

Our Family Faith Goals:



Espiritu Santo Roman Catholic Church

Religious Education

2405 Philippe Parkway

Safety Harbor, Florida 34695

www.espiritusanto.cc

(727) 726-8477 ext. 1312



2024-2025

Family Handbook

Religious Education & Faith Formation is not a program ... it is a way of living and growing every day. It is rooted in the home, and is ONGOING!

Parents, Grandparents, Guardians – you are the first, foremost and forever models of the faith for your children and families. May God continue to bless you in your beautiful mission!

The Domestic Church - The Home as the First Church

(1655-1657) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

From the beginning, the Church was formed from believers
"and their whole household."



2024-2025 Formation Year

Dear Families,

Welcome! On behalf of Espiritu Santo Roman Catholic Church and School, thank you for your commitment to your child & family's faith formation. It is our hope and prayer that during this year we may grow together in our love and discipleship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As parents / guardians, you have an essential role in the formation of your child's Catholic identity. The time and energy you spend promoting a rich faith in your child now will bear fruit in so many ways as they mature. You are aware that *example* is the best way to teach children about the Catholic faith. Your family prayer and reflection, participation in Mass and reception of sacraments, giving of your time, talent, and treasure to your parish community, your neighboring community, and God's global community will teach your children more about their faith than any religion class can possibly accomplish.

The success of our Religious Education & Faith Formation process depends upon the support and active participation by our parish families. Please offer your assistance to our staff to ensure that our education efforts are a reflection of the talents and gifts which God has blessed us with.

May we all grow much closer to God through Jesus Christ and promote "compassion" wherever we go.

Together with you in ministry!

Father Len Piotrowski - Pastor

Subscriptions / Publications to consider for Daily Reflections and Biblical Study

<https://giveusthisday.org/>

<https://us.magnificat.net/>

The Catholic Study Bible (NAB)

Introduction to the New Testament—
Raymond E. Brown

New Jerome Biblical Commentary—
Raymond E. Brown

Paulist Biblical Commentary

Paulist Press *Child's Guide* (to the Mass, Sacraments, Beatitudes, among others)

Loyola Press *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*

Embracing the Way of Jesus, Pope Francis

The Religious Education Office offers an abundance of enrichment resources.
Contact Sue for your faith needs.
sue@espiritusanto.cc

Share
Your
Faith!

Family Resources for Faith Sharing...

Lectionary Resources:

USCCB

<http://www.usccb.org/>

Loyola Press Sunday Connection

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/sunday-connection>

Pflaum Weekly For Families

<https://www.pflaumweeklies.com/family-catechesis-the-gospel-for-all-ages/>

Curriculum links below for your reference and resource.

LOYOLA PRESS Finding God (upgraded links to be provided)

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021>

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)

<https://www.cgsusa.org>

Other Faith Enriching Resources

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en.html>

<https://www.americamagazine.org/>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/inside-the-vatican-o0uz0h/>

<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/franc>



Dear Families,

Welcome and thank you for choosing the Espiritu Santo Domestic Church model as a layer of your religious education and faith growth. The staff eagerly looks forward to serving you during the 2024-2025 formation year.

We hope this handbook will provide you with valuable information about the formation year. It is important that you read through and discuss the information as a family. **You are asked to sign acknowledgement and agreement of this on your registration form.** *Additional forms, releases and policy agreements will be provided and added to your registration file.*

As parents you know how important your role is in the education and faith formation of your child. Please take the time to engage in your child's lessons. Break open the Word together, reflect on sacred scripture - apply the messages to your own family life. Make it relevant. Make it meaningful. Make it matter. This is how you will make it last! Our formation year will offer special focus on whole family catechesis, your domestic church enrichment. What a beautiful faith-focus it will be!

The clergy, staff, and catechists thank you for the privilege of working with your family. The year promises to be rich in meaning for all.

Privileged to serve you in faith!

Sue Sferra
& your Espiritu Santo Family

"It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions." Our Holy Father Pope Francis

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis

On the subject of fully living a life of faith:

“You can have flaws, be anxious and even be angry, but do not forget that your life is the greatest enterprise in the world. Only you can stop it from failing. You are appreciated, admired and loved by so many. Remember that being happy is not having a sky without storm, a road without accidents, a job without effort, a relationship without disappointments.

“To be happy is to stop feeling like a victim and become the author of your own fate.” It’s walking through deserts, but being able to find an oasis deep in the soul. Is thanking God every morning for the miracle of life. It’s kissing your children, cuddling your parents, having poetic moments with your friends, even when they hurt us.

“Being happy is letting the creature that lives in each of us live, free, joyful and simple. You have the maturity to be able to say: “I’ve made mistakes”. It’s having the courage to say I’m sorry. It’s having the sense to say “I need you”. Is having the ability to say “I love you”. May your life become a garden of opportunities for happiness... that in spring he may be a lover of joy and in winter a lover of wisdom.

“And when you make a mistake, start over. Because only then will you be in love with life. You’ll discover that being happy isn’t having a perfect life. But use tears to irrigate tolerance. Use your defeats to train your patience.

“Use your mistakes with the serenity of the sculptor. Use pain to tune into pleasure. Use obstacles to open the windows of intelligence. Never give up ... Above all never give up on the people that love you. Never give up on being happy, because life is an incredible spectacle.”



The Catechism of the Catholic Church:
Part Three, Section Two, Chapter Two—

“You Shall Love Your Neighbor As Yourself”

[The Christian Family](#)

[2204](#)

"The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*."⁹ It is a community of faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament.¹⁰

[2205](#)

The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father's work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task.

[2206](#)

The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members' respect for one another. The family is a *privileged community* called to achieve a "sharing of thought and common deliberation as well as their eager co-operation as parents in the children's upbringing."¹¹

Admission, Curriculum, Participation

Updates, forms and other information will be made available through our website



Espiritu Santo Public and Live-Stream Mass Schedules

Espiritu Santo Public Mass Schedule:

Saturday Vigils: 4:00PM, 6:00PM

Sunday: 7:30AM, 9:00AM, 10:00AM, 10:30AM, 12:00Noon, 6:00PM

Weekday Masses Daily Mon-Fri: 7:45AM, 8:30AM, 12:15PM

Espiritu Santo Live-Stream Mass Schedule:

Weekdays (Mon-Fri) 8:30AM, Sundays 9:00AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday 2:30PM (or by appointment)

Communal Celebrations during Advent and Lent

Devotions, Marian Prayers, Rosaries, Adoration:

See bulletin and website for updates to these and all schedules

Admission

Admission to the Religious Education / Faith Formation process is open to all families! It is encouraged that families be registered in the parish, to enable the fullest faith experience for families - and to enable the parish staff to best serve you!

Curriculum - Religious Education / Faith Formation

Loyola Press web resources below. Password is **FG-2021** for all links

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021/directors-and-principals>

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021/catechists-and-teachers>

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021/parents-and-students>

The Loyola Press *Finding God Series* for grades K-8 - the Loyola Press *God's Gift: Eucharist & Reconciliation* for First Communion Preparation - the Loyola Press *Confirmed in the Spirit* and Ignatius Press *YOUCAT: Youth Catechism* for teens - Loyola Press *Sunday Connection*, the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy *Rite of Christian Initiation*, Loyola Press *A Well Built Faith*, Pflaum *Visions: What the Church Believes and Teaches* for older teens, adults and ongoing supplements for all - are all designed to help children, youth and whole families understand what Catholics believe and how to put those beliefs in to practice at age appropriate levels. With the help of these and other websites, you can stay connected with the curriculum: www.loyolapress.com, www.usccb.org, www.dosp.org, www.espiritusanto.cc

Sacrament Preparation

Reconciliation / First Communion and **Confirmation** preparation are two year processes - beginning in the primary level, usually grade 1 for Reconciliation / First Communion and grade 7 for Confirmation. Specialized curriculum is used for each. Preparation is also available for older children in need of formation and the sacraments through specialized sessions in a process called **RCIA for Youth**. Families are expected to assist in the formation process by **regularly & actively participating in the faith**. An important way of participation is by being active in the Mass at least weekly.

ARK Assessment—Grades 2 through 12

For the purpose of assessing the Faith Formation progress, the Diocese of St. Petersburg has established guidelines for administering the Assessment of Catholic Religious education to grades 2-12. The questionnaire will be administered as directed by the Diocesan Office in the spring of the school year.

Sessions are offered in a hybrid model - combining student classroom sessions, whole family catechesis on campus, online and at home domestic church enrichment. When we physically gather (in classrooms or larger spaces, the policies and guidelines on the following pages will be followed):

Class Participation

Since each grade level of our faith formation has its own curriculum focus, regular participation in all grade levels is essential for the development of mature faith -

Faith Formation is a life long process and should continue beyond the early formative years of life through the adult years.

In the event a session must be missed, please contact the office and / or catechist in advance to ensure you have all of the resources necessary to teach the lesson at home.

Mass Participation

Parents seeking to raise their children in the fullness of the Catholic faith, should see to it that their family participates in Mass each Sunday and every holy day of obligation. Nothing is more important for faith formation than our celebration of the Eucharist with our Parish community. Please make every effort to participate in Mass regularly.

Espiritu Santo Public Mass Schedule:

Saturday Vigils: 4:00PM, 6:00PM

Sunday: 7:30AM, 9:00AM, 10:30AM, 12:00Noon, 6:00PM

Weekday Masses Daily Mon-Fri: 7:45AM, 8:30AM, 12:15PM

Espiritu Santo Live-Stream Mass Schedule:

Weekdays 8:30AM, Sundays 9:00AM

ARK Assessment

For the purpose of assessing the Faith Formation progress, the Diocese of St. Petersburg has established guidelines for administering the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education to grades 2-12. The questionnaire will be administered as directed by the Diocesan Office in the spring of the school year.

This policy is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students, and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the Sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries.

EXPLANATION OF HARASSMENT:

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior involving verbal, written or physical conduct or communication.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviors, which could include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical, mental or verbal abuse
2. Insults, jokes, or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status (es)
3. Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
4. Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors
5. Unwanted sexual comments (serious or humorous)
6. Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
7. Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness
8. Unwanted forced involvement in activities (e.g., physical, religious, etc.)
9. Coercion of religious styles or personal beliefs upon a participant
10. Intimidation in front of a group or forced personal sharing in groups
11. Inappropriate media or music use which would violate this policy

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible, but will be consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

Harassment Policy for Non-Employment Situations in Schools/Centers, Parish Religious Education and Parish Youth Ministry Programs of the Diocese of St. Petersburg

POLICY:

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires that each parish, Catholic school or early childhood center establish and adopt this policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of a Christian, professional and supportive educational environment for all persons engaged in or involved with religious education programs, schools and early childhood centers, and parish youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school, or early childhood center will be responsible for off campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish-, school-, or early childhood center-sponsored event.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

This policy intends

- ❖ that each individual is free from physical, psychological or verbal intimidation and harassment in the schools, early childhood centers, religious education and youth ministry settings;
- ❖ that each individual involved in schools, early childhood centers, religious education and youth ministry programs maintain and further develop attitudes and behaviors which express respect for others and are reflective of each person's God-given dignity;
- ❖ to encourage a heightened sensitivity toward behaviors that others may find offensive and intimidating, whether these behaviors refer to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, familial status, veteran status or disability.

Weather

We will follow the County & Parochial School guidelines pertaining to weather alerts, evacuations and canceled sessions.

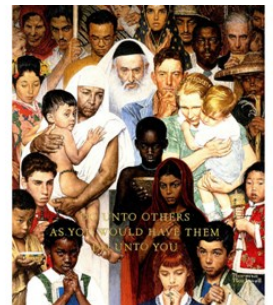
Religious Education / Faith Formation Discipline Policy

Students in Faith Formation at Espiritu Santo Roman Catholic Church and School are expected to behave in a manner that reflects the ideals of our Christian faith and which promotes a positive learning environment in the session. To be able to assist children in practicing self control suitable to their age, as well as establish a learning environment that is calm and orderly, we have some basic rules:

1. Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself.
2. Talk respectfully - no name calling, teasing, cursing, etc.
3. Follow directions the first time.
4. Bring required books and supplies to class.

Severe disruption of class will result in the child being removed from class and the parent being called. A meeting will be held with the Director at that time.

THE GOLDEN RULE:
Treat everyone as you wish to be treated!



Espiritu Santo Catholic Church and School

Safe Environment Procedures

Our Parish Community continues training by a program established by the Diocese of St. Petersburg to become a “**Safe Environment**” for all our children, youth, and adults. All adults directly involved with children and youth are required to attend this training class and proof will be kept on file.

In cooperation with our “**Safe Environment**” guidelines, we ask parents / guardians:

- Please park your cars and walk your child to class.
Do not drop your children off in the parking lot.
- Be sure that you have walked your child in to the proper classroom, **with the teacher or assistant present in that room prior to you leaving.**
- Please arrive at your child’s classroom promptly at dismissal time to sign him / her out. ***
Do not wait in the parking lot for your child.
Students will not be permitted to leave their classroom without you, or persons authorized by you. *** *middle and high school sessions may dismiss without parent signature (unless stated otherwise in writing by parent).* ***

THANK YOU for your interest and cooperation in the safety of all those entrusted in our care.

SUMMARY OF DIOCESAN POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Diocese of St. Petersburg remains committed to the well-being of those who are served by the Church, and has placed two rings of protection around our children, youth and vulnerable adults - **a criminal history background check and safe environment program training.**

Background screening - is the first line of defense. A Level 2 Criminal History Background Check of anyone who wishes unsupervised access to children, youth or vulnerable adults. It is a check of an individual’s background predicated upon an electronically taken and transmitted set of digital fingerprints matched against prints contained in the FBI National Criminal Information Center database and the FDLE criminal history system database.

Safe Environment Program (SEP) Training - is the second line of defense. Both SEP Training and Level 2 Criminal History Background Check are required **before** an individual can have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of children and youth or access to vulnerable adults.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg does not accept background screening reports from any federal agency, state agency, or private information vendor regardless of the screening organization and regardless of the position that an individual currently holds or may have held in the past—NO EXCEPTIONS— This means that the sharing of criminal history reports between entities is not allowed.

The complete text of the Policy of the Diocese of St. Petersburg for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults is available on the diocesan website: www.dosp.org