

## Saint Elizabeth Parish EFF Guide for Parents

We welcome you and your children to St Elizabeth's Elementary Faith Formation Program [EFF]. You are the primary teachers of your child in the faith. We are here to help you be the best of teachers in all you say and do. Without your assistance, the faith formation of your child will be lacking.

### How can you participate?

- **Pray with your child**, every day. Familiarize yourself with your children's books. There are many prayers in the books that you can pray together.
- **Bring them to Mass on Sunday.**
- **Ask your child about their session.** Ask them: "what was your favorite part of the lesson today?" Help them to build on their relationship with God
- **Plan ahead to attend the three family liturgies** during the EFF school year. To include as many children as possible in these programs, **we have three sessions. Monday and Wednesday are at 5:00 and Tuesday is at 6:30. Please mark your calendar now with these dates:**

Advent Liturgy:	<b>December 5, 6, 7</b>
Lenten Liturgy:	<b>March 13, 14, 15</b>
Closing Liturgy:	<b>May 15, 16, 17</b>

- **Earnestly ask God to bless your family** with the fruits of the Holy Spirit: gentleness; patience; peace; joy; love; generosity; and self-control.
- **Have them attend every session** and stay for the complete class. Only leave early for an emergency.

We trust that this handbook will acquaint you with the policies and procedures for our faith formation process.

***May Christ's Peace be with you!***

**St Elizabeth Parish**  
Elementary Faith Formation Program (EFF)

Our Mission is to bring the children and parents into ***“Communion with Christ.”***

**“On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.”** [Jn 14:20]

The Church tells us **“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ.”** The task of our catechists is to help our children encounter God and build a living relationship with Him

**Program Goals:**

The Saint Elizabeth EFF program supports the parish mission statement by helping form the faith lives of our children in kindergarten through sixth grade and provide special tutorial classes as needed. Our goals are to:

- Inflame a desire in the children to learn, know and understand their relationship with Christ through our Catholic faith and apply it to their lives.
- Stimulate the children to develop a more intimate relationship with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
- Foster a desire to continue building their relationship throughout their life.
- Prepare the children to regularly receive the sacraments as a statement of a living, vibrant faith and enhance the worship experience of children at Mass.
- Help them recognize, develop and use their God given gifts in stewardship service to others. There are many service projects incorporated in our program, throughout the year.
- Encourage the children to engage in faith discussions with their parents or guardians.
- Assist parents to understand their unique role in the formation of their child’s faith life.

The Saint Elizabeth EFF program is available to all registered members of the parish in kindergarten through sixth grade. Applicants who have not been baptized at Saint Elizabeth Church must provide a copy of the child’s Baptismal Certificate at the time of initial registration.

Special classes are offered for older children who have not received any or all of the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation or Holy Communion.

## St Elizabeth Parish

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**Attendance Policy:** The Archdiocesan guideline is a minimum of **30 hours** of religious education each year. Parents are requested to make every effort to have their child attend all sessions. Consistent attendance is a sign of your commitment to have your child grow and live out their faith. The official policy in regards to attendance is that you cannot miss more than 20% of the classes so a total of 6 class through the year. Please contact the Director of Religious Education if you have circumstances that prevent attendance.

**Absences:** When an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the catechist or the EFF Office to notify us that your child will not be in class that day and get any make up work from your catechist.

**Early Dismissals:** Early dismissals should be requested for special and serious reasons only, not for athletics. Since there is a rhythm to each session, a child leaving early loses the sense of continuity and closure with his/her class

1. Please submit a written note or Early Dismissal Form to the EFF Office.
2. Since we must protect your child, you must sign your child out and your child will be brought to you. We limit adults from coming into the school building during class times.

#### **Weather Related Emergencies:**

Go to the Saint Elizabeth website: [www.stelizabethparish.org](http://www.stelizabethparish.org) or Call **610-646-6545** for a recorded message.

Go to **KYW News radio 1060** and [kyw1060.com](http://kyw1060.com) website for announcements of closings. **Our number is 1187.**

*NOTE: If Saint Elizabeth Parish School is closed for weather, Elementary Faith Formation classes will be cancelled for that day.*

#### **Safe Environment: Your child's safety is paramount to us.**

All volunteers are required to submit to a criminal record check and a child abuse clearance. They are also required to take "Protecting God's Children" a Save Environment training course.

A "Safe Environment" class will be held for your child. You can find helpful information in the Archdiocesan web site, <http://archphila.org/home.php>. Click on "Archdiocese" and scroll down to "Children and Youth Protection", go to Resources, then scroll down to Resources for Parents. **If you wish to have your child "opt out" of this class, please notify us in writing.**

**Clothing and attire** should be age appropriate for a school or church setting.

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**Appropriate Conduct:** As Jesus directed us, **“Love one another as I have loved you.”**

Inappropriate conduct:

- ✓ Being disrespectful to anyone
- ✓ Hitting or physically hurting anyone
- ✓ Bringing any dangerous item into the school

**Parent Responsibilities:**

- All Special Needs of your child need to be given in writing to the EFF Office and your catechist.
- **Check your child’s folder for important notices and homework assignments.**
- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days
- Bring your child to every class.
- Pray with your child every night.
- Contact your catechist for make-up work and have your child complete the work in a timely manner as mutually agreed to with the catechist.
- Review pertinent parts of this Handbook with your child.

NOTE: There is a spiritual lending Library, available to all parishioners. The library is located in the Narthex of the church, in the Holy Family Room. It is open at all times when the church is open. You will find materials there that may be helpful to you.

**Student Responsibilities:** Students in our program are required to be respectful and to abide by all individual class rules, as well as to abide by the following:

- Attend Mass: Our children cannot get to Mass without the assistance of their parents [guardians]. So help them grow in their faith.
- Pray for your catechist and fellow students every night.
- Bring your books and other appropriate materials to every class.
- Be respectful in attitude and speech to your catechist, aide and fellow classmates.
- Put forth your best effort by coming prepared and completing all class assignments.
- Be respectful of the personal space of others, keep your hands and feet away from others.

**Student Progress Reports (report cards):** Progress reports are issued twice a year for students. Students will be evaluated on attendance, prayers, knowledge of the faith, and effort. Conferences are held only if requested by the catechist or parent.

**Book Replacement Fee:** All students are issued the appropriate grade level materials at the beginning of the school year. Replacement fees may be assessed for any books/materials that are lost and need to be replaced. The book replacement fee is \$20.00 per book.

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**Drop-off of Students:**

**For the First two weeks:** Please bring your child to the classroom to meet the catechist and ensure your child learns the location of their classroom.

**Week three and beyond:** Park and walk your child to the area protected by cones in front of the Education Center. Keep your child close to you in the parking lot as cars are backing up to leave or arriving.

**Pick-up of Students:**

**Family ID Cards:** We have a very large program and many people picking up students. To ensure proper access to the building you will be required to show a family ID card. Each family will be issued two cards at the beginning of the year. If you do not have a card, you will be required to present ID (e.g. driver's license in the office).

**Park and walk to the classroom in the Education Center to pick up your child at his/her classroom.** The Catechist or Aide will dismiss directly to the parent of the child. This allows the catechist or assistant to assure we are dismissing to a parent or guardian. If someone other than the parent or guardian will pick up your child, in advance please fill out and sign a Carpool Permission Slip and give it to your child's Catechist.

**Visitation of Classes:** Parents are permitted to visit periodically by invitation for special events. Parents are not permitted to sit in on classes on a routine basis during the year.

**Communication:**

Parents who wish to consult with a catechist should do so outside of regular class time. Parents who wish to meet with the DRE may arrange an appointment by calling 610-646-6545.

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**Preparation for Sacraments**

The Archdiocese requires two consecutive years of religious education prior to the reception of a sacrament. Readiness for the reception of a sacrament is more than just the age and class level of the child. Discernment of readiness is shared by the parents, staff and the child. The pastor will be consulted if postponement of a sacrament is deemed advisable.

At Saint Elizabeth, the Sacraments of Penance/Reconciliation and Communion are normally received in the second grade. The Sacrament of Confirmation is normally received in the sixth grade. We have special formation classes for older children and teens who have not been catechized to prepare them to receive the sacraments. We also have a special faith formation class for students above sixth grade who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation. All children must have at least two continuous years of faith formation before receiving these Sacraments.

**Sacramental Workshop - Parents Only:** Parents with children preparing to receive First Penance/Reconciliation, Holy Communion or Confirmation are expected to attend the Workshop, see below for dates.

**Confirmation Retreat for Child and Parents:** A child/parent Confirmation retreat will be held for all those candidates preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The half day retreat will also allow time for the reception of Reconciliation for all in attendance. Additional information on the retreat time and location will be communicated directly to the candidates and their parents. Sponsors are welcome but not required to attend the retreat.

**Important dates for those receiving Sacraments in 2017:**

<b>Sacramental Workshops:</b>	<b>10/22/16 Parents of Penance/Holy Communion Students 11/12/16 Parents of Confirmation Students</b>
<b>Confirmation Retreat:</b>	<b>Parents &amp; Confirmation Candidates February 25, 2017 &amp; March 4, 2017</b>
<b>First Reconciliation:</b>	<b>Parents &amp; Holy Communion Candidates March 20 and 22 @ 7:00 PM in Church</b>
<b>Confirmation Rehearsal:</b>	<b>Confirmation Candidates Only, Thursday April 20</b>
<b>Confirmation:</b>	<b>April 22, 2017</b>
<b>Holy Communion:</b>	<b>April – May, 2017, Specific dates TBD</b>