



# Faith Formation Parent Handbook

## St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish

1230 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines, IA 50311-2098

Parish Office Phone: (515) 279-4654 Parish Office Fax: (515) 277-0838

Parish Website: [www.sainttheresaiaowa.org](http://www.sainttheresaiaowa.org)

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00-3:30

### Parish Staff

Rev. Raphael Assamah, Pastor	(515) 279-4654 x301 office	<a href="mailto:rassamah@stsdsm.com">rassamah@stsdsm.com</a>
	(515) 279-4654 x501 rectory	
Mike Smith, Parish Manager	(515) 279-4654 x303	<a href="mailto:michaelsmith@stsdsm.com">michaelsmith@stsdsm.com</a>
Dcn. David Schmidt, Pastoral Associate	(515) 279-4654 x308	<a href="mailto:dschmidt@stsdsm.com">dschmidt@stsdsm.com</a>
John McMichael, Parish Accountant	(515) 279-4654 x305	<a href="mailto:jmcmichael@stsdsm.com">jmcmichael@stsdsm.com</a>
Sue Fitzpatrick, Parish Secretary	(515) 279-4654 x300	<a href="mailto:sfitzpatrick@stsdsm.com">sfitzpatrick@stsdsm.com</a>
Ellen Stemler, School Principal	(515) 277-0178 x207	<a href="mailto:estemler@stsdsm.com">estemler@stsdsm.com</a>

### Faith Formation Staff

Jane Ann Becicka Children's Faith Formation Coordinator (pre-k-5th grade)	Office (515) 279-4654 x304	<a href="mailto:jbecicka@stsdsm.com">jbecicka@stsdsm.com</a>
Megan (Megs) Howes, Youth Ministry Director (6-12 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Office (515) 279-4654 x306 Mobile (515) 720-4060	<a href="mailto:mhowes@stsdsm.com">mhowes@stsdsm.com</a>
Barb Woods Adult Faith Formation/Music/RCIA	Office (515) 279-4654 x307 Mobile (515) 210-6649	<a href="mailto:bwoods@stsdsm.com">bwoods@stsdsm.com</a>

#### **Mass Times**

Daily 6:30am; 8:30am most Fridays during the school year

Saturday 4:30; Sunday 8:30, 10:30, 4:30

Holy days check bulletin or website for current schedule

#### **Reconciliation**

Saturday 8:30-10:00 am

First Friday of the Month 3:30-4:30pm

Other times available by appointment, just call Fr. Raphael

#### **Eucharistic Adoration**

Tuesdays 7:00-8:00pm & First Friday of the Month 7:00-8:15am and 10:00-6:00pm

Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3:00pm at First Friday Adoration

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## St. Theresa Lifelong Faith Formation Vision Statement

*Faith Formation at St. Theresa Parish is an ongoing collaborative ministry. It encompasses all aspects of parish life so that each baptized person will more fully understand his or her faith and live it at all times and in all places. Faith Formation will be nurtured in our parish by providing a variety of opportunities through prayer, liturgy, sacraments, service, and catechesis.*

### The Foundations of Faith Formation

Faith Formation applies the Six Essential Tasks of Catechesis

- Knowledge of the Faith
- Liturgical Life
- Moral Formation
- Prayer
- Community
- Missionary Spirit



We also incorporate the Four Pillars of Stewardship, which richly complement the tasks of catechesis

- Formation
- Prayer
- Hospitality
- Service

By Our Works  
We Show Our Faith



**Faith Formation is a lifelong process** that promotes an environment of Christian values and spiritual growth to nurture a vibrant relationship with Jesus in service to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

### Family Involvement

At the time of each child's baptism, parents accept the responsibility and duty of teaching their child in the knowledge and practice of the Faith. At St. Theresa Parish we recognize parents are the primary educators of their children- sharing their experiences, values, stories, customs and faith. We believe that the holiness a child experiences begins in the home long before the child comes to the parish for faith formation classes. Parish Faith Formation assists and supports parents and families in this remarkable task. As partners, we assist in promoting a durable and living relationship with God, living life as God calls each one to live.

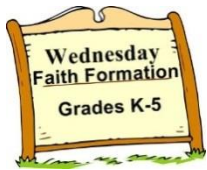
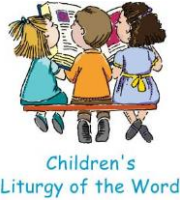
# Catechetical programs for Pre-K – High School

Sunday School



**Sunday School (SS)** for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten (ages 3-6). Sunday School meets most Sundays from September through April, during 8:30am Mass. Children will learn about God and His love for them through songs, bible stories, crafts and prayer. Please register.

**Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLW)** meets most Sundays during 10:30am Mass. Children in grades Pre-K through 3rd (ages 4-9) grade are dismissed from the assembly during Liturgy of the Word to participate in the liturgy at their level. No registration required.



**Wednesday Faith Formation (WFF)** for Kindergarten through 5th Grade. Meets most Wednesday evenings from September to May 6:30-7:30pm at St. Theresa's School. Please register.



Sacramental Preparation

**First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion** preparation typically occurs for children entering 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. Contact the Children's Faith Formation Coordinator if your child has not yet been **baptized** or needs instruction after 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

**Confirmation Preparation** begins in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Please register.

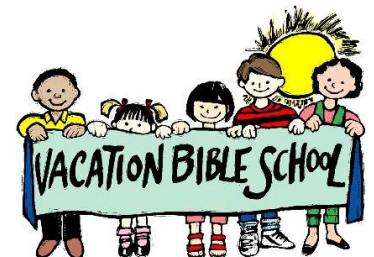


**Edge for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade usually** meets 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evenings, September to May, 6:30-7:30 pm, in the school gym. Edge is offered to all parish middle schoolers. Edge includes catechetical sessions, service, and social events. It provides parish-based, age appropriate activities and events that reinforce Catholic identity fostered in the home, at St. Theresa School or in the home-school setting. This is led by a team of adult catechists, assisted by confirmed teen catechists. The typical format consists of opening prayer, icebreaker or game, scripture, activity, discussion and closing prayer. Please register.



**Life Teen** for high school usually meets on the 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evenings in the parish hall, September to May, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Life Teen uses three avenues for learning and faith-sharing: teaching, social activities and topic/issue sessions. The typical format consists of opening prayer, icebreaker or game, scripture, activity, discussion, and closing prayer. For more information, visit the Youth Ministry page of the parish website: [www.sainttheresaiaowa.org](http://www.sainttheresaiaowa.org)

**Vacation Bible School is held in the summer.**  
**Watch bulletin for details.**



**Curricula** To support parents in the faith formation of their children, St. Theresa Catholic Parish uses the following classroom materials:

Sunday School -- Allelu! Program published by Our Sunday Visitor  
Children's Liturgy of the Word -- "*Children Celebrate*" published by Pflaum Publishers  
Reconciliation & Eucharist – *God's Gift* published by Loyola Press  
Wednesday Faith Formation -- *Be My Disciples* published by Benziger Press  
Edge and Life Teen use curricula provided by *Life Teen*

## Registration and Tuition

Faith Formation Registration must be complete for children to participate in Faith Formation sessions. Online registration for all grades is available on the parish website under the Faith Formation tab, then click on Elementary Formation.

### Tuition Rates

**Sunday School**      \$20.00 per child

#### Faith Formation Tuition Grades K-10

One child	\$ 65.00
Two children	\$115.00
Three or more	\$150.00

Confirmed high school students are free

\*No family or child will be turned away for financial reasons. Contact the faith formation coordinators for more information.

## Wednesday Evening Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is essential for children to gain the maximum benefit from participation in faith formation sessions. If your child cannot attend, please notify the Faith Formation office before 5:00 pm. E-mail or phone the faith formation coordinator for children in grades K-5 and the youth minister for children in grades 6-12. Do not leave a message on the school phone.

### Drop off and pick up

**Drop off** K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents, please wait with your child outside the classroom until your catechist arrives. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students, wait with the downstairs hall monitor until your catechist arrives.

**Pick up** K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents meet your child outside their classroom. Make sure the catechist knows that you have picked up your child. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade parents, pick up your child in the downstairs hallway. Make sure your catechist knows that you have picked up your child.

For the safety of the children, students may be on the parish grounds if they are under the supervision of a parent or guardian.

## Closings & Cancellations

Emergency closings or cancellations will be announced on the Parish Website or KCCI Channel 8. Since our parish families come from a wide range of area cities, please exercise caution based on your own area's safety.

## Catechists

Catechists from the parish community offer the richness of our Catholic Tradition in a classroom setting. Catechists are expected to be in good standing with the Church. They are required to complete safe environment training (VIRTUS) and a background check to help provide a safe environment for children. Catechists are also encouraged to participate in faith formation opportunities, in-service meetings, and other offerings that enhance their own spiritual lives and catechetical skills.

Confirmed high schoolers may be assistant catechists at the discretion of the director.

## Discipline

In order to foster a Christian atmosphere of hospitality, caring and courtesy and to promote maximum learning in the classrooms, the following guidelines are used:

- It shall be the policy that students attending Faith Formation Programs are expected to treat themselves, one another and all properties with respect and to demonstrate Christian-like conduct at all times.
- If discipline problems arise it is the practice of the program to approach the situation with an attitude of Christian reconciliation.
- Should a discipline problem persist, parents will be contacted. An alternate faith formation setting will be explored.

**Dress Code** Modest dress should be the guide for all attire.



Electronics &  
Social Media

## Cell Phones, iPods, MP-3 players, etc.

All personal electronic devices must be out of sight and not in use once students enter the building for catechesis unless directed by the catechist for class purposes. Devices that are out without catechist direction will be safely held by the catechist, hall monitor or director until the session is over.



Reconciliation



First Communion

## Sacramental Preparation

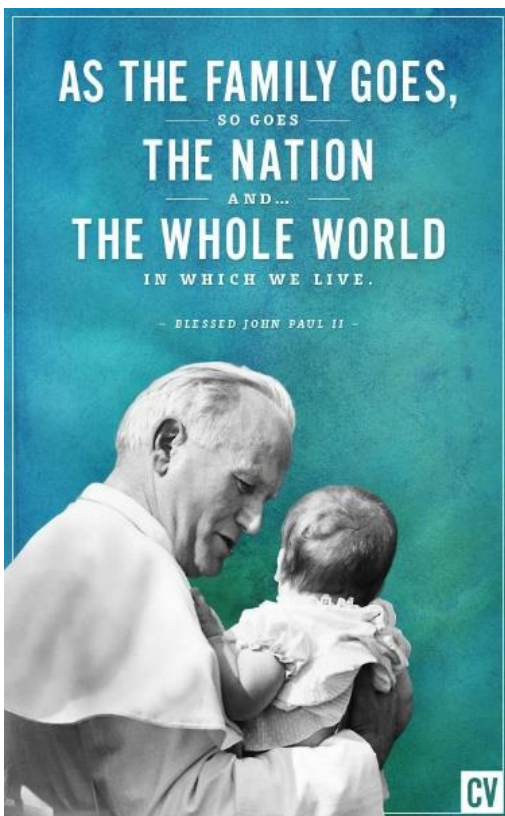


Sacraments provide times of joy and celebration for individual families and the entire parish community.

Children usually receive First Reconciliation in the fall and First Eucharist in the spring of 2nd grade.

Confirmation is usually celebrated in the spring of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

Consistent attendance in a Catholic faith formation program for the years prior to receiving sacraments is important for celebrating First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Children who have missed the usual age of sacramental reception are most welcome to begin wherever they are in their faith journey, with supplemental education as necessary. It is never too late to accept Jesus' gifts of grace in the sacraments!



**NOTE:** Parents, the parish supports you as your child's primary educator. In addition to sharing practical details about procedures for the sacramental day, we want to partner with you to deepen our adult understanding of the Faith so that we can best guide our children as they grow in their own relationship with Jesus.

Contact the Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation (Reconciliation and Eucharist) or Youth Minister (Confirmation) if you are unable to attend the scheduled meetings so we can set up an alternate meeting.

God bless our families!

From St. John Paul the Great