our Catholic faith. Many of these events are considered Faith Formation class nights.

**Family Mass:** Join us as we kick-off the Faith Formation year with a "Family Mass" on Sunday, September 17, 2017 at 5:00pm. We hope to fill OLC to the brim as we celebrate beginning of our programs together! Fellowship and refreshments will follow in the Holy Family Center.

### **DOMESTIC DISCIPLESHIP- FAMILY/ PARISH WIDE CATECHESIS**

Domestic Discipleship will provide families of all ages a time and place to engage in their faith through hands on activities. Families will gather on the second Tuesday of each month for a meal, catechesis and hands on activities. These evenings will help parishioners to understand their faith better and to deepen your relationship with Christ. As a community, families will have time to pray and learn about our faith while being present with each other.

Through Domestic Discipleship, we hope to provide the opportunities for our parish family to spend time together and have fun learning about our faith!

The evenings will consist of:

- A potluck dinner and fellowship
- Hands on catechesis for all ages from DK- adult
- Take home resources to implement faith activities into daily life
- It is a supplement for OLC school families, regular Faith Formation classes and families who choose to home school their children.
- For those families working at home with their children, Blest Are We student textbooks will be provided along with a syllabus. Work can be completed on line.