

# OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE FAMILY FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK

*(Revised 9/5/2018)*



*“Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”*

*(Mark10:14)*

# INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to provide you as parents/guardians a comprehensive overview of our Family Faith Formation Programs. Our mission is to “*work in partnership with parents/guardians to create an atmosphere of Catholic Christian values that permeates home, church, and community for all children in our parish, broadening our outreach beyond OLG School. We develop and support a variety of programs and activities that help to deepen our children’s relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church, to strengthen our families, and to provide opportunities to serve others.*”

Your support and partnership is **essential** not only to the success of our programs, but more importantly, to your child’s faith life. The Second Vatican Council taught, “*Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children.*” Our parish is committed to bring our best efforts and resources to assist you in this most important task.

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

OLG Family Faith Formation programs are available to **ALL** children, regardless of religious background or which school they attend. We provide a variety of programs for families. They include the following:

- “**Little Lambs**” **Child Care Program** during the 11:00 a.m. Mass - (*ages 6 mos. – 3 years old*): This program is play-centered and may include story, prayer, song and snack. We will offer the same snack all year to enable us to accommodate any food allergies. It is offered during the 11:00 Mass on Sunday mornings. Child care is located in the OLG preschool classroom located in the Parish Hall. Drop off of your child(ren) will be in the front parish hall door starting at 10:45 a.m. and pick up of your child will be at the south back door. This will enable the two child care providers to stay in the class room and monitor the south back door without leaving the classroom.
- “**Lord’s Lions**” (*pre-school*): Children learn about God’s love for them so they can “roar with love”. Classes involve play stations, including art and/or a craft, learning about Bible stories, sharing, prayer, song and snack. Parents/guardians need to bring their child(ren) to the school **at 10:45 AM**, before attending the 11:00 Mass. *Parents/guardians are required to assist with two classes during the year.*
- “**Good News Bears**” (*Kindergarten*): Classes involve play stations, including art and/or craft, learning more about Bible stories, sharing and celebrating the Good News of Jesus, prayer, song and snack. Parents/guardians need to bring their child(ren) to the school **at 10:45 AM**, before attending the 11:00 Mass. *Parents/guardians are required to assist with two classes during the year.*
- **Sacramental Preparation Year One**: This is the first year of a two year preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Classes take place on Sunday mornings from **9:30-10:45 AM** in the school where children will learn more about the Bible, particularly the stories of Jesus and his disciples. They will also learn more about the Sacraments and their significance in our Church and in their lives. Children will also attend the 11:00 Mass with their families where they will participate in the Children’s Liturgy of the Word, deepening their understanding of the Sunday readings in their everyday lives.

- **Sacramental Preparation Year Two:** This is the second year of the two year preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Children not attending OLG School will participate in our Sunday morning classes from **9:30-10:45 AM**. [OLG School students receive preparation in their classroom]. In addition **ALL** children will attend the 11:00 Mass with their families where they will participate in the Children's Liturgy of the Word, deepening their understanding of the Sunday readings in their everyday lives. Parents/Guardians are also required to participate in our Family Faith Sundays programs which include preparation classes for parents/guardians, Family Learning Centers prior to each sacramental celebration, and a Saturday Morning of Reflection prior to the celebration of First Communion. There is a separate Orientation meeting that families are required to attend in the fall which will provide additional information specific to this program.
- **Adventurers (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades):** Students will have opportunities to reflect on the Sunday Scripture readings and learn more about what they mean, how they relate to the Catholic faith, and how they connect to their everyday lives. Particular focus will be given to the Catholic Church, introduction to morality, and sacraments. Classes take place on Sunday mornings from **9:30-10:45 AM** in the school. Third and fourth graders are also invited to participate in the Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 11:00 Mass, deepening their understanding of the Sunday readings in their everyday lives.
- **Visionaries (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades):** Students will have opportunities to reflect on the Sunday Scripture readings and learn more about what they mean, how they relate to the Catholic faith, and how they connect to their everyday lives. Particular focus will be given to the Bible and the mystery of God. Classes take place on Sunday mornings from **9:30-10:45 AM** in the school.
- **Family Faith Sundays (K-8<sup>th</sup> grades):** This is a multi-generational program where parents/guardians and their children (K-8) gather to learn more about their faith, pray together, play together, and interact with other families. Sessions take place generally on the first Sunday of the month (October-June) from 9:30-10:45 am in the Walmesley Center followed by a family Mass at 11:00 am in the church. In addition, there will be monthly opportunities to gather as families for a variety of service projects both within the parish community and with the community at large.
- **"The Mighty Doves"—Children's Liturgy of the Word during the 11:00 Mass (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade):** To make Sunday Mass a more positive and meaningful experience for children, we provide a "Word" experience that is designed to meet the developmental and spiritual needs of the elementary-aged child. Children come to the 11:00 am Mass with their family and are dismissed at the beginning of Mass and return at the Offertory. During the children's "Word" service, we focus generally focus on one reading—usually the Gospel reading. This is followed by a child-oriented reflection that often includes an activity to help the Scripture stories have more meaning in their young lives.



# CURRICULUM

The Archdiocese of Seattle has created curriculum guidelines based on those developed by the US Catholic Bishops. This curriculum is the same for both Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs (although the programs are adapted for a Sunday school format). A theme has been identified for each grade to focus on. They are:

<b>Pre-School</b>	God made you. God made me. God loves you and me.
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Creation, Jesus and God's Family
<b>Sac. Prep 1</b>	Creation, Jesus and the Church
<b>Sac. Prep 2</b>	Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Mass
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>	The Catholic Church
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	Morality / Catholic Doctrine
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	Sacraments
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	Scripture
<b>7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> Grades</b>	Mystery of God

## CURRICULUM MATERIALS

### **Pflaum Gospel Weeklies**

This publication provides weekly Gospel-based lessons based on the liturgical year that is age-appropriate for preschoolers through eighth grade. These weekly lessons help children to understand the basics of the Catholic faith and inspire them to seek out ways to practice their faith in their daily lives. In addition, the Gospel connection helps prepare children for Sunday Mass with their families. One exciting component of this series is its website, which not only supplements our curriculum but also provides additional resources for families, including "Family Pages", seasonal ideas, and a quarterly family newsletter. Check it out by going to [www.pflaum.com/families3](http://www.pflaum.com/families3)

### **Finding God Together**

"Finding God" is the curriculum used for Sac Prep Years 1 & 2 and is published by Loyola Press. It is also the same program used at OLG School. In addition, it has an award-winning free integrated web site, [www.FindingGod.com](http://www.FindingGod.com), which supplements our family faith formation program materials used in the classrooms. Please make the most of this website and use it as a tool to initiate and reinforce faith formation at home. There are links for kids, teens, parents/guardians, and family life. The links include *Activities, Stories, Games, Chapter Reviews*, among many others. These will give everyone in the family a great, fun and engaging way of learning about our Catholic faith.

Sadlier Publishing: "We Believe Catholic Identity Retreats" which are designed to nurture family's spiritual growth and relationships with Jesus Christ. They offer prayer, reflection, activities, discussion and meditation focused on themes. The four themes are related to the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church – Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Morality, and prayer.

Loyola Press Publishing: **God Made the World** for our preschool age students. The God Made Everything series is a comprehensive early childhood program designed to nurture and enrich the faith of children ages, 3,4, and 5. Each Sunday, Parents and Guardians will receive, and overview of the Chapter completed, and topics on Your Child; Reflective questions and scripture; Prayer; and Things to do at home.



## **THE MASS**

The Mass is the best place for all of us to grow in faith as we gather with others to be fed by the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Jesus. In particular, the celebration of Eucharist is the “source and summit” of our Christian life because in it is found the **entire** treasure of the Church: Jesus Christ. It is our most important prayer as Catholics and the greatest prayer that we can offer to God; it is Jesus Christ’s own living Word and sacred meal which he shares with us. Thus, it is **very important** for families to come to Mass **every** weekend to gather with others and participate in this celebration. We particularly encourage you to come to the 11:00 Mass so that your child (ren) will have the opportunity to participate in the Children’s Liturgy of the Word.

**Children’s Liturgy of the Word** – This special liturgy for children is an extension of the Faith Formation sessions. During the Introductory Rites at the 11:00 AM Mass the celebrant invites the children to go to the DeMazenod room (east side of church basement) where God’s Word is read and explained to them in a way easier for them to understand. The children return to their families in the church for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Through this experience, they learn to appreciate “full, active, and conscious participation” in the Liturgy to which Christ calls us as his worshipping family.

**FAMILY FAITH SUNDAYS** – Family Faith Sunday is held the first Sunday for families and their children ages K-8<sup>th</sup> grade from 9:30 a.m. to 10: 45 a.m. in the Walmesley Gym. Families are then invited to proceed to the 11:00 a.m. Mass to be part of the procession as a family. Children during the Family Faith Sunday participate in the Mass as Readers, Alter Servers and Assistant Ushers.

Parents are the primary teachers of the faith to their children and to support this important role, wonderful activities are planned that nurture prayer, and open discussion on faith topics that can continue at home with take home activities. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet families in our parish community as you share your faith together.

**PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES** – This special collection of prayers for our children and youth contains all the Catholic prayers children are asked to learn growing up. There is even a prayer guide and check list for each grade to assist in this effort. Parents / Guardians are urged to set aside time daily to pray together as a family. This will help your child to learn some of the universal prayers of the Catholic Church at the recommended grade level. At the same time, it will enable your entire family to experience in a deeper way God’s personal and constant loving care for you. So...*Pray FOR and WITH your children.*

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

### **RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS ADAPTED FOR OLDER CHILDREN**

Our parish welcomes children (4<sup>th</sup> grade or older) along with their families, on a journey of preparation for initiation into the Catholic community. Those who have never been baptized will prepare for the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Those already baptized in other Christian communities will make a Profession of Faith into the Catholic Church and will celebrate the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

Participants in RCIA Adapted for Older Children (RCIA/C) enter a process, a way of growing in response to God’s call. This process occurs within the entire faith community of OLG.

Parents/guardians of children in the RCIA process often find that their child's journey towards initiation prompts them to think about their own faith, and perhaps to re-examine it in a new light. Thus, the RCIA/C initiation process calls for significant family involvement in terms of some parental class attendance, participation in special rites during Mass, family prayer, and living the experience of a Christian life each day. In addition to the regular Sunday class schedule, there are additional times the group meets for such things as retreats and formal RCIA Rites here at our parish and at St. James Cathedral.

## **FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST COMMUNION**

Parents / Guardians have a significant part in this special preparation for their children's celebration of these important sacraments. During the Family Faith Formation sessions on Sunday mornings, the catechists work with the children to prepare them for these important sacraments in their faith journey. But it is the ***lived faith at home***, role modeled by the parents/guardians that best helps the child (ren) integrate his/her learning's into their young lives.

**Two-year preparation time:** In conjunction with the new Archdiocesan guidelines, preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion is done in a two-year term.

***Sacramental Preparation 1:*** This is the first of the two-year preparation period. The children in this group will be:

- baptized 1<sup>st</sup> graders who have been active in our Sunday School Program or OLG Parish School, *OR*
- new students who are in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, *OR*
- Children in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who have not been catechized, e.g., they do not go to a Catholic school, or have not participated in some formal sacramental preparation in a parish.

***Sacramental Preparation 2:*** This is the second year of preparation. Children in this class will be those who have done the first year preparation. New second graders can join this class if they have been catechized, e.g., they go to a Catholic school, or if they have participated in some formal sacramental preparation in a parish. The children will prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Communion during this year. In addition, there are sessions with parents/guardians held during our Family Faith Sundays. Family Learning Centers prior to each sacramental celebration, and on a morning of reflection with rehearsal prior to First Communion. They are an important component of each child's preparation and are required for celebrating First Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Please refer to your Sac Prep 2 calendar and ***give these dates priority in your schedule.***

## **YOUTH CONFIRMATION PROGRAM (offered every other year)**

High school students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade or who are at least 16 years old are encouraged to receive this sacrament. OLG offers Confirmation Preparation every other year. Preparation includes class sessions that cover a variety of topics and are centered on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, service and pastoral experiences, and retreats. Confirmation is usually celebrated in the spring during the Easter season. Preparation begins in the fall. For more information, go to [www.olgseattle.org/confirmation](http://www.olgseattle.org/confirmation)



# CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Please know that your child's safety in this diverse, urban neighborhood is of utmost importance to us and we have taken precautions to ensure this is a "safe place."

## **HARASSMENT / SEXUAL ABUSE / SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

All volunteers who will have unsupervised access to your child are required to complete the training session for "Called to Protect Seminar," the Archdiocesan Safe Environment program which seeks to educate clergy, employees and volunteers on the subject of sexual abuse. A criminal background check is also part of the clearance procedure. All our catechists, classroom assistants, greeters and staff members have been carefully screened and have participated in this required Safe Environment training.

## **DROP OFF AND PICK UP OF STUDENTS**

Our policy is that children who participate in our weekly classes will be released **only** to parents/guardians or designated alternates as recorded on the registration form. ALL students (except Sac Prep 2) will be dismissed from OLG School. Sac Prep 2 students will be dismissed from the DeMazenod Room in the basement of the church (access on the east side of building next to the school). We ask parents / guardians to drop off and pick up your children **at the door** of the classroom and **not in the parking lots or outside the front doors of the building**.

[Note: Visionaries' students (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) can be leave on their own if written permission is given by their parent/guardian.

Please drop off your children for our regular Sunday morning classes **punctually**:

- **9:25 am** for Sac Prep I, II, and RCIA for Older Children, Adventurers and Visionaries and pick them up **promptly at 10:45 am**. **Children who are not picked up on time** will be taken by staff to the church for Mass.
- **10:45 am** for Lions and Good News Bears and pick them up **immediately after the 11:00 Mass**. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** A parent/guardian **must be at church** while your child (ren) is participating in in these programs. This is for your child's safety and well-being.

Your child's safety is of paramount concern to us and we appreciate your cooperation as together we take this responsibility very seriously.

## **ACCIDENTS**

There is a First Aid kit available for all program participants. We will not administer First Aid without checking the student's allergies, etc., as indicated on the student's medical form. We will also inform parent/guardian if first aid was needed and what it involved. *[All accidents and injuries will be recorded on an Accident Form, which includes student name, date, nature of accident/injury and steps taken. These forms are then submitted to our Parish Administrator]*



## **CUSTODIAL/NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT RIGHTS**

Please complete your child's registration form carefully and **speak with your child's catechist if you have any special issues regarding the health and security of your child. If your child is not to be released to a certain individual, make the staff and catechist aware of it.** If you would like duplicate copies of mailings sent to a joint- or non-custodial parent, please advise us. We strive to make the experience convenient for you as we understand the challenges of parenting today.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

According to Archdiocesan Policy and Civil Law, if a catechist suspects child abuse, it **must** be reported to Child Protective Services within 48 hours. Mistakes can be made so, if your child has sustained an injury, please feel free to communicate with your catechist.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The rules to be followed by students will be clear and public. Discipline will be characterized by charity, compassion and fairness with an understanding that these are children in formative ages. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Class rules will be set with the children on the first day of class. Politeness and courtesy are valued in each classroom.

Each child is a unique gift of God. We recognize that each child comes to class with many different morning experiences. Parental support is crucial as we strive to help our children learn positively the value of discipline. With your help, we will work together to provide a faith-filled, gentle and pleasant atmosphere.

## **CRISIS PLANS**

**INCLEMENT WEATHER OR SNOW:** If it is unsafe to travel, we will post on our parish website that classes will be cancelled. However, as you know the road conditions can vary widely—even in West Seattle—and you are encouraged to use good judgment regarding traveling. When in doubt, it is best to stay home and use our online resources noted in our "Curriculum" section to have "Sunday School" in your home!!

### **DURING CLASS:**

**Earthquake:** Children will be advised to get under their desks and hold on to the desk until all movement stops and the "All clear!" is given by the teacher. When it is safe, another "All clear" signal will be given to the catechists to take the students cautiously and quickly to the Walmesley Center (if safe) or parking lot. Students will be released **only** to individuals authorized to pick them up. They will be signed out OR remain until a staff member instructs otherwise. A Designated catechist will be assigned each year and will be given a set of keys so that they can unlock the Walmesley Center doors and inform the director of Faith Formation programs and the Sacristan at the church so that an announcement will be made to direct parents/guardians to go to the Walmesley Center for pickup of their child (ren)

**Fire:** Children will be moved cautiously but quickly to the Walmesley Center (if safe) unless otherwise directed by emergency personnel. Students will be released **only** to individuals

authorized to pick them up. As with our Earthquake policy, for Fire, a designated person will be assigned each year to open the Walmesley Center and notify appropriate personnel.

**Intruder:** The facilities are usually locked. In case of an intruder, children will be kept in the classrooms with locked doors until a staff member or emergency personnel signals the “All clear”. Again, children will be released **only** to authorized parents/guardians.

### **DURING DISMISSALS IN THE CHURCH:**

If children are in the DeMazenod Room during an emergency, as soon as it is safe, they will be moved, with adult supervision, to the Walmesley Center where you will pick them up. They will never be left alone; a staff member will remain with them.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Volunteer support is what makes our Family Faith Formation programs possible. We ask each family to choose from the following at least one volunteer opportunity to fulfill this year. There are many options to suit a variety of schedules. As with our parish school, all volunteers who work directly with children are required to complete the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training and submit a background check. [**Note:** *If you have a child enrolled at OLG School, all time given will count as service hours.*]

**Hospitality:** Each family is asked to contribute something to share with others at least once during the year for our Family Faith Sundays.

**Set-up/Take down:** Assist with the set-up/take down for Family Faith Sunday program.

**Art/Project Assistant:** Assist with the various projects in the class room and during our Family Faith Sunday program.

**Classroom Aide:** To regularly assist the catechist in the classroom as needed.

**Table helper:** FF Sundays consist of families gathered at tables for various activities. You would assist with those activities, creating a welcoming atmosphere for those at the table.

**Babysitting Helpers:** Assist in caring for the younger children during our FF Sunday programs, as needed.

**Liturgy:** Assist as needed with the monthly family masses liturgies and/or with our Christmas Eve mass and pageant.

**Community Outreach:** This is the way we live out the Gospel message as part of our programs. Assist with outreach efforts such as “Boxes of Joy”, food drive, and care for the Parish Community Garden.

**Sewing Projects:** From time to time we need volunteers to sew costumes, banners, or other items for assemblies or family liturgies.

**Helping Hands:** Assist with a wide variety of projects as needed, such as preparing materials for FF Sundays, organizing supplies, copying, and whatever else that might come up!!

**Volunteering during our Vacation Bible Camp:** This year, consider volunteering in our vacation bible camp which offers many opportunities to assist from working one day to all five days as a station leader, leader assistant, environment, set up and take down of vacation bible camp.