



**ST. GABRIEL
THE ARCHANGEL**
Catholic Community

PARENT HANDBOOK

St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church

Faith Formation

900 Geiger St.

Neenah, WI 54956

920-725-0660

Jenny Schneider: jschneider@smcatholicschools.org

Meredith Lauer: mlauer@smcatholicschools.org

2023 - 2024

ST. GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

“St. Gabriel the Archangel is a welcoming Catholic community of disciples who encounter Jesus, joyfully and compassionately serving God’s people.”

The purpose of the Faith Formation Program of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish is to continue the ministry and message of Jesus Christ. By helping young people and families come to know Jesus better, we are more effective in bringing the Gospel – the Good News – of Jesus to those around us. We encounter Jesus in a variety of ways: in Scripture, in the Church and the Sacraments, and in our lived experience.

We recognize that the family, in all its diversity, plays THE PRIMARY role in the Faith Formation of children. Our role is to partner with the family to see that each child in our care is educated about and immersed in his or her Catholic Faith.

We believe that parents, catechists, the pastor and parish staff are all vital to the process of catechesis and nurturing of faith in our young people. Through teaching and example, we can help cultivate the gifts, talents and skills necessary for them to share, in word and action, their faith with the global community around them.

OFFICE HOURS

The Faith Formation office is located in the Parish/School building. We are the first door on the left as you enter from the West Parking Lot.

Our office hours are:

Monday	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
*Wednesday	9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Thursday	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Faith Formation Phone number is 725-0660 FAX is 722-2566

Faith Formation Team

Jenny Schneider Coordinator of Grades 1-6, 1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist
jschneider@smcatholicschools.org

Meredith Lauer Coordinator of Grades 7-12, Confirmation, and Youth Ministry
mlauer@smcatholicschools.org

SACRAMENT PREPARATION PROGRAMS

FIRST EUCHARIST

Children in Second Grade and older who have not received Communion and have been baptized are eligible for First Eucharist, provided they have at least one year of Faith Formation. The preparation program begins in **January** with a meeting for parents. The textbook will be distributed, as well as a handbook for parents to help families prepare for the celebration. The children are prepared at home and in FAITH FORMATION sessions. Families will select a Mass time on a designated weekend to celebrate the sacrament. It is expected that children will have completed Grade 1 (or at least one year, if an older student) in FAITH FORMATION, Catholic School or another setting prior to beginning preparation for First Eucharist. This gives the child better grounding in and knowledge of the faith, learning and memorization of prayers, etc.

FIRST RECONCILIATION

The practice in the Diocese of Green Bay is to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) prior to receiving First Communion. This means that most children will prepare in Grade 2. The preparation program begins in **September** with a meeting for parents. We use the textbook, [Signs of Grace: You are Forgiven](#). A handbook is given out to help families prepare for the celebration. The children are prepared at home and in Faith Formation sessions. Please consult the calendar for dates of meetings and the celebration of First Reconciliation.

CONFIRMATION

Juniors and seniors in high school, who have not been confirmed, and have been baptized and received their First Communion, are eligible to participate in the preparation program. All students **MUST** have participated in prior religious education training (Grades 9 & 10) or attend Catholic High School. *****Please Note: Confirmation Preparation is NOT part of Catholic High School Curriculum. Confirmation is prepared for at the parish of membership. Candidates who wish to prepare for Confirmation at a parish outside of their parish of membership should speak with the Confirmation Coordinator and Priest at the parish of membership before enrolling in another parish.*** Candidates select a sponsor who works with them throughout the final stages of the preparation process. **The Confirmation Liturgy is scheduled by the Office of the Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, and is set for Sunday April 28 at 1:00 pm at St. Gabriel.**

NOTE: Any child who has not received these sacraments at the customary times (Grade 2 for First Eucharist, and First Reconciliation, and Grade 11 for Confirmation) may do so by contacting Jennifer Schneider or Meredith Lauer in the Faith Formation office. All children must be baptized before receiving any of the above-mentioned sacraments. For Baptism preparation of older children please contact Deacon Tom Gritton at the Parish Office (722-4914).

Faith Formation Family Events

It is essential for the children to have family support in their Faith Formation training. This support comes in many forms. Family prayer plays a primary role in the family's activities. Your weekly attendance at Mass, and your participation in other parish celebrations also help support your child's Faith Formation. In addition to weekly classes, the following Family Events are scheduled each year:

Faith Formation Kickoff

Faith Formation Classes will begin its 2023-2024 program year with a Kick-off Mass. The evening will consist of Mass and ice cream treats. This event will give parents and children an opportunity to visit and meet other families and the Faith Formation Team. Please see the calendar for dates.

Family Advent and Lent Nights

The Faith Formation Office will plan a special event and/or service project to help families and all parish members get the most out of the seasons of Advent and Lent. These are seasons of rich symbolism and spiritual growth, and we will explore the deep meanings of these seasons with family activities and prayer opportunities.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

SUPERVISION & SECURITY

Students will be supervised during all class times by an adult volunteer or member of the Faith Formation staff. **Children are not to be dropped off more than 15 minutes before class, and must be picked up promptly after class.** Please contact the Faith Formation Office if your child will be early or late for drop off or pick up. We are not responsible for students outside of class times. We suggest younger children be escorted to/from their classroom by parents or an older sibling.

Our building security includes an electronic entry system and camera access. We know you understand the reasons for these measures, and we depend upon all parents and families to help safeguard the security of our children. We ask for your patience, your awareness of those around you, and your cooperation in not propping open doors or other actions that undermine our building safety. Please communicate any concerns to Jenny Schneider in the Faith Formation Office.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend scheduled classes consistently to be given credit for that year. Make-up work can be arranged with the program coordinator for the child's grade level. Students should be in their classroom a couple of minutes before classes begin but should **NOT** enter the classroom if the teacher is not there yet. **If students will be absent from class, parents or guardians are asked to contact the Faith Formation office before or during class time (725-0660).**

TEXTBOOK POLICY

Textbooks are on a book rental system. Texts can be taken home after every class but remain the property of the Faith Formation program. All textbooks are to be returned at the end of the school year. A charge of \$20-\$25 will be assessed for a lost or damaged book. Students in Grades 7-11 are using consumable materials,

which are theirs to keep unless otherwise specified.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Our Faith Formation Program takes place in a Catholic Christian setting. We strive to not only teach about the Christian way of life and values, but also to help our students live them. We expect consideration and respect for teachers, other students, and parish property from all children involved in our program. Teachers will explain classroom and program expectations at the beginning of the school year.

SMOKING ON SCHOOL PREMISES

St. Gabriel Parish and School is a smoke-free, tobacco-free facility. No smoking by anyone is allowed on parish/school premises at any time. Any smoking shall be reported to the Coordinator of the Faith Formation program who has authority to take appropriate action.

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS OR WEAPONS

Any use or possession of alcohol, non-prescription drugs, or weapons is strictly prohibited while on parish & school grounds or during any Faith Formation sponsored event. It should be understood by parents, students, employees and volunteer staff that all violations of municipal, state, or federal rules will be enforced by the Faith Formation staff.

TUITION, FEES AND FUND-RAISING

TUITION

The majority of the budget for the Faith Formation Program is subsidized by the parish. We ask that you, as parish members, help supplement the cost of tuition through your sacrificial giving. Parents are asked to pay 25% of the total cost of the program with the parish paying the remaining 75%. The budget includes textbooks, teaching supplies, office supplies, audio-visual materials, teacher training, capital outlay, salaries for Faith Formation staff, plus 15% of the operating cost of the building.

Tuition is \$140.00 per child for parish members with a maximum of \$420.00 per family.

We ask that all tuition be paid by April 1, 2024. Anyone needing more time, or assistance with payment, can contact Jenny Schneider at the Faith Formation office (725-0660). Any requests for exemptions will be held in the strictest confidence.

RETREAT AND MATERIALS FEES

For students receiving Sacraments, there is a fee to cover the costs of additional materials and retreats. While there is no fee to receive the actual Sacraments, these fees help us to provide the best preparation experience for each student. No student will be denied a sacrament due to costs, and there is assistance available for those who may need it. Please contact Jenny Schneider at 920-725-0660 for additional information.

SCRIP CREDITS

SCRIP is a fundraising program that allows users to purchase gift cards for participating businesses right at St. Gabriel or using the online SCRIP Purchasing program. Those businesses will then donate a percentage of sales back to St. Gabriel, and you can use a portion of that towards your Faith Formation Tuition! Participating businesses are probably places you go all the time, including Kwik Trip, Walmart, Pick N Save, McDonalds and more! It is fast and easy to set up an account, and after that it's as easy as cash! Please contact the Faith Formation Office at 920-725-0660 for information about how to enroll in the SCRIP program or visit the SCRIP table in Stingle Hall after every Mass!

** SCRIP Credit can be used for any student CURRENTLY enrolled in the Faith Formation or Sacramental Preparation. Any SCRIP Credits remaining after a tuition balance is Zero will be donated to the General Faith Formation Assistance Fund. Families that will continue the following year with Faith Formation Classes that will continue to accrue SCRIP Credits should contact the Faith Formation Office to enroll students early in order to keep their accrued SCRIP Credits.

Please note that the percentage listed next to the business on the order form IS NOT the percentage you receive for tuition credit. Administration and other fees are taken out before credits are calculated.

PROCEDURE FOR WITHDRAWAL

Please contact the Faith Formation office as soon as you know you will be leaving the program for any reason. We will follow the schedule below for refunds on tuition if proper advance notification is given:

Before 1st Class	Full refund of tuition/Sacrament Fees
Before January 1	Half of tuition refunded
After January 1	No Refund

SCHEDULING

Classes are available for students at the following times:

Grades 1-6 Wednesday from 4:30-5:30 p.m. or 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Grades 7-8 Wednesday from 5:30-7:00 pm.

Grade 9-10 Wednesday evenings from 7:15 to 8:45

Confirmation Wednesday evenings from 7:15 to 8:45

ENTRANCE AND DISMISSAL

Students in Grades 1-6 are asked to enter and exit through the West doors (Green Bay Road parking lot) of the school building. Grades 7-11 programs enter and leave through doors between the church and Stingle Hall (drive-up/drop-off carport area for church).

CANCELLING CLASSES

If the NEENAH public schools are cancelled for the day or let out early due to weather, Faith Formation classes for that evening will be cancelled. If Faith Formation classes are to be cancelled (without Neenah Public Schools cancelling), we will try to make that decision by 2 p.m. We will also send notifications via Flocknote Text and Email and post the cancellation on the St. Gabriel Facebook page. As always, we ask you, as a parent

to be the judge of driving in hazardous weather.

HOME STUDY

Home study for Faith Formation classes is available for families who cannot attend regular Faith Formation classes. This option is available upon request and acceptance by the Faith Formation staff. A contract for home study must be filled out and returned to the Faith Formation Office. Children in the home study program must meet with a Faith Formation staff person on a regular basis. Families are expected to attend all family events listed in this handbook. Regular tuition & fees apply.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Staff & Volunteers—as part of the nationwide effort to maintain safe environments for children/young people and vulnerable adults involved in our Catholic parishes, schools, and programs, a specialized training program is offered through the Diocese of Green Bay. All employees, all clergy, and those volunteers in contact with children and young people are required to participate in a VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children* Adult Awareness Session. Furthermore, the comprehensive measures being taken to create a safer environment include an on-line application process, checking of references, and criminal background screenings.

Children & Youth—during the course of the program year, parents can expect that their children will have the equivalent of at least one hour of instructional time devoted to protective behaviors for themselves. While some of the material is similar to what is mandated and offered in the public school setting, the content also emphasizes our dignity as children of God, and a Catholic Christian understanding of healthy relationships.

For more information about these efforts, you can visit the Diocese of Green Bay's web site at www.gbdioc.org and click on the "Protecting Our Children" tab, or contact Jenny Schneider, Faith Formation Coordinator and parish co-LoSEC (Local Safe Environment Coordinator).

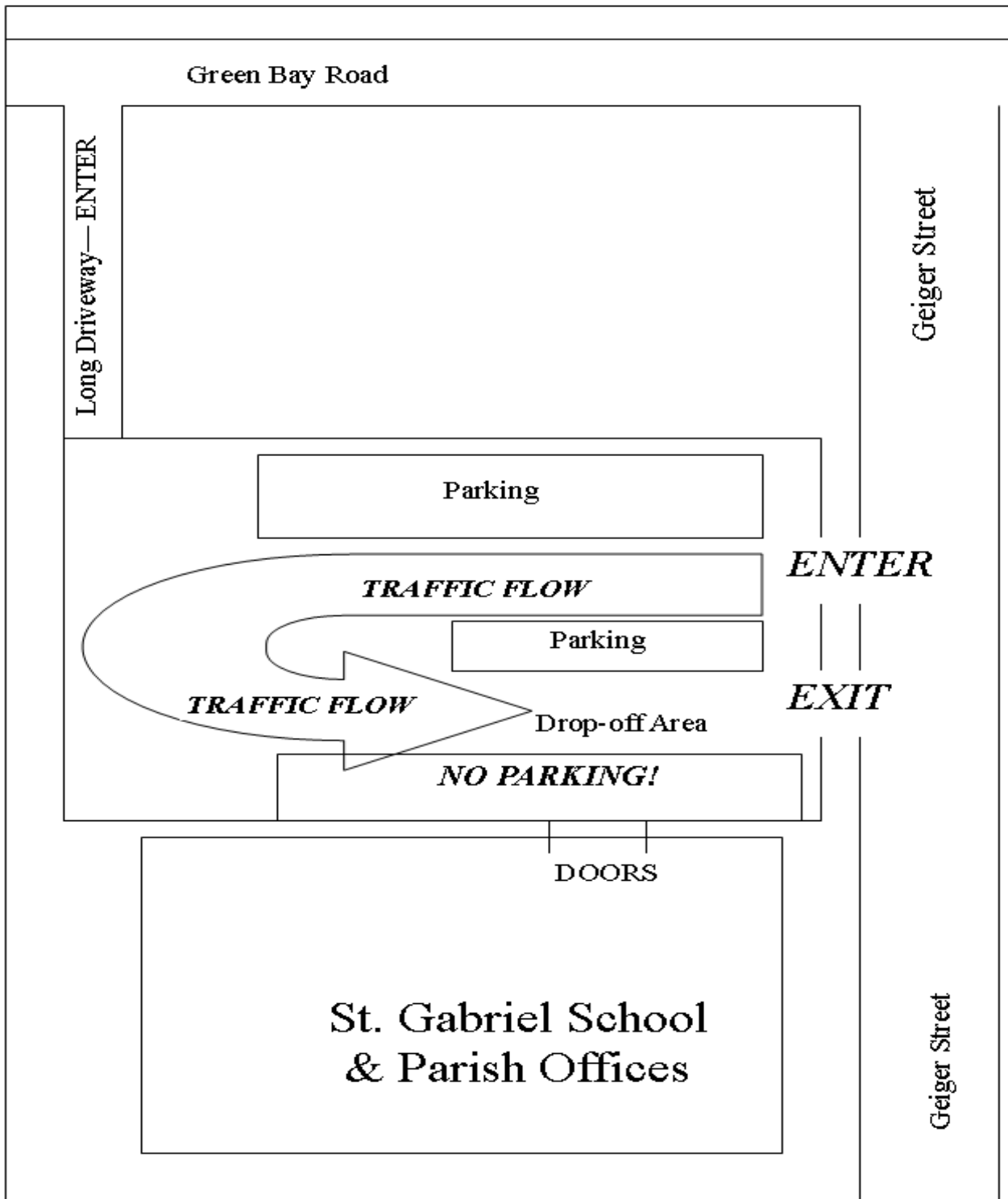
PARKING

Please read the following information on Parking Lot Safety and look at the map very carefully. All drivers and children are asked to be especially vigilant, so as to avoid any accidents. Also, please do not block the entrance to the parking lot or school. This is a fire lane.

The safety of our children is a primary concern for parents and teachers alike. During the course of our classes, we have *several hundred* people going in and out of our building and the parking lot. It is essential that we all cooperate to make this process safe and orderly. **PLEASE** take a moment to read and abide by the following guidelines for **anyone** doing drop-off or pick-up of a FAITH FORMATION student.

1. There is **NO PARKING** in the area in front of the school doors. If you are parking your car, please do so in the painted lines further away from the doors.
2. ENTER the parking lot **ONLY** from the long drive on Green Bay Road, or via the lot entrance from Geiger Street. Follow the 'One Way' signs.
3. EXIT the parking lot **ONLY** via the drive onto Geiger Street.
4. **ALWAYS** be attentive for any pedestrians making their way to and from the building and vehicles. This will be especially critical during the fall and winter afternoons/evenings when it gets dark earlier, and/or the parking lot is slippery.

5. DO NOT allow your children to RUN freely/unattended through the parking lot. Remind one another every week to be careful when getting to and from class.
6. Communicate any safety questions or concerns to Jenny Schneider, Faith Formation Coordinator, at 725-0660 or jschneider@smcatholicschools.org. Thank you for your cooperation!



Year Content for Grades 1-11
Text for Grades 1, 3-6 *We Believe* published by Sadlier
No texts for Grades 7-11

Grade 1

Goals: That the child discovers that each person is called through Baptism to be a disciple of Jesus and a member of God's family, recognizes that God is Creator of all, learns about Jesus and how to live as Jesus did, and experiences the Church as God's Family.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Teach your child these prayers:
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Hail Mary
 - Lord's Prayer (Our Father)
 - Glory Be
2. Pray spontaneously as a family at meals and/or bedtime, birthdays, etc.
3. Attend weekend Mass, and celebrate Sundays and special family and church feasts (Advent/Christmas & Lent/Easter).
4. Read/tell Bible stories and listen to the children re-tell them.

Grade 2

Texts used are for Sacramental preparation.

Goals: That the child discovers that each person is called as a disciple of Jesus to love, forgive and serve others, understands that Jesus is the fullest expression we have of how much God loves us, understands that Baptism and Eucharist are two of the Church's Sacraments of Initiation and discovers that forgiveness and reconciliation are important parts of the Church's life.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Attend weekend Mass and participate actively with your child.
2. Participate in the parish's preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion
3. Participate in the retreat for First Reconciliation and the parent/child meeting and retreat for First Communion
4. Celebrate your child's First Reconciliation and First Communion
5. Read/tell the story of the Last Supper
6. Review prayers listed under Grade 1 Parent Responsibilities

Grade 3

Goals: That the child learns that disciples live, celebrate and serve within the People of God, deepens his or her understanding of the Trinity, realizes that he or she is called to follow Jesus as a member of the Catholic Church.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Help your child experience and observe the work of parish ministers.
2. Involve your child in a shared service activity.

3. Attend Sunday Mass and actively participate with your children.
4. Attend Reconciliation with your child.
5. Read and tell Bible stories and listen to your child share these stories in his/her own words.
6. Review the prayers listed under the Grade 1 Parent Responsibilities and The Apostle's Creed

Grade 4

Goal: That the child becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, learns how God's law leads us to happiness, prays with heart and mind open to what Jesus asks, celebrates the liturgical year by learning about it and celebrating it in Sunday Mass and the sacraments, chooses to follow a well-formed conscience, shares his/her love of God and others by living the commandments and lives out the virtues of faith, hope and charity each day.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Spend time praying and reading from the Bible
2. Go over the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes with your child
3. Attend Weekend Mass
4. Invite your child to lead family meal prayer
5. Apply principles of good stewardship to the care of the earth and its resources
6. Review and recite the prayers listed above.

Grade 5

Goal: That the child becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, learns that we meet Jesus in the sacraments, prays as Jesus taught us to pray, celebrates that Jesus is present in the sacraments, learns to love the Mass chooses to love and serve as Jesus did, shares in the Church's mission by giving witness to their faith and lives out the sacraments by being faithful and inviting others to follow Jesus.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Help your child understand and memorize the Nicene Creed.
2. Attend weekend Mass and other liturgical celebrations.
3. Take an active part in the sacraments of our Church.
4. Discuss issues of peace and justice with your child.
5. Continue to pray with your child.

Grade 6

Goal: That the youth become familiar with the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) and their importance in the life of discipleship and in the life of the community of disciples and the church, understand that the Old Testament is foundational to Christian tradition, enter more fully into the Liturgy of the Word at Mass and relate the message and moral values proclaimed by the prophets with those proclaimed by Jesus.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Participate in the celebration of the Mass with your son/daughter each week.
2. Assist your son/daughter in identifying the possible forces of violence, oppression and injustice in the Fox Valley area and discuss ways the family can help oppose these forces.

3. Read or pray from the Bible occasionally in a family setting.
4. Participate with your child in a communal reconciliation service in the parish
5. Include prayer as a part of your daily lives.

Grade 7/8

EDGE

Goal: To help teens have a personal encounter and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. Students will participate in rotating semesters with subjects including the Creed, Morality, Sacraments, and the Liturgy.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Participate in the Mass on Weekends and Holy Days with your child.
2. Include prayer for and with your children as part of your daily life.
3. Increase your child's awareness of conflicts in the community or world and how these situations might be addressed from a Gospel perspective.
4. Talk to your child about how faith relates to everyday life.

Grades 9/10

High School Ministry

Goals: Following the directives of the Green Bay diocese, we will follow the curriculum guides in order to help teens come to an understanding of the fullness of faith, which ultimately is rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The teens will be able to integrate the teachings of Scripture & Church into their life decisions, grow in their understanding of Jesus as the Jesus of History and the Lord of Faith, can name and describe the main qualities and virtues of Jesus as revealed by His words and actions, recorded in the Gospels, apply the example of Jesus in a personal effort to be more responsive to the needs of those around them, understand the nature of faith as a personal relationship with God, through their baptism as disciples of Jesus.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Participate in the weekend Mass and Holy Day Liturgies with your children.
2. Engage in discussion that examines the problems facing society and our role as Catholics in helping to resolve them. In the process, help your child identify ways in which he or she can serve the parish and the community.
3. Participate with your child in the parish Reconciliation Services and Service Projects during Advent and Lent in addition to parent designated classes throughout the course of the year.
4. Engage in family prayer.

Confirmation

The goal of our Confirmation preparation program is to equip students to be disciples of Jesus Christ through prayer, active participation in the sacraments, and service and foster a desire to know Jesus and love Jesus better throughout their lives. With guidance from the Diocese of Green Bay and a wide range of curriculum materials, students will learn how to apply Catholic teaching to everyday life and live in the joy of the Gospel.

All Confirmation students are required to attend a Confirmation retreat, scheduled by the Faith Formation office. If the student is unable to attend the scheduled retreat, we will work together to find a suitable alternative. Additionally, students will need a Confirmation Sponsor. As defined by Canon Law, a Confirmation sponsor must be more than 16 years of age, a confirmed, practicing Catholic, and cannot be the candidate's parent. Students will be asked to work closely with their sponsor throughout their time of preparation, and sponsors will be required to attend the Confirmation Mass. Opportunities through the year will be available for parents and/or sponsors to attend classes with their candidate.

The date for the Confirmation Mass is set by the Diocese of Green Bay, and is usually available in August. St. Gabriel will celebrate the Confirmation Mass with area parishes, as directed by the Bishop. The Bishop or the Abbot of St. Norbert Abbey will be the Celebrant of the Mass.

For additional information about the Sacrament of Confirmation, please contact Meredith Lauer at mlauer@smcatholicschools.org or 920-725-0660.

Thank you for enrolling your children in the St. Gabriel Faith Formation Program! We encourage you to review the Faith Formation Family Partnership Guidelines below with your family. We look forward to seeing you all in September!

Faith Formation Family Partnership

When your child was baptized, he or she began an intimate relationship with Jesus. Your child became one of Jesus' disciples and a member of our Church family. At Baptism you assumed the awesome responsibility to nurture and support your child's growth in discipleship, and it is our honor to support you and your family in your faith journey. We recognize that every student and every family has individual needs, questions, and desires. We encourage questions and conversation, and we will work hard to earn your trust as we build up our faith community.

As a parent, you are the first teacher of faith to your child, and they will learn the most about their faith from you. The Faith Formation Program at St. Gabriel the Archangel seeks to support your efforts at home, and we ask that you keep us informed of any questions or concerns that may arise throughout the year. Everything we do, at every grade level, has this goal in mind:

Children will discover that each person is special; made in the image and likeness of God, and that all life is a gift from God, who loves us and has a unique plan and purpose for each of us.

In order to achieve this goal, parents/guardians agree to:

- *model the faith we seek to share with our children;*
- *participate regularly in the Eucharist and other parish celebrations with our children;*
- *provide opportunities in the home for our children to experience family prayer, the celebration of religious and family traditions and works of care and service to others;*
- *ensure that our children regularly attend classes, Masses and special events planned for them.*
- *participate in the parent sessions as outlined and scheduled;*
- *cooperate with our children's catechists and maintain open communication with them*

As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please don't hesitate to give us a call or send an email. We would love to hear from you, and we look forward to growing in faith together!

Jenny Schneider
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Meredith Lauer
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Grades 1-6, First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Grades 7-10, Confirmation, and Youth Ministry