

March 30, 2017

Dear Parents:

We, the Faith Formation team of St. Anne-Tomball, unite in partnership with parents as they guide their children in the process of becoming faith-filled, loving Catholic Christians. Assisted by the Spirit of Jesus, we provide information about the Catholic faith, formation in the Gospel way of life, and prayer experiences that invite spiritual transformation. We believe that the presence of Jesus makes the ministry of Faith Formation effective, so that young people may respond to the message through growth in faith, liturgy and Christian service.

**Please read this informational letter carefully as some of our policies, requirements, and fees have changed.**

**Our faith formation registration will officially begin on April 1, 2017.** Regular registration and fees will end on July 31, 2017. As of August 1, 2017 the late cost will apply and must be paid in full. All those who take advantage of early registration may set up a payment plan to help with the cost of their child's faith formation and/or sacramental preparation fees. Anyone with an outstanding faith formation balance from the 2016-2017 year will not be able to register with a payment plan option without either taking care of the outstanding balance prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 or paying in full at the time of registration.

There are also discounts for multiple children in the same formation level. Another way to get a discount is by volunteering to be a catechist for the upcoming year. The only requirement of a catechist for any level is that they take Virtus: Protecting God's Children which is good for 5 years and a free training course on how to safe guard the children in our care. This is a requirement for anyone who ministers with children in the Church. For information on how to register for Virtus please go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). We are ALWAYS in need of faith formation volunteers in many capacities.

Please see the other side of this letter for faith formation programs and costs. We have to have a faith formation fee due to the materials needed to run our programs. We would love to work with you if finances are a difficulty but we must know the nature of your need. We will have a form to be completed if seeking financial assistance and this information will be kept confidential. Anyone, requesting financial assistance would be required to contribute their time and talent as a catechist for the full year in each level (elementary and/or upper level) of programming in which they have a student registered in lieu of a full payment although an initial deposit will show a commitment to our programs.

There is a commitment from Father Tommy, our staff and volunteers (catechists) as well, along with you to teach your children about Jesus Christ and His Church. We thank you for registering your children which will help us plan our catechetical year.

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
Faith Formation Team  
St. Anne Catholic Church-Tomball

Father Thomas W. Hopper  
Pastor

Barbara Lowell  
Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Bridget Landin  
6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

## **ELEMENTARY FEES**

### **Regular Faith Formation (Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade)**

If registered between April 1-July 31, 2017 - \$60 (1 child)    \$100 (2 children)    \$140 (3 children+)  
If registered after July 31, 2017- \$70 (1 child)    \$110 (2 children)    \$150 (3 children+)

### **Sacramental Preparation (2 – 5<sup>th</sup> grade)**

If registered between April 1-July 31, 2017 - \$50 (1 child)    \$70 (2 children)    \$90 (3 children+)  
If registered after July 31, 2017- \$70 (1 child)    \$90 (2 children)    \$110 (3 children+)

## **JUNIOR HIGH/HIGH SCHOOL FEES**

### **Faith Formation (6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade)**

If registered between April 1-July 31, 2017 - \$95 per youth    \$150 (2 youth)    \$200 (3 youth+)  
If registered after July 31, 2017- \$105 per youth    \$160 (2 youth)    \$225 (3 youth+)

### **Sacramental Preparation-Reconciliation/Eucharist (6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade)**

If registered between April 1-July 31, 2017 - \$50 per youth    \$70 (2 youth)    \$90 (3 youth+)  
If registered after July 31, 2017- \$70 per youth    \$90 (2 youth)    \$110 (3 youth+)

### **Confirmation (11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade) – Does NOT include retreat cost.**

If registered between April 1-July 31, 2017 - \$50 per youth  
If registered after July 31, 2017- \$70 per youth



## **St. Anne Faith Formation - Frequently Asked Questions:**

- 1. When does Faith Formation begin and end for the upcoming year?** Faith Formation begins in mid-September and ends in mid to late April. Our calendar is primarily based on your child's academic calendar. We try to follow the local schools' calendars in regards to longer vacation times and by allowing the children to become acclimated to school before beginning faith formation and sacramental preparation. We also have a framework curriculum which we are asked to adhere to by the Archdiocese and therefore need a certain amount of classes to teach the curriculum.
- 2. What do the fees cover?** Our faith formations fees cover all the materials needed for the class/classes. This varies depending on the program but includes some or all of the following: books, supplies, snacks or dinner (for upper grades), certificates, and any guest speaker fees (upper grades). The program directors are held accountable for their budgets to the parish finance council. All families may pay in full at the time of registration or if all previous year's balances are paid in full there is also a payment plan option. If you are in need of financial assistance we can help on a case by case basis and there is a form to request for this assistance. All financial assistance is kept confidential in the parish office.
- 3. How many classes can my child miss and still be in the program and not have their sacrament delayed and why is attendance important?** Your child is allowed to miss 4 classes over the fall and spring semesters combined which equals to about 25% of classes since we normally have 20-22 classes. It is not wise to miss all four in a row as the child may miss a large quantity of the same material. After 4 absences, you may need to speak to the program director about continuing with the program. Attendance is taken and is important so that we know the child is present to receive the information given about their faith. Even though an exit exam is not given, the student's attendance helps us to know that the child is actually here to receive the information given. NOTE: although we appreciate notification that your child will be/was absent – it still counts as an absence. Please DO let us know if it is an out of the ordinary absence such as hospitalization or long term illness. As parents, you may use your best judgement on your child coming to class when they are sick or for family events.
- 4. Why does my child need a separate sacramental preparation class before making 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation/Communion or Confirmation?** The archdiocese mandates that sacramental preparation be separate and distinct from regular faith formation. There is no way we can adequately cover the material during regular faith formation while we are teaching everything else our faith teaches. Also, although traditionally sacraments are done at certain grade levels, we often see children coming into our programs beyond the traditional years so we are not able to cover the information in only one year.
- 5. How many years must my child be in faith formation before making a sacrament?**

**For 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation(Penance)& Eucharist (Communion) –** The child must do one full year of faith formation before entering the sacramental preparation program. In their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of regular faith formation/catechism they must also be in a sacramental preparation program to be prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation & Eucharist. If the child attends a catholic school they may begin the sacramental preparation program in the parish beginning in their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. The one year of faith formation is for children no matter which age they begin faith formation. For example: if a 4<sup>th</sup> grade child begins faith formation in their 4<sup>th</sup> grade year they may make their sacraments in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade so long as they continue with formation and be enrolled in the sacramental preparation program.

**For Confirmation –** For those young people desiring to make confirmation in 11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> grade, they must be enrolled in regular faith formation (Life Teen) in their 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade years or 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> to make Confirmation in either 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. After 2 years of regular faith formation they may enter our one year confirmation program which consists of Confirmation only classes (Life Teen in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year is optional). We also require the teens to make 2 retreats one of which will be a Confirmation specific retreat in the spring of their Confirmation year, as well as a 1<sup>st</sup> year retreat in either year of regular faith formation (9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade).

6. **What must my child do if they are over the age of 7 years and not baptized in any Christian faith?** Your child must enter the RCIA for children program. Usually this consists of a first year of regular faith formation in their grade level. Their second year would consist of in-depth catechesis with other candidates and brought in to the church during the Easter vigil of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year.
7. **What are the times for religious education/faith formation?** Unfortunately space and other ministry events do not allow us the opportunity to have all the grade levels in the same time period. Elementary Faith Formation is on Sunday mornings both at 8:30-9:45am (English) & 10:30-11:45am (Spanish). The junior and senior high levels (Edge/Life Teen) are on Sunday evenings from 3:45-7:00pm which includes mass and dinner. The teens will take turns with mass ministries during the night's we have faith formation and there may be a couple of times when they will be asked to arrive a little earlier to prepare for their responsibilities at mass. This mass is a requirement beginning in the 2017-2018 school year as per the instructions of our pastor, Fr. Tommy.
8. **Why is attending Mass important if my child is in faith formation?** Attending mass as a family is critical for your child's learning and living of the catholic faith. Our children learn by our examples and also prioritize their lives the way the adults around them do. If it isn't important to the family, it will not be so for the child and often confuses them especially when preparing for a sacrament that isn't received regularly. Studies from the Fuller Youth Institute have shown that at least 50% of teens will not practice their faith after high school. "Research demonstrates that parents are the #1 influencers when it comes to spirituality in young people—yes, even teenagers." Parents are the primary teachers of the faith for their children – we are here to help you teach your child. But we cannot be the only example of the faith the children have in their lives, especially when we only have them for such a small percentage of their lives. While we cover a vast portion of the faith in our programs, one thing we cannot give them is the sacraments. The Eucharist can only be received within the context of mass with the exception of those who are home bound. What a phenomenal gift we have in the Eucharist which is the source and summit of our Catholic faith.
9. **So, if my child is not preparing for a sacrament should they be enrolled in faith formation?** Absolutely. We have faith formation classes available from PK-12<sup>th</sup> grades. Our Shepherd, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo is quoted as saying "We learn from womb to tomb." Just because we have finished one sacrament, this does not mean we are done until it's time for the next sacrament. We understand that our families' lives are busy and demanding and so we offer a variety of way to have your child receive their faith formation including homeschooling your children (generally for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and below). Children learn different things at each grade level even if topics are repeated they are learning from the perspective they are currently at and much of what is taught builds on the previous grade level. Imagine a child not having to learn math after 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and returning to begin Calculus in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. How lost would that child be and what would that say about the priority of math in today's world. The same can be same for learning AND living our faith.
10. **Why should I consider being a catechist?** Becoming a catechist (religion teacher) only has 2 requirements 1) a desire to share the faith with young people (children or teens) and 2) taking a 3 hour Protecting God's Children (Virtus) class which is good for 5 years before a shorter refresher course is need. PGA is a requirement not only of our Archdiocese but of all who minister to children in the Catholic Church. This class helps us be more aware of safeguarding the children in our care. You do NOT have to have a degree in Catholic Theology to be a catechist. The word catechist comes from the word Catechesis which means "echo". All that is needed is to be an echo of our faith to the young church. The benefits: a catechist discount on your child's formation fees, a chance to make a difference in the lives you echo the faith to, it is great way to further deepen your own faith life (remember: We learn from womb to tomb!), and most importantly a way to share and be the example of our faith with your own children. Children may not remember everything we say but they will remember what we do more than anything.

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All parents need to be part of their child's religious education.

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