



**ST. COLETTE**  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION**


*PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK*

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### CONTACT

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### FAITH FORMATION OFFICE HOURS

*(During Academic Year)*

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday | **8am - 4pm**

Tuesday | **1pm - 9pm**

### STAFF

Pastor | **Rev. James Smalarz**

Permanent Deacon | **Dcn. Dave Carignan**

Director of Faith Formation | **Kimberly Glowicki**

Coordinator of Youth Ministry | **Mary Jo Parnell**

## MISSION

St. Colette Catholic Church is dedicated to nurturing lifelong discipleship in Jesus Christ by forming hearts, minds, and spirits in the richness of the Catholic tradition. We accompany children, youth and adults as they grow in knowledge of Scripture and Church teaching, deepen their life of prayer and sacramental participation, and learn to live the Gospel through service, community, and moral responsibility.

## PARENTAL ROLE

Parents, you are the primary educators of your children. More than that, you are role models of faith. As your parish partners, we commit to providing excellent religious education at every grade level. The reality is that we only have your children for a brief amount of time, so our influence is limited. Your influence, however, is exercised every single day of your child's life. They not only hear what you say, but they watch what you do. Your role in helping them develop their relationship with God is critical. To help your children grow in knowledge and love of God and to understand how Catholic Christians worship God, we ask that you make the following commitments:

- **Attend Mass on Sunday with your family and pray together on a regular basis.**
- **Attend Sacramental Gatherings and Parent Meetings, making certain your child attends class regularly and arrives on time.**
- **Oversee your child's home assignments and communicate with your child's catechist as needed.**

### POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

#### **Attendance/Absence:**

Students need to attend Faith Formation classes on a consistent basis. Attendance records are kept for every student. Please contact the Faith Formation Offices as soon as you know your child will miss.

#### **Children's Summer Faith Formation Program:**

Due to the accelerated nature of the program and the limited number of days that the students can attend, it is mandatory that your student attends the entire two-week program. No unexcused absences are permitted. An unexcused absence may result in a repeat of the program and delay your child from receiving their Sacraments. Please choose another option if you know you, or your child will not be able to commit to the entire 9 days.

#### **Integrated Family Formation Program:**

Due to the limited number of in-person sessions, students & families should not miss more than one of the monthly student/parent gatherings.

#### **Drop Off & Pickup:**

Arrival is through the main Religious Education Doors (**Door #10**). Staff will be available to help your child find his/her classroom if needed. All students will be dismissed through the the same doors. Grades 1-6 will remain with their catechist until a parent or designated person picks them up.

#### **Early Dismissal:**

To ensure the safety of our students during Faith Formation class time, please call the Faith Formation Office on the day your child needs to leave early. If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, please identify who that person is when you call. All pickups are from the school office. The parent or designated person should enter through the main Religious Education doors, go directly to the Faith Formation Office and sign the release log. The catechist will be notified to release the child when the parent, or designated person, arrives.

**Dress Code:**

Students should dress appropriately for class. Clothing with inappropriate words or pictures is not allowed. Keep in mind that some class sessions include a visit to church and warm outerwear or rain gear may be needed.

**Weather Emergencies:**

In the case of a weather emergency, do not assume that Faith Formation classes are cancelled. Very often weather conditions improve as the day goes on so we usually wait until early afternoon to make a final decision about holding classes later in the day. If classes are cancelled, we will send you an e-mail. **Please note** that in the case of a tornado warning, we will not release any child, but will move everybody to a safe place in the build-

**Medical:**

Please dispense all medications prior to class. Students should not bring medications to class. If a student becomes ill, parents will be called. If there is no response, we will call the emergency number indicated on your registration form.

**Epinephrine Pen (EpiPen) & Medical Device Policy:**

Parents/guardians must notify the Faith Formation Office of any medical condition requiring an **Epinephrine Pen (EpiPen)** or other **medical device**. A completed medical authorization form must be on file. All devices must be clearly labeled, current and available during class time. Devices may be carried by the child or kept in a designated location, as appropriate. Staff will follow emergency procedures and contact 911 when necessary.

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### Code of Conduct:

Students are asked to attend class regularly, arrive promptly, and participate actively. Every student in the Faith Formation Program at St. Colette is expected to cooperate with our Code of Conduct as follows:

- Speak and act respectfully toward catechists and staff
- Speak and act respectfully toward other students
- Respect parish buildings and classroom property
- Follow class rules and dress code

**When a student does not comply with the above, the following procedures will be implemented:**

**1st Violation:** Student will be reminded of the policy in the classroom.

**2nd Violation:** Student will be sent to the Faith Formation Office. Parents may be notified.

**3rd Violation:** Student will be sent to Faith Formation Office and parents contacted to take him or her home.

**4th Violation:** Student will be suspended from the Faith Formation Program until a parent conference is held where arrangements for the future will be made.

### Classroom Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy:

This policy applies to all personal electronic devices, including:

- Cell Phones & Smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Tablets
- Gaming devices
- Music players
- Any device capable of calling, texting, gaming, recording, or internet access

### General Rule

Personal electronic devices are **not** to be used during any Faith Formation Session unless explicit permission is given by the teacher for instructional purposes.

### **Storage:**

Devices must be turned off or silenced and stored in a designated classroom area upon arrival. Devices should remain stored for the entire class unless **otherwise directed**.

### **Instructional Use:**

Devices may be used only **when the catechist gives permission** for a specific learning activity. Unauthorized use during class time is **not allowed**.

### **Smartwatches:**

Smartwatches must be in **silent mode** and used only as a watch. Messaging, calling, gaming, or recording features are not permitted during class.

### **Consequences for Policy Violations:**

**1st Violation:** The student will be given a verbal reminder of the policy.

**2nd Violation:** The device(s) will be confiscated until the end of the day. A parent/guardian will be notified.

**Repeated Violations:** A parent/guardian will be contacted, and student may lose device privileges.

### **Responsibility for Lost, Stolen or Damaged Devices:**

St. Colette Catholic Church, its Children's Faith Formation Program and/or its staff are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices brought to any Faith Formation class or activity.

### **Emergency Communication:**

Parents/Guardians should contact the Faith Formation Office for urgent messages during a class or program.

### **Parent Support:**

We appreciate families reinforcing this policy at home to help students develop healthy boundaries with technology and stay focused on learning.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW & MATERIALS

### Integrated Family Formation Program:

This format runs throughout the academic school year. Families are provided course material to work on with the student at home, then meet on the **first Sunday of each month**, at **8:30am**, to take a deeper dive into the material with our catechists & Faith Formation Director.

### Children's Summer Faith Formation Program:

A two-week long, focused course, for students who may enjoy a more immersive classroom-type environment. This program runs **Monday-Thursday, 5:30-8:30pm**, during the last two full weeks of June.

### Textbook Series for Grades 1-8:

All of the materials used in the St. Colette Children's Faith Formation Program are from major Catholic publishers and have received an Imprimatur. In each case, "The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found (these) series to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church."

**Grades 1-7** use the *Alive in Christ* series from **Our Sunday Visitor**. The *Alive in Christ* curriculum is built on four essential catechetical threads—**Salvation History, Christian Anthropology, Heroic Virtue & Character Formation, and Learning through Discipleship**.

Rooted in the Kerygma, it invites children into a personal relationship with God through His Word while presenting the teachings of the Church in precise, developmentally appropriate theological language.

Through Scripture, doctrine, and prayer, *Alive in Christ* helps children come to know, love, and live their Catholic faith. Each year introduces fresh, engaging materials designed to open their hearts and minds, spark imagination and deepen understanding in interactive ways. Students grow spiritually through **lectio divina, sacred art, liturgical music** and the rich-

ness of **Catholic Tradition**, experiencing the story of salvation as if they are stepping into the Bible itself.

The curriculum also supports a variety of catechetical models, making it especially effective for our **Integrated Family Catechesis Program**, which meets monthly throughout the school year. With customizable assessments, eAssessments, and progress tracking, we can meet the unique needs of every student and ensure meaningful formation before each family gathering.

**Grade 8** students participate in *Chosen*, a video-based Confirmation preparation program published by **Ascension Press**. This series guides young people toward the Sacrament of Confirmation and full initiation into the Catholic Church through meaningful discussions, engaging video content, and opportunities to deepen their understanding of the faith.

### Scripture:

To nurture a lifelong love of God's Word, our students are introduced to Scripture in ways that match their age and stage of faith development.

**Grades 1-3:** Each child is equipped with *The Catholic Children's Bible* from **St. Mary's Press**. This edition is designed with younger readers in mind, offering simplified language, vibrant illustrations, and accessible explanations. It helps children not only hear the stories of salvation history but also truly understand them, laying a foundation for prayer and trust in God's presence in their lives.

**Grades 4-8:** As students grow, so does the depth of their engagement with Scripture. They use *The Catholic Youth Bible*, also from **St. Mary's Press**, which provides the full text of the Bible alongside study tools, commentary, and reflection questions. This resource encourages them to explore the meaning of Scripture in greater detail, connect biblical themes to their own experiences, and develop a more mature relationship with Christ.

## FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The 2nd Grade is a beautiful moment in a child's faith life because he/she encounters God's mercy and God's presence in a profound way.

### **First Reconciliation:**

In this sacrament, children learn that God's mercy is not an abstract idea but a lived reality. Jesus entrusted the Church with the ministry of forgiveness so that His healing love could continue in every generation. Through confession, children discover that sin never has the final word – grace does.

#### **Key Focus:**

- God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Jesus' ministry of forgiveness

### **First Holy Communion:**

Receiving the Eucharist for the first time is a milestone of grace. The Eucharist is not merely a symbol; it is the Real Presence of Christ – His Body, Blood, Soul & Divinity given for us. Children learn that Jesus desires to be close to them, to nourish them, and to remain with them in a relationship of love.

#### **Key Focus:**

- The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- The Eucharist as spiritual nourishment

Formation sessions, and a retreat, help children understand that these sacraments are encounters with a living God who loves them personally, and invites them into deeper friendship.

## CONFIRMATION

Our two-year Confirmation process is rooted in the Church's understanding that Confirmation is not, "graduation from faith," but **strengthening for mission**.

The goal is not simply to prepare students for a ceremony, but to help them recognize that God is calling them – personally and uniquely – to holiness and service.

### **The Gift of The Holy Spirit:**

In Confirmation, the same Spirit who descended at Pentecost comes upon the candidate with gifts that equip them for discipleship. Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, these are not abstract virtues – they are divine helps for real life.

#### **Key Focus:**

- **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**
- **Pentecost as the model of Confirmation**

### **Called to Mission:**

Service opportunities and retreats are not just requirements; they are ways students learn to live as witnesses of Christ. Confirmation seals them with the Spirit so they can participate fully in the Church's mission of love, justice, and evangelization.

#### **Key Focus:**

- **Christian mission and discipleship**
- **Witnessing Christ in daily life**

## PROGRAM CONTENT

### Grade 1 Focus: God

Because this is the beginning of formal religious education for many children, first grade focuses on helping the children to know and love God. Grade 1 emphasizes God as a central and key part of the Catholic faith. Examples of lesson goals include to recall that God created all things and understanding the Kingdom of Heaven as wherever God rules over people's hearts. First graders are beginning to move into a cognitive stage of rule-based thinking, so this is a great opportunity to provide them with the basic teachings of the faith.

At some point in the year, a member of the pastoral staff will treat the children to an educational tour of the church that includes an explanation of basic parts of the Mass. The students are helped to see that they belong to and are a part of the Church, and that St. Colette is their parish family.

### Grade 2 Focus: The Sacraments of First Reconciliation & First Eucharist

Children of this age are in the cognitive stage of "concrete operations." They understand cause and effect in terms of how the world works. Therefore, this is a great time to introduce God's guidelines for living. They learn about God's love and mercy as they prepare to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Because they have reached the age of reason, second graders are better able to understand that the Eucharist is not ordinary bread and wine, because Jesus said it is His Body and Blood.

### Grade 3 Focus: The Church

Children this age have entered what social/developmental theorist Harry Stack Sullivan called the "chumship stage," when same-age peers become very important, and children often have "best friends." For this reason, it is an ideal time to focus on the parish community. The students learn about the characteristics of the Catholic Church from its earliest beginnings and what it means to be a member. They study the four marks of the Church; that it is **one, holy, catholic** and **apostolic**.

After they have learned about the individual parts of the Mass in the classroom, an in depth teaching about the Mass is facilitated by one of the priests, just for these students. As part of their deepening understanding of the Church, they are introduced to the idea that involvement is not limited to Sunday worship. Our Church has a mission to the world, and each of us is called to serve and to be a witness for justice and peace.

### **Grade 4 Focus: Covenant**

Fourth graders will learn to define the word covenant as a serious agreement between God and people. An example of a lesson goal includes to identify each one of us as a necessary part of the Body of Christ. They will see that God's covenant with Abraham paved the way for successive covenants that progressively formed the story of our redemption, culminating with Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

### **Grade 5 Focus: The Sacraments**

Fifth graders are growing in their ability to understand symbols and signs. This makes fifth grade an ideal time to take an in-depth look at the sacraments and rites of the Church. They learn how the sacraments strengthen our faith and renew us as a community. Fifth graders are also in a stage of identity development when they begin to seriously consider who they will be when they are older. This makes fifth grade an important time for learning about vocation and the sacraments of service.

### **Grade 6 Focus: God Calls A People**

Sixth grade is a time of significant cognitive growth, marked by the continuing development of abstract thought. The sixth-grade program is the study of God's saving love as it is revealed in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. This program will help your child increase his or her knowledge of Salvation History, in order to respond to God with ever-deepening love and gratitude. As your child learns the stories of our ancestors in the faith and reads God's Word, he or she will learn to appreciate our ties to the Jewish people and deepen his or her understanding that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and will come to love him more ardently and serve him more generously.

### Grades 7 & 8 Focus: Confirmation Preparation

Experts tell us that sometime around the ages of 12-14, children experience a spiritual awakening. It is a point in their development when they begin to ask the “big” questions and to wonder about the faith of their childhood. It is important for parents and educators to be aware of this. It is helpful to allow a young person to think things through and to be prepared to discuss and explore these themes. In so many areas of learning we impart knowledge and expect our children to simply accept what we say. Our program for Confirmation does not shy away from questions, doubt and discussion.

*Chosen* our Confirmation program, addresses the questions head-on and seeks to remove any obstacles that make it difficult for a teen or an adult to believe. Rather than focusing on our choosing God and the Catholic faith, it shows how God has chosen us.

- Our teens are “invited first to hear, then to respond with faith to the voice of God who has called us to become his sons and daughters – simply because ‘he first loved us’ (1 John 4:19).”
- The second stage includes a lively exploration of who Jesus is and how we are called to follow him.
- The final phase adds more intense, interior formation for a life of discipleship.
- Specific preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation

### Empowering God’s Children

As part of a widespread effort to ensure the wellbeing of all of children entrusted to our care, the Archdiocese of Detroit mandates that every parish provide safety training for both adults and children. **The Empowering God’s Children** program teaches a culture of respect and faith that helps children and young people understand their own sacredness as well as the sacredness of others. It teaches children and youth to identify early on when they are uncomfortable with a situation and includes ways to seek the help of a trusted adult. An Empowering God’s Children safety lesson is included at each grade level.

## Prayers

Parents should be teaching these prayers at home. We have indicated below which prayers are emphasized at each grade level.

### The Sign of The Cross (*Kindergarten*)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### The Glory Be to The Father (*Grade 1*)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### The Lord's Prayer (*Grade 1*)

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### Hail Mary (*Grade 1*)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### The Guardian Angel Prayer (*Grade 1*)

Angel of God, my guardian dear to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

### Grace Before Meals (*Grade 1*)

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## PRAYERS

### Prayers *(continued)*

#### Act of Contrition *(Grade 2)*

O my God, I am sorry for my sins with all of my heart. In choosing to do wrong and in failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

#### Prayer to St. Michael The Archangel *(Grade 3)*

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the Power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

#### Apostles' Creed *(Grade 3)*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

#### The Rosary *(Grade 4)*

Sign of the Cross, Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Three Hail Marys, Glory Be to the Father. For each decade, pray:  
- The Lord's Prayer - Ten Hail Marys - Glory Be to the Father - Hail Holy Queen.

### Salve Regina - Hail Holy Queen (*Grade 4*)

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

### Nicene Creed (*Grades 7 & 8*)

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

# NOTES





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