



Youth Faith Formation (YFF) Handbook Sacred Heart Parish, Gettysburg, SD YFF Mission Year 2021-2022

Youth Faith Formation Parish Mission

The purpose of our Youth Faith Formation Parish Mission is to bring our young people and youth to Christ, help them to love Holy Mother Church and our Catholic Faith, foster in them their Catholic identity and make them disciples of Christ (Mt 28:16-18). We help our young disciples, along with their parents, to better understand our Catholic Faith and receive the seeds of Faith in their hearts, to have steadfast Hope, to share in Divine Love that never fails, and to engage in their life-long, Catholic Faith Formation.

Parents have the first responsibility for the Faith Formation of their children. If they want the assistance of their Parish Priest and Parish, they need to discern God's Will and God's call for them to fulfill their responsibility by offering their stewardship of time, talent, and treasure which directly benefits their children. We need parents to volunteer to help with this mission as a catechist, substitute catechist, or in other ways to serve God's children. Parents need to take an active role in cooperation and support of our parish's YFF Mission. Our young disciples of Christ need reinforcement in the ways this mission will help them; otherwise, it may have little long-term benefit for them. Parents need to work with their children to help develop spiritual discipline by teaching them their prayers and using them, taking their children to Sunday and Holy Day Masses and to have their children participate in Faith Formation missionary activities available in our parish and diocese to the extent possible.

COVID-19 Considerations

We will continue to follow the guidelines set forth by the Diocese of Sioux Falls and the SD DoH in the event there is a resurgence of COVID-19 in our community. Parents have the option of sending their children to Faith Formation with masks; however, it is not the responsibility of catechists or volunteers to enforce mask wearing even if there is a diocese-wide mandate in place. Face masks and hand sanitizer are available at the building entrances. We encourage all young disciples to practice frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.

Please do NOT send your children to Faith Formation if they are feeling under the weather or running a temperature! Any young disciple with a temperature over 99.5 will not be permitted to join Faith Formation and/or will be released if they are already present. Parents will be expected to come pick them up.

There will be NO in-person sessions in the event that the Gettysburg school is closed due to a COVID-19 related issue. In that case, materials will be sent home with our young disciples to study on their own with a parent. Weekly assignments will be posted on the Faith Formation portal which is located at www.sacredhearted.org.

If your child has tested positive for COVID-19 or if they have been tested and have not yet received their results, we ask that they do NOT participate in any in-person Faith Formation activities until they have been cleared by testing negative.

If you are concerned about sending your child(ren) to Faith Formation during a pandemic, you may teach them at home. We will provide you with the resources you will need.

Registration, Attendance and Arrival Times

We require all families to register for this new mission with current information. To maintain order and safety, your young disciples should arrive no earlier than 3:30 pm, even on days when Gettysburg school lets out early, unless we are able to shift our start time. On early release days, snacks will not be served. All young disciples are expected to arrive on time and not leave until they are dismissed. They are not allowed to play outside the buildings before or after class unsupervised without their parent or designated adult guardian.

Grades 1 – 5 meet weekly from 3:45 – 5:00 pm on Wednesdays unless we are able to shift to an earlier time on early release days. Snacks will be served in their mission center rooms from 3:30 – 3:45 pm. Anyone arriving after the mission session begins will be marked for late attendance. Chronic tardiness may result in disciplinary action. Grades 6 – 12 meet weekly on Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8:00 pm.

Note: The Gettysburg school calendar has early release dates on some Wednesdays during the school year. Parents are expected to pick up their young disciples after school on those days and deliver them to Faith Formation by 3:45 pm unless we are able to shift our start time earlier.

Absences

If for any reason your young disciple will be absent, please let us know by calling the Mission Center office at 765-2359 or email sacredheartre@venturecomm.net. To ensure the safety of our young disciples, attendance is taken at the beginning of the session. If a young disciple is not in attendance and we have not heard from you to let us know that he/she is not coming, we may text or call you to let you know that your young disciple did not arrive. Ongoing absences may result in a parent meeting with Fr. Simon.

Communicating Cancellations and Changes

If there is no school or school is dismissed early due to bad weather, there will be no Faith Formation activities that day. Also, even if school was not dismissed, classes may be cancelled at the last minute if inclement weather causes poor visibility or other hazardous driving conditions. Please check the web site www.getshc.org, the street display sign in front of church, and parish bulletin for schedule changes and special events. To receive automatic YFF text notifications, please text **SACRED** to **97000**. (This is a free service. Your cell phone carrier's standard messaging rates may apply. You need to opt into this service.)

Online Portal

We provide a secure online portal for our young disciples to access their weekly Faith Formation lessons in the event there is a need to study from home. This portal is to be used for Faith Formation only. Young disciples need to maintain a level of communication (content and language) on the portal that is commensurate with its purpose.

Food and Snacks

Young disciples are permitted to bring water bottles to YFF. Water cups are available in the bathroom and in the hall for use in those locations. No other food is permitted during Faith Formation without prior permission of the Faith Formation Coordinator on duty and/or Father Simon other than the sealed snacks provided. We expect everyone to be responsible young disciples by cleaning up after themselves as determined by their adult supervisor. If this becomes a persistent problem as determined by Fr. Simon, this privilege may be revoked.

Discipline

Every person is always to be treated with respect and kindness as made in the image and likeness of God. Since our catechists have a short period of time to work with our young disciples, they have little time to spend on discipline and cannot deprive the other young disciples of their limited opportunity. Courtesy and respect for the catechists, volunteers and other young disciples is required. Disruptive behavior will be addressed as follows:

- 1st Offense:** Verbal correction by the catechist or volunteer: The catechist, at his/her discretion, may hold some or all young disciples late if the session is disrupted by one or more young disciple.
- 2nd Offense:** Removal from class and sent to the Virtue Formator or Coordinator on duty for the remainder of the class period: Parent(s) may be contacted by Father Simon.
- 3rd Offense:** Removal from class and parent(s) contacted by Fr. Simon: The young disciple will be allowed to return to class the following week accompanied by a parent.

Anyone caught defacing parish property, including leaving a mess in the bathrooms, will be reprimanded, and we will contact the parents immediately. If any of the above problems persist, the young disciple and parent(s) will meet with Father Simon to discuss disciplinary issues and a behavioral agreement will be signed before the child may return to Faith Formation.

Cell Phone and Electronics Policy

Cell phones, tablets, smartwatches and other electronic devices are NOT allowed. All devices are to be powered off and deposited in the electronics box before Faith Formation and picked up after Faith Formation. If a young disciple violates this policy, the following steps will be taken:

- 1st Offense:** The catechist or supervisor will take it, and the young disciple may pick it up in the office at the end of the Faith Formation session.
- 2nd Offense:** The young disciple's phone will be held in the office for a parent to pick up.
- 3rd Offense:** Young disciple's phone will be given to Father who will return it personally to the parent(s) during a disciplinary meeting.

Mandatory Safe Environment Program

The diocese requires us to teach a Safe Environment curriculum (either "Circle of Grace" or "Made in His Image") to each grade every year. These lessons will be taught in person with attendance recorded and reported to the diocese. The curriculum reinforces the message that we are created by God out of Divine Love, and so, we need to respect and love others and ourselves. The "Circle of Grace" lessons teach that a "Circle of Grace" surrounds us individually. It is up to each one of us to allow only positive, healthy, safe and respectful people into our Circle of Grace. "Made in His Image" lessons seek to instill in our young disciples a greater sense of God's love for them and the inviolable dignity that each and every person enjoys since they are made in the image of God. Contact the parish office for more information or to opt your child out of participating.

Special Mission Activities for Disciples of All Ages

Special mission activities for parishioner disciples of all ages include Opening & Closing Mission Year Masses, Eucharistic adoration and Benediction, praying the Most Holy Rosary, missionary formation and annual retreats. Age appropriate mission activities include liturgical training such as liturgical service roles and choir, sacramental preparation and their celebration, annual Masses and retreats for all ages, and regular confessions. Volunteers and additional contributions will be needed to make these activities happen in an effective way. Mission announcements are posted in the bulletin, on the electronic sign and on our parish website at www.getshc.org.

We look forward to another great year helping your young disciple(s) grow in their Catholic Faith and helping you and Jesus form them to become more like Him! Thank you for your help supporting a positive Faith Formation environment that is conducive to that goal.