

## 2025-26 Faith Formation

Dear Parents and Guardians,

First, let me start off by saying thank you for your dedication of passing on the Catholic faith to your child through the Faith Formation Program. As primary teacher, you are the foundation for your child's Catholic faith journey. We know that our religious education program can never substitute for your work in forming the faith of your children at home, but we are still dedicated to supporting and helping you in the religious education of our youth.

*It is important that you attend Mass and celebrate the sacraments regularly as a family. Weekend Mass times are as follows:*

*Saturday-4pm*

*Sunday-8am, 10am, 12:00pm-(Spanish), and 6pm*

*Confessions are available Thursdays-5pm, Fridays-12pm, Saturdays-3pm and Sundays-5pm.*

*More information about Mass attendance can be found in the Expectations section of the Handbook.*

Secondly, I want to keep in communication with you throughout the year, so if you are new to Faith Formation, we use Flocknote to communicate with our parishioners on various events. If you are not receiving messages through Flocknote, please contact me to make sure the information is correct. There is no need to sign up for an account or download an app; I will set you up for this messaging system. I will send information via text or email. In addition, I will be updating our website, especially for First Eucharist and Confirmation, to provide you with more information that I may need throughout the year. Please visit our website at [www.ihm-church.com](http://www.ihm-church.com), look under the Faith Formation tab.

Thirdly, Faith Formation is an ongoing for the rest of your child's life, therefore your child should be returning to Faith Formation every year from K-8<sup>th</sup> grade and continuing 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade with CYO. If you choose to skip years and only return for the sacrament years, your child will not be placed in the sacrament classes. They will need to complete any grades they skipped before moving onto receiving sacraments.

It is important that your child attends every Faith Formation session on time because our teachers have prepared valuable lessons about our faith to teach your child. Frequent absences or tardiness will make it difficult for your child to master the material designated for your child's grade level. The catechist may deem summer school necessary with too many absences. If your child will be absent, please call me, Jaclyn Brown, at 785.625.7643, ext 108.

Finally, security and safety of your child is top priority. Due to many active shooters in our country, we will secure the building to prevent an active shooter from entering the building. Doors to the Activity Center will be unlocked from 6:10pm and locked at 6:30pm. Therefore, we will secure the building during Faith Formation, and you will be required to come inside and sign your child out. We want to make sure every child goes home with the correct family.

On behalf of the parish staff, I welcome you to a new year! Enclosed you will find a schedule and additional information specific to your child's grade.

Sincerely,

*Jaclyn Brown*

Jaclyn Brown  
Director of Religious Education (DRE)

## **Registered members of Parish/Enrollment Fees:**

All families who have children enrolled in any class will need to be registered members of the parish.

Financial Policy

- Total Stewardship Parish (active participation in Time, Talent, and Treasure)-Stewardship and Parish Agreement Forms need to be filled out annually. See Stewardship section of this handbook.
- Out of Parish or opt out then fees are required and payable by the family of the student. Debbie Nunnelee, the bookkeeper, will take care of fees.

## **Sunday Mass:**

As Catholics, we are obligated to attend Mass every Sunday [weekend] and Holy Days of Obligation. Those who fail in this obligation commit a grave sin (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2181*).

*It is important that you attend Mass and celebrate the sacraments regularly as a family, even if you have no students preparing for sacraments.*

At IHM, Mass attendance will be taken for every student in Sacrament preparations (Grades 2 and 8) beginning the weekend of September 13-14. There are several ways we take attendance. Weekend Mass and Holy Days of Obligation Attendance cards ([Grade 2-blue](#) and [Grade 8-Purple](#)) will be in the kitchenette next to the gathering space. Please have your student print their name on the card, circle IHM, and place in the collection basket when passed to you. Mass attendance cards are available at St. Joseph, St. Nicolas of Myra, and the Comeau Catholic Campus Center.

Our Catholic Church is worldwide! Wherever you go, there is always a Catholic Church nearby. We would like to share with others the great and varied experiences of Mass that our families have, even outside of our parish. Another way we can track attendance is if you attend Mass in another parish/town, take a selfie at the church, being sure to capture in the background either the outside architecture, the inside with the sanctuary or some sort of window, statue, or art, or *even a picture with the priest!* Then, if you are willing to give us permission, we will periodically share in a Flocknote newsletter the various places our parishioners have travelled and the interesting places they have attended Mass. For those in Sacramental preparation classes, these pictures will also count as proof of your weekly Mass attendance.

A third way to track attendance is for you can also grab a signed bulletin if you are not one for taking selfies. Bulletins can be dropped off at the parish office or scanned and sent to the DRE's email.

**To assist you in finding a Catholic church wherever you travel, visit [masstimes.org](http://masstimes.org).** You can email your Mass selfies at [jbrown@ihm-church.com](mailto:jbrown@ihm-church.com).

## **Weekend Mass times are as follows:**

**Saturday-4pm**

**Sunday-8am, 10am, 12:00pm-(Spanish), and 6pm**

## **Holy Days of Obligation are as follows:**

**November 1**-All Saint's Day (Since this Holy Day falls on a Saturday, the obligation is abrogated.)

**December 8**-Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (as this day is the Patronal Feast of the United States of America, this day is always a Holy Day of Obligation. **If December 8 naturally falls on a Saturday or a Monday, it would still be required to attend Mass for both the Immaculate Conception and the Sunday obligation, which means attending Mass two days in a row.** If the Immaculate Conception falls on a Sunday, the obligation to attend Mass is transferred to Monday.)

**December 25**-Christmas

**January 1**-Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Please check the bulletin for Holy Days of Obligation Mass times!

If you miss Mass for reasons other than illness or taking care of one who is ill, it is important that you go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, for those who have already made their First Reconciliation. If you need to miss Mass due to illness or taking care of someone who is ill please contact me by email, [jbrown@ihm-church.com](mailto:jbrown@ihm-church.com), or leave a voice message on Sunday, at 785.625.7643, ext 108.

**Confessions are available Thursdays-5pm, Fridays-12pm, Saturdays-3pm and Sundays-5pm.**

## Stewardship:

Our parish embraces the stewardship model to promote active, engaged, and informed Catholics. It is our way of life. Stewardship begins from the time you become a member of the Catholic faith (at baptism). By your stewardship, we can offer our parish community a place to gather for worship, fellowship, and formation. Exploring how your family's gifts of time, talent, and treasure can help our parish to provide a great place to worship, to have fellowship with one another through events, and provide formation for all ages. There are many ways to get involved and serve in our parish community.

A stewardship way of life involves the following:

- Becoming more and more aware that everything is a *gift* and *blessing*—that all that we are and have is a gift from God. This means *accepting the biblical truth that we own nothing*. Scripture reminds us that we come into the world with nothing, and we leave the world with nothing (Job 1).
- A stewardship way of life involves recognizing *God* as the sole creator and owner of all that we are and have and accepting the fact that we are merely the stewards or managers of God's gifts and blessings. Our job or mission is to manage and use wisely and responsibly all that God has placed in our care.
- As we grow into a stewardship way of life, we gradually develop a lifestyle marked by *generosity*. A life of generosity is a clear sign that we do in fact believe and accept the biblical truth that God owns it all. Conversely, when we hoard our gifts and talents, we assign ownership of our good fortune to ourselves and not to God, doing with them as we please.
- As we seek to develop a stewardship way of life, we are aware that one day we will have to account for our stewardship here on earth. How well did we use God's gifts to bless the lives of others?

**In their Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, the U.S. bishops affirm: *"The Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord."***

Ways your family can give back to your parish community:

- **Usher:** The usher helps people to find a seat as they enter the church. They will also pass the baskets for the collection. They also pass out the song and missal books at the Spanish Mass.
- **Greeters:** Opens the door for people as they enter into the church.
- **Gift Bearers:** The gift bearers will bring up the gifts of bread, wine, and collection to the priest at the front of the church.
- **Altar Servers:** The altar servers are trained to serve the priest at the altar. They help the priest at the altar with various duties during the Mass.
- **Lector:** The lector reads the First and/or Second Reading.
- **Cantor/Musicians:** The cantor leads the congregation in song or playing an instrument.
- Providing formation for all ages.
- Serve on councils or committees.
- Helping at Parish gatherings by serving, picking up trash, setting up tables, taking down tables, etc.
- Helping with decorating the church for big celebrations like Christmas and Easter.
- Attending Jr. CYO (middle school) and CYO (high school).
- Childcare during events.
- Numerous other opportunities to share your gifts!

## Illness:

We want all our children to come to Faith Formation healthy and ready to learn. It is hard for children to learn if they are not feeling well and can be a distraction to others in the class. Since we are also sharing the space with the Holy Family School, we want to keep unwanted germs at bay, therefore, if your child does not go to school during the day, please keep them at home so we can keep the other Faith Formation students and Holy Family Students healthy.

## **Attendance and Responsibilities: PLEASE**

- Pray, be an active participant in church, and become involved in the church community.
- Be on time for sessions and be prepared for class by completing the lesson the week prior to class. The catechist will use class time to review and reinforce what they learned the week prior. It will be difficult for your child to understand what is happening in class if the work hasn't been done prior to class.
- Leave personal belongings at home. It is up to the individual catechists regarding electronic devices/usage during the sessions.
- Treat everyone with respect and reverence.
- Follow instructions and rules of the teacher and DRE.
- Always walk in the classrooms and hallways.
- Show respect for the personal property of the school and others.
- **No gum, food, or snowballs in the classrooms! The syrup from the snowballs leaves a black stain on the carpet and does not come out. Only water bottles sealed with a screw top lid are allowed, whereas if the bottle falls over, water cannot pour out. Straws must fold down and close back into the lid; no tumblers, paper, plastic, or Styrofoam cups with straws.**
- Dress modestly.
- Be prompt picking up your child at the end of class.
- Call the DRE by 4pm on Wednesday, if your child will be absent.
- Students will not be dismissed early without a written request from the parent and permission from the DRE.
- Your child is not allowed to leave early or arrive late. See the Safety section of the handbook.

## **Faith Formation for Parents:**

As Catholic Parents, we are the first educator of our children in the faith. It is our duty to continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ and to pass this onto our children. Religious education is not the primary role of the church, parish, or even a Catholic school. All these entities are here to support you in what you are teaching in the home. There are many resources out there to help you to educate your children in the Catholic faith. FORMED is one of those resources. It is like Netflix, only any and everything Catholic that you want to know about the faith. There are audiobooks, podcasts, movies, daily meditations, even cartoons for children. There is even programming in Spanish. The Catholic Diocese of Salina has generously given access to FORMED for **free**. To access it for free:

1. Go to our parish website, ihm-church.com
2. Scroll down to the bottom and click on the FORMED icon.
3. Then click on "Formed for Individuals", enter your email, search for Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hays, KS, then enter your name and email and you have access. You can at this point download the FORMED app to watch on your other electronic devices.

## **Dress Code:**

Modesty is a virtue to be encouraged. Parents and teachers are to give guidance as needed to students. This applies to Faith Formation sessions and Sunday Mass.

- Clothing is to cover the mid-section of body.
- Clothing bearing inappropriate slogans will not be permitted. i.e., drugs, sex, alcohol, racial slurs.
- Excessively baggy, tight fitting, or revealing clothing is not permitted.

## **Class Schedule and Curriculum:**

GRADES K through 8: Classes will be on Wednesday evenings at Holy Family School. **All grades will meet from 6:30-7:30pm.**

In Hays, we have a unique situation in that we have K-12 Catholic School that serves students from all three Hays parishes as well as some outlying parishes. We also have students in our public schools that attend religious education classes on Wednesday evenings in all three parishes. Due to these entities, we found that every one of us uses different curriculums. This is great, but when a family moves from parish to school or vis versa or even to another parish, the parish or school has no way of knowing what the student has or has not learned, making it difficult to get the student up to speed or frustration because the student already knows the information. Therefore, all three parishes and the Catholic schools moved to one curriculum. The curriculum is the Word of Life series from the Augustine Institute. Here is an

outline of what is taught in each grade from the Word of Life Student textbook.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION-A separate handbook outlining requirements for sacraments will be made available at the Parent/Student Meeting at another time.

**Kindergarten** Introduces God's plan of love as expressed in Scripture. It provides a groundwork for understanding the dignity of the human person and prepares your child for a deeper understanding of the faith in later grades.

**Grade 1** establishes the overarching narrative of salvation history. Students and families will come to understand that this history is our history as God's people. In this grade, God's immense love for His children is revealed. Students will learn the great lengths God has gone to in order to share His life and love with us, culminating in the coming of Jesus Christ to save us from sin and to establish the Church.

**Grade 2** prepares students to receive their First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in light of salvation history. They will see that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament and instituted the sacraments so they can be virtuous and holy. Students are encouraged to develop their character by making virtuous choices and by receiving God's grace in the sacraments.

**Grade 3** presents to students God's plan to be in communion with His people. Throughout all of salvation history, God has mercifully gathered His people to Himself. The following chapters invite each student to freely choose to accept God's invitation to communion and to accept true happiness here on earth and perfect happiness with God in heaven.

**Grade 4** presents to your child the truths revealed by God and professed in the Creeds of the Catholic Church. The Creeds provide a "common language of faith" for Christians (CCC 185). Your child will study these truths and develop a personal understanding of this language of faith. Courageously living according to the truths professed in the Creeds of the Catholic Church requires fortitude. But as Catholics, we trust that our obedience to God and to the truths He has revealed will lead us to Him and to true and perfect happiness.

In **Grade 5**, your child will explore the beauty and meaning of the Catholic Church's worship of God. Your child will study the life of Christ according to the Gospels and see how Jesus fulfilled and perfected the worship of God in the Old Testament. Jesus instituted the sacraments and sent the Holy Spirit to give us the grace we need to worship God in perfect charity and justice. With this understanding, your child and your entire family will be able to participate in God's saving work more fully in the liturgical worship of the Catholic Church.

**Grade 6** begins focusing on a scripture-centered curriculum. We cannot have a relationship with someone we do not know. The Word of Life curriculum helps students come to know who Jesus is. It does this through a unique, biblically grounded curriculum. St. Jerome once said, "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." Jerome reminds us that when we pray, we speak to Christ; but when we read Scripture, Christ speaks to us. Students will come to know Christ by spending time reading and engaging with Scripture, especially the Gospels. We will focus our study on the Gospel of Matthew.

**Grade 7** continues the scripture-centered curriculum. The Word of Life series provides an in-depth exploration of the shape of life in Christ through the lens of Jesus' call: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" Mk 8:34. The opening unit provides the students with a foundation in the Gospel of Mark. Subsequent units consider topics related to Christian morality and the human desire for happiness. In accepting Jesus' radical invitation, students will find happiness, meaning, and their identity. The Golden Threads of Christian anthropology and learning through discipleship take center stage.

**Grade 8** is the sacramental year for Confirmation. The Word of Life series for this year focus on the Acts of the Apostles. Students come to know these great men and women throughout Church history who have boldly responded to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this way, the Golden Thread of heroic virtue and character formation is given particular attention in this grade. The opening unit begins by considering key passages from the Acts of the Apostles and the empowering gift of the Holy Spirit first poured out on the Church at Pentecost. Carefully curated excerpts from the writings and teachings of the saints and Doctors of the Church are used, so that students encounter first-hand the teaching and preaching of the great cloud of witnesses from Church history.

## **Family Nights:**

Family Nights are designed so your family can come together to share in fellowship and prayer and build a community of believers. Nowadays, families rarely eat dinner together, let alone come together to pray or to spend time together. This is what family nights are designed for, to come together as a parish family, and domestic family to spend time together. These nights are different from regular class time. More than likely, we will gather in the church for different forms of prayer, whether it is a rosary, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, Divine Mercy Chaplet, etc. Class attendance will still be taken. On these nights, more than likely, we will dismiss earlier than the regular scheduled time. Since dismissal will be earlier than normal, we ask for your family's presence in order to prevent your child from waiting until the regular dismissal time to be picked up. A home note will be sent one week prior to a family night. See schedule for family nights.

## **JR. CYO Grades 6-8:**

Jr. Catholic Youth Organization (Jr. CYO) is a monthly meeting for youth in grades 6-8. The meeting consists of Faith Formation with fellowship with other Catholics from both Faith Formation and TMP-Marian Jr. High of all three parishes. Attending the meetings, helping with some fundraisers, and assisting at various events will earn participation points that could be used to help with registration fees for larger events, such as Jr. CYO camp or National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

Your family will be added to the Flocknote for Jr. CYO. You can also find them on Instagram and Facebook under Hays CYO. Create new memories with your friends by joining Jr. CYO!

## **Safety:**

The safety of our Faith Formation children is paramount. We take responsibility to ensure the safety of all students during scheduled Faith Formation times and while on the property. A particular challenge of evening Faith Formation is arrival and dismissal, especially with traffic and darkness. It is imperative that each parent follow the safe and orderly dismissal procedures:

- All grades, K - 8th, should begin arriving no earlier than 6:20 P.M.
- **NO parking** is allowed in the East Parking Lot when parents are dropping-off their children.
- Catechists, and volunteers are asked to only park in the North School parking lot.

## **Drop-off locations & entrances:**

- South / 18<sup>th</sup> street entrance becomes a one way for the traffic flow. Drivers enter on 18<sup>th</sup> street playground entrance and circle around to drop off area, then exit by **right turn only** on 18<sup>th</sup> street.
- North door entrance of the Activity Center will be open for you and your child to enter and exit from.
- Due to the many active shooters' incidents in our country, we need to keep your child safe and secure. Therefore, the school building will be locked and secured at 6:30pm. Once the doors are locked, no one will be available to let you or your child into the school building (unless we have advance notice), therefore they will just miss class. Your child is not allowed to leave early or arrive late since no one will be available to unlock doors. The doors will be unlocked at 7:25 to allow you to come inside to pick up your child. **Parents of students K-8 need to park in the Activity Center Parking Lot and come through the Activity Center to pick-up your children.** No student will be allowed to go outside on their own to wait for their parent. All students will gather in the Activity Center by class to wait for parents to come inside to pick up. To ensure children go home with the correct parents, parents will need to sign out each child.
- There will be no parking allowed in the drop off lane.

### Safety Tips:

\*Drivers should not stop in the middle of the parking lot to unload children from a vehicle. The safest route is to first pull the vehicle all the way up to the marked drop off area, place the vehicle in park, then allow the child to unload the vehicle.

\*If possible, children should exit the vehicle from the passenger side (side of the vehicle farthest from the road/traffic.)

## **Medical Form:**

At the time of enrollment, Medical Permission forms B and C is filled out. The Medical Permission forms only give us the ability to get your child medical attention in case we are unable to reach you. Any medical, surgical, and transportation costs are the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

## **Child Lures Prevention Program:**

In June 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops created the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. This charter mandated that certain measures be taken to assure greater protection of young people in the church. Some of these measures include criminal background checks for all adults who regularly minister to children in a parish. Furthermore, all those who work with children are required to participate in online training on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

- Effective September of 2017, the Diocese of Salina has requested that children in all grades receive information and a short course on child lures. Each grade level receives information specific to their age. Your child's catechist will review this information with their class at some point during the school year. Specific topics and information are suggested by the Office of Religious Education to the catechist. For a list of specific lures and information covered in your child's grade level please contact your Director of Religious Education. As of 2021, a signed consent form (signed by parent/guardian) is required at the beginning of each enrollment year for your child to participate and does give parents the option to opt out, if desired.

## **Emergency Procedures:**

Teachers and students will be made aware of fire and tornado procedures. Fire Drill and Tornado directions are posted in each room. We will practice each procedure once.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER - CLASS CANCELATION POLICY**

- If classes are canceled in the Hays School District (USD 489) or Catholic Schools due to severe or inclement weather, then Religious Education classes are automatically canceled. If after school hours inclement and severe weather begins to develop within Ellis County, especially in the surrounding areas of Hays and even as far west as Ellis, the Director of Religious Education and the Pastor will cancel classes to ensure the safety of those catechists, parents and students driving to and from the Parish Activity Center.
- Parents are also encouraged to use their best judgment and withhold their child from attending religion class in the event of inclement weather.
- The cancelation may be communicated to catechists and families via one (or more) of the following ways:
  - Group Text by Flocknote
  - Phone calls to catechists and volunteers
  - Immaculate Heart of Mary Facebook page and website (ihm-church.com)
  - Hays Post and / or KAKE TV