

St. Raphael's Parish Faith Formation Guidelines, Procedures, and Protocols 2025-2026

Dear St. Raphael's Families,

As we embark on another meaningful year of sharing our faith, I am so excited to share the faith with your children! These guidelines, procedures, and protocols are designed to support you every step of the way, ensuring a safe, nurturing, and enriching experience for all.

VIRTUS Training

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our care, **all volunteers and employees of the Diocese of Rockville Centre must be VIRTUS trained.** If you choose to volunteer in the classroom more than three times this year, you must be VIRTUS trained. This helps to ensure the safety of our students. This essential two-hour seminar provides valuable insights into child safety and outlines reporting procedures if you ever have concerns. We offer VIRTUS classes here at St. Raphael's, and many are available in surrounding parishes.

Communicating with Parents

I have kindly requested that our catechists **contact you within three days of receiving their roster. This will occur in early September 2025.** When they reach out, they were asked to share the following key information:

1. Their name and a contact number where parents can reach them.
 2. The specific day, time, and room number for their class.
 3. A clear explanation of the pick-up and drop-off procedures.
 4. Explanation of the policy of parent volunteering. This year, parents are required to **volunteer twice during the year**—once before Christmas Break and once after—to assist with classroom monitoring. If a parent is not able to do so due to work commitments, another family member or family friend is able to go in their stead.
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Drop-Off Procedures

All students will enter the building through the **main Faith Formation door, which faces Newbridge Road**. The doors will close 15 minutes after classes begin; after this time, children will need to use the doorbell to be admitted. For students up to Level 3, parents are **required** to accompany their children directly to the classroom at drop-off. Parents of students at other levels are always welcome and encouraged to accompany their children to class to meet their catechist and build rapport.

Pick-Up Procedures

Parents will pick up their children from the same **main Faith Formation door**. Doors will open precisely at the end of the class hour, and parents may begin to queue beforehand. Once classes conclude, catechists and children will remain in their classrooms. Parents will then come to their child's classroom to retrieve them. They may exit through either of the doors near the front office.

Food in Classrooms

Due to the prevalence of food allergies, **food cannot be consumed in classrooms if a child with an allergy to that food is present**. Always consult your class's food allergy list. If allergies are present, you are welcome to contact the parents of the affected child(ren) to discuss safe snack options that the entire class can enjoy.

If snacks are consumed, **all desks must be thoroughly cleaned with a soap-based cleaner** (such as Wet Ones or Lysol Wipes, etc.). This step is crucial, even if food is not visibly present, as unseen food proteins can pose a threat to children with allergies in subsequent classes. If thorough cleaning cannot be assured, food can not be consumed in the classroom.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is vital for a comprehensive and enriching faith formation experience. **If your child's absences exceed four classes**, please reach out to me promptly. I'd like to partner with you to discuss these absences and determine the most supportive path forward for your child. Without this discussion, the understanding will be that repeating the year due to excessive absences is an acceptable outcome. To explore alternatives, I encourage you to contact me directly.

Classroom Disciplinary Procedures

To ensure a positive and respectful learning environment, we follow these disciplinary steps:

- **First Incident:** A phone call/email will be made home to the parents regarding the situation.

- **Second Incident:** The child will be sent down to the main office for the remainder of the class, and a call will be made home to the parents regarding the situation.
 - **Third Incident:** The child's parents will be called to pick them up early from class. To continue attending classes, the child must be accompanied by a parent for at least the next class session, and potentially for multiple sessions depending on the seriousness of the offense, at the catechist's discretion.
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Confirmation Paperwork

Starting this year, all required **Confirmation Preparation Paperwork for Levels 7 and 8 will be submitted to StRaphaelConfirmationPaperwork@gmail.com**. Students are not to hand in paperwork to their catechists.

Parent Signature

Date