



Handbook

Jodi Tooke, Director of Faith Formation

stmcc.education@gmail.com

(501) 623-3233 (office)

Introduction

As the primary educators of your children parents (or guardians) have the right and the duty to choose the kind of educational environment you determine best suites your children's needs. The family is the primary but not the only or exclusive educating community. The family has the primary responsibility for faith formation while the parish supports the family in its responsibility. The parish and the family share a common goal—the spiritual development of their children and their participation in the life of the Church.

We've chosen *Alive in Christ* published by Our Sunday Visitor to provide a comprehensive presentation of the essentials of our Catholic faith, repeating key themes each year to build on each child's knowledge of the faith. The seven essential, foundational themes of the faith—Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Church, Morality, Sacraments, and Kingdom of God—provide a structural framework to deepen understanding as children progress through the grades.

You have the right to educate your children consistent with your moral and religious convictions, taking into account the cultural traditions of your family and the dignity of each child. Learning at home is a viable option for education of children. Parents who choose to educate their children at home are not alone in this task. The Church encourages and supports them. In Deuteronomy 11:18,19 we are charged, "Therefore take these words of mine into your heart and soul...Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up..." Children should know the happiness possible with complete faith in Christ and learn to be the best version of themselves.

A parish is one expression of the Mystical Body of Christ. To separate children from the life of the parish deprives them of rich spiritual benefits and wonderful faith experiences. We pray that as a community we can face any challenge. This handbook outlines curriculum by grade and offers resources to help you guide your children in their faith journeys.

In Christ,

Jodi Tooke
Religious Education Director
St. Mary of the Springs Catholic Church
100 Central Ave., Hot Springs AR 71901

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents (or guardians) are the primary educators of their children and are responsible for initiating their children into Sacramental life. They serve as models for their children by being committed Christians.

Parents should expect to:

- Worship with your families regularly
- Engage in discussions about the material being studied including sharing your understanding and perspective; there will be take-home materials every week
- Pray for your child's spiritual growth every day
- Support and encourage completion of assignments, activities, and expectations

EXPECTATIONS FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL AT A GLANCE

Our Faith Formation program seeks to help children learn about the Catholic Faith and reinforce their love of the Lord. The curriculum has four focus areas: Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ, and Christian Prayer, as reflected in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, Second Edition.

1. **The Creed.** This is our faith. Children learn not only about salvation history, but also about how God continues to create and how each of us is a manifestation of that creation. God spoke to our fathers and continues to speak to us and invites us to be a part of the History of saving love. (CCC Part One)
2. **The Sacraments.** We receive God's free gift of grace through the sacraments at each stage of life. They are about God's love and an opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ personally and to grow in His love. The foundation of Christian living, the sacraments also bring us into communion with one another in the Church. (CCC Part Two, Section Two)
3. **Life in Christ.** God has provided us models for living virtuously in salvation history from the Ten Commandments to the Beatitudes and the Greatest Commandment. Ultimately, He sent Christ Himself who calls us to live like Him and in Him. Christianity is not just a set of rules but rather a complete way of life. (CCC Part Three)
4. **Christian Prayer.** A fruitful prayer life comes with practice. Those prayers we learn to recite give us words when we have none and help us to join in community prayer. We learn to converse with God through various expressions of prayer enriching our relationship with Him. (CCC Part Four)

Kindergarten/1st Grade

Catechists: _____

“For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26

Focus: Jesus Christ

Our goal: Prepare children to receive our Lord into their minds, hearts and souls.

1. **The Creed.**

Who is God?

We are created in God’s image

Who are the saints?

2. **The Sacraments.**

Baptism

3. **Life in Christ.**

Heaven

4. **Christian Prayer.**

+ Sign of the Cross / Prayer before Meals / Our Father / Hail Mary / Glory Be

RESOURCES

The Catholic Children’s Bible from St. Mary’s Press

Group’s Bible Big Books

Our Sunday Visitor ‘Alive in Christ’ – parish 1

2nd Grade (First Communion Preparation)

Catechists: _____

“This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” Luke 22:19

Focus: Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist

Our goal: Prepare children to receive our Lord into their minds, hearts and souls.

1. **The Creed.**

Who is Jesus?

2. **The Sacraments.**

Penance/Eucharist

3. **Life in Christ.**

Conscience

Cardinal Virtues

4. **Christian Prayer.**

Act of Contrition / Fatima Prayer

+ Sign of the Cross / Prayer before Meals / Our Father / Hail Mary / Glory Be

RESOURCES

The Catholic Children’s Bible from St. Mary’s Press

Blessed from Dynamic Catholic

3rd Grade

Catechists: _____

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit..." John 15:5

Focus: The Church

1. **The Creed.**

Annunciation

Immaculate Conception

2. **The Sacraments.**

Anointing of the Sick

3. **Life in Christ.**

Theological Virtues

4. **Christian Prayer.**

Sacraments

Morning Offering

Act of Contrition / Fatima Prayer

+ Sign of the Cross / Prayer before Meals / Our Father / Hail Mary / Glory Be

RESOURCES

The Catholic Children's Bible from St. Mary's Press

'Alive in Christ' – parish 3 from Our Sunday Visitor

4th Grade

Catechists: _____

“This is my commandment: love one another as love you.” John 15:12

Focus: The Moral Life

1. The Creed.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

2. The Sacraments.

Confirmation

3. Life in Christ.

The Ten Commandments

4. Christian Prayer.

Commandments

Hail Holy Queen

+ Sign of the Cross / Prayer before Meals / Our Father / Hail Mary / Glory Be /
Act of Contrition / Fatima Prayer / Sacraments / Morning Offering

RESOURCES

The Catholic Children’s Bible from St. Mary’s Press
'Alive in Christ' – parish 4 and 5 from Our Sunday Visitor

5th Grade

Catechists: _____

*“The water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
John 4:14*

Focus: The Seven Sacraments

1. **The Creed.**

Who is the Holy Spirit?

2. **The Sacraments.**

Confirmation

3. **Life in Christ.**

The Ten Commandments

4. **Christian Prayer.**

Nicene Creed

Prayer to St. Michael

+ Sign of the Cross / Prayer before Meals / Our Father / Hail Mary / Glory Be /
Act of Contrition / Fatima Prayer / Sacraments / Morning Offering /
Commandments / Hail Holy Queen

RESOURCES

The Catholic Children’s Bible from St. Mary’s Press
'Alive in Christ' – parish 4 and 5 from Our Sunday Visitor

6th/7th Grades

Catechists: _____

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path." Psalm 119:105

Focus: The Word of God in the Old Testament

1. **The Creed.**

What is the Paschal Mystery?

Marks of the Church

2. **The Sacraments.**

Holy Orders

Matrimony

3. **Life in Christ.**

Beatitudes

Works of Mercy

4. **Christian Prayer.**

Stations of the Cross

Rosary – Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, Glorious Mysteries

+ Sign of the Cross / Prayer before Meals / Our Father / Hail Mary / Glory Be /
Act of Contrition / Fatima Prayer / Sacraments / Morning Offering /
Commandments / Hail Holy Queen / Nicene Creed / St. Michael

RESOURCES

The Catholic Children's Bible from St. Mary's Press

'Alive in Christ' – parish 6 from Our Sunday Visitor

Confirmation Preparation – Year 1

Catechists: _____

“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him,” this God has revealed to us through the Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 2:9

Focus: In the first year we emphasize how Catholics worship.

Our goal: Raise disciples who will stay involved in the Church past adolescence and into the rest of their lives.

1. **The Creed.**

Liturgy and Liturgical Seasons

2. **The Sacraments.**

Review all Sacraments

3. **Life in Christ.**

Ten Commandments

Works of Mercy

Saints

4. **Christian Prayer.**

Cardinal/Theological Virtues

Deconstruct the ‘Our Father’ and ‘Hail Mary’

RESOURCES

Chosen from Ascension Press

Decision Point from Dynamic Catholic

The New Catholic Answer Bible: New American Bible Revised Edition, by Paul Thigpen and Dave Armstrong

Confirmation Preparation – Year 2

Catechist: _____

“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God.” 1 Corinthians 2:12

Focus: In the second year we emphasize what Catholics believe.

Our goal: Prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation that gives us the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God.

1. **The Creed.**

Salvation History

What are the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit?

2. **The Sacraments.**

Review the Sacraments

3. **Life in Christ.**

Beatitudes

The Church and its Precepts

4. **Christian Prayer.**

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Deconstruct the ‘Apostles’ Creed’

RESOURCES

Chosen from Ascension Press

Decision Point from Dynamic Catholic

The New Catholic Answer Bible: New American Bible Revised Edition, by Paul Thigpen and Dave Armstrong

High School (Confirmed)

Catechist: _____

“And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11

Focus: The Word of God in the Old Testament

We seek to engage young adults where they are on their faith journeys with questions we all ask at some point in our lives. *The Search* offers seven episodes for thought-provoking discussion of the Gospel, posing seven questions: What do you seek? Who are you? Why a God? What's our story? Who is Jesus? Am I saved? Why a Church? Catechists will respond to questions and concerns from the youth to offer a holistic way to pray, to learn about and to live our Catholic Faith.

1. **The Creed.** Learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and explore the mission and structure of the Catholic Church.
2. **The Sacraments.** Appreciate how God works through the Seven Sacraments and the sacred liturgy.
3. **Morality (Life in Christ).** Understand the foundations for Catholic morality and apply the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes to life today.
4. **Christian Prayer.** Make prayer a central part of your life by learning about the types of prayer that are part of the Catholic faith.

RESOURCES

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition, from Saint Mary's Press

The Search from Augustine Institute on FORMED at formed.org

The New Catholic Answer Bible: New American Bible Revised Edition, by Paul Thigpen and Dave Armstrong