



All Are Welcome!

Faith Formation Guidelines

St. MARK R.C. CHURCH

“... because anything is possible for God.” (MK 10:27)

105 RANDALL RD.
SHOREHAM, NY 11786

Rev. James-Patrick Mannion, *Administrator*
Ph (*Parish Office*): (631)744-2800

Mrs. Lynn Fein, *Director*
Ph (*Faith Formation Office*): (631)744-2800 x109
stmarkshoreham.org

TABLE of CONTENTS

LETTER from FR. JIM	3
LETTER from MRS. LYNN FEIN	4
WELCOME	5
REGISTRATION & PARISH CONNECTION	5
When to Register.....	5
Program Fees	5
Sacramental Records.....	6
PROGRESSION THROUGH LEVELS	6
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	6
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL	6
ATTENDANCE	7
Lateness	7
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	7
CANCELLATION OF CLASSES	8
Weather-Related Closings	8
GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER.....	8
WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD BRING EACH WEEK	9
Supporting Learning at Home.....	9
Homework.....	9
ASSESSMENT	9
IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS.....	10
RESPONSIBILITY AND CONDUCT	10
DRESS CODE	10
USE OF RESTROOMS	10
SNACKS.....	10
RESPECT FOR OUR SPACE	11
ELECTRONIC DEVICES, TOYS, AND PERSONAL ITEMS.....	11
INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR.....	11
PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN	11
COMMUNICATION	12



105 RANDALL ROAD
SHOREHAM, NY 11786

REVEREND JAMES-PATRICK MANNION
Administrator
PARISH OFFICE 631-744-2800
Email: pastor@rcchurchstmark.org

Dear Parents and Families,

It is a joy to welcome you and your children to another year of Faith Formation here at St. Mark's. Our parish is blessed by your presence, your trust, and your desire to help your children grow in the love of Jesus Christ. Each child who walks through our doors is a gift to our parish family, and we are honored to accompany them on their journey of faith.

Faith Formation is not simply a program—it is a partnership between parish and home, rooted in the belief that God is already at work in the hearts of your children. Our catechists, staff, and volunteers are committed to creating a safe, joyful, and nurturing environment where that faith can take deeper root. Together, we help our young people discover the beauty of the Gospel, the richness of our Catholic tradition, and the joy of belonging to a community that cares for them.

I am especially grateful for the time, effort, and love you pour into your children's spiritual lives. Your example—your prayers, your presence at Mass, your conversations at home—forms the foundation of everything they learn here. Thank you for saying "yes" to this sacred work.

Please know that my door is always open. If you have questions, concerns, or simply want to talk, I am here for you. Let us continue to walk together in faith, hope, and love as we help our children grow into the disciples God calls them to be.

With prayer and gratitude,

Fr. James-Patrick Mannion (Fr. Jim)

Administrator, St. Mark's RC Church



105 RANDALL ROAD
SHOREHAM, NY 11786

MRS. LYNN FEIN
Faith Formation Director

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE 631-744-2800 x109

Email: relformr@rcchurchstmark.org

Dear Faith Formation Families,

Those of us who have been blessed to be parents certainly know that the birth or adoption of a child is a major event in the life of any family, no matter whether it is our first child or our fourth. Of course, we know it is normal to experience a range of emotions as we welcomed our children and thanked the Lord for these precious gifts of life. As we have discovered in raising our children, we are a special part of God's plan for our children. Our relationship with our children was formed before the actual birth and of course continued as we bonded with a newborn and took care of all our children's needs. Your child's first image of God is the love and care we continually provide throughout their lives. The children know a loving and caring God through our love and care. Parents are the ones who will influence their children the most and this applies to their growth in faith. If you practice our faith regularly, setting the example from the time your children are young, they will acquire a good foundation in our beliefs. When you celebrated the Baptism of your children you promised to raise your children in the faith and make your home the center of your child's growth in our faith. This includes praying together as a family at meals and bedtime and also includes attendance at Mass. Parents are the primary religious educators of their children, as they make sure that their children come to know God's love and as a family bring that love into the parish and community.

How grateful we are that you have chosen to become engaged in the life of our parish, and to have your children attend our Faith Formation classes. The dedicated and faith-filled catechists who teach our classes and I look forward to welcoming the children and teens to our weekly classes and to joining in the celebration of Mass with your families.

Please feel free to contact me at any time. I am always happy to hear from you and help you in any way that I can.

In the peace of Christ,

Lynn Fein

Director of Faith Formation

WELCOME

At St. Mark's, we are blessed to walk with families as their children grow in faith. Our Faith Formation program welcomes **all** children and families with open hearts. We do not discriminate based on race, gender, nationality, or disability. Every child is a gift to our parish family, and we are grateful for the opportunity to accompany them.

REGISTRATION & PARISH CONNECTION

We warmly invite all families who wish to enroll their children in Faith Formation to register with the parish first. Registration forms will be provided for your convenience.

When to Register

Registration for September classes begins in June. We encourage families to register during this time so we can plan well for the year ahead. Registration continues throughout the summer, and families who are new to St. Mark's are always welcome to join us at any time.

Program Fees

At St. Mark's, we are grateful for every family who entrusts their children to our Faith Formation program. Your registration fees help us provide a safe, joyful, and well-resourced environment for learning and growing in faith. These fees support books, classroom materials, technology, and the everyday needs of our Faith Formation office, including phone and internet services, heating and cooling, and mailings.

Payment is requested at the time of registration and may be made easily through our parish website: stmarkshoreham.org.

Fees for 2026–27

- **One child:** \$150
- **Two children:** \$250
- **Three or more children:** \$300

Sacramental years include additional costs to help cover special materials and retreat experiences:

Sacrament Fees for 2026-27

- **First Communion:** \$100 sacramental fee (certificates, banners, retreats)
- **Confirmation:** \$150 sacramental fee (Confirmation materials and related expenses)

As families who worship with us each week, we also ask that you support the parish through regular contributions—either by using the envelopes mailed to your home or by giving

electronically through our secure website. Your generosity helps sustain the ministries that serve your family and our entire parish community.

Sacramental Records

If your child was baptized at a parish other than St. Mark's, we kindly ask that you provide a copy of their Baptismal certificate.

Families transferring from another parish are asked to share documentation of the sacraments their child has received and the levels they have completed. This helps us place your child where they will grow best.

PROGRESSION THROUGH LEVELS

Each level of Faith Formation builds upon the one before it.

- Preparation for **First Reconciliation** and **First Eucharist** is a two-year journey, typically beginning in first grade.
- **Confirmation** is celebrated in the fall of ninth grade after completing Levels 1 through 8.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We joyfully welcome children with special needs. Every child deserves a place to grow in faith. Please reach out to Mrs. Fein, in confidence, to share any needs your child may have. Together, we will plan for the most supportive and meaningful formation experience possible.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The safety and well-being of our children is one of our highest priorities. To ensure a secure and peaceful environment for all:

- All children, teens, parents, grandparents, caretakers, and catechists are asked to **enter and exit only through the breezeway doors** connecting the church and parish center.
- All other doors remain locked for everyone's safety. An adult will be present at the breezeway to welcome you.
- For security reasons, **children and teens may not open doors** for anyone.

We kindly ask parents or guardians to **enter the building for both drop-off and pick-up**. Please wait in the connecting hallway so that classes may continue without interruption. At dismissal, catechists will accompany the children to the hallway.

For everyone's safety:

- Children will only be released to a parent or the designated adult listed at registration.
- If someone different will be picking up your child—whether regularly, occasionally, or just once—please notify Mrs. Fein.
- Please drive slowly and attentively in the parking lot. Children should never play or be left unsupervised outside, including siblings waiting in the car.

We understand that family schedules can be complex. You have chosen the class day and time that works best for your household, and if a conflict arises, your child is welcome to attend another class time for their level. If your child ever needs to be picked up early, please contact Mrs. Fein beforehand and sign your child out with her. If you are delayed at dismissal, your child will remain safely with Mrs. Fein and another adult until you arrive.

ATTENDANCE

Regular participation in Faith Formation is an important part of your child's spiritual growth. We ask all children to attend classes each week, following the calendar provided to your family and available on our parish website. We also warmly invite families to be present at **Level Masses**, **parent meetings**, and any **special events** connected to your child's level. These gatherings help strengthen the bond between home, parish, and classroom.

If your child will be absent, please contact **Mrs. Fein**—by phone or email—before or on the day of the absence. (Please reach out to her directly rather than the volunteer catechist.) Absences are recorded only after this communication is made.

We understand that life can be busy. More than **three absences** makes it difficult for a child to complete the level, so after the third absence, we will reach out to see how we can best support your family. Remember, if your child has a conflict on a particular week—such as a school event or concert—they are always welcome to attend another class time for their level that same week.

Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, and transportation difficulties.

Lateness

Classes begin promptly, and arriving late can be disruptive for both the class and your child. Please plan to arrive **five minutes before class begins**. If lateness occurs, kindly bring your child to **Mrs. Fein**, who will escort them to their classroom. If late arrivals become frequent, we are happy to help you find a class time that better fits your family's schedule.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Our Faith Formation calendar—available on our website—lists all parent meetings, special events, and days when classes are not held. Your presence at parent meetings is an important part of your child's

formation, and we deeply appreciate your partnership. These gatherings help ensure that families and catechists are working together to support each child's journey of faith.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

Our calendar reflects the vacation schedules of both the **Shoreham-Wading River** and **Longwood** school districts, though it may not match every family's individual school calendar. We do not close for individual district conference days. The calendar also includes Holy Days of Obligation, diocesan holidays, parish events, and other important dates.

Weather-Related Closings

If classes must be cancelled due to inclement weather, information will be available:

- On the **News 12** info bar
- On the News 12 website: www.news12.com
- By calling the Faith Formation office (631)744-2800, ext. 109 for a recorded message when possible

Please do not contact the Parish Office or the volunteer catechist for weather updates.

If **both school districts close** due to weather, we will also close. As always, each family should make the decision they feel is safest for their children, even if classes have not been officially cancelled.

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER

At St. Mark's, we believe that faith grows most beautifully when it is nurtured both at home and within our parish community. While weekly classes play an important role in your child's ongoing formation, it is your family's lived faith—especially your regular participation at Sunday Mass—that forms the heart of their spiritual life. We are truly honored to walk with you in this sacred work.

Our classes are led by dedicated volunteer catechists who serve as joyful witnesses of the Gospel. These women and men love the Lord, cherish the Eucharist, and feel called to share their faith with the children of our parish. Each catechist receives both initial and ongoing formation, helping them grow in confidence and deepen their ministry.

Every class begins with a reflection on the Sunday Gospel and the message shared in the homily. Catechists first share what they heard and how it touched them, and then the children are invited to do the same. This simple practice helps connect what happens at Mass with what happens in the classroom—and, most importantly, with what happens at home.

We believe that faith is something we **live**, not just something we **learn**. But to live our faith well, we also need to understand it. To support this, we use *Loyola Press' Christ Our Life – New Evangelization Edition* for Levels 1–8. For Confirmation preparation, we also use *Decision Point* and *Ascension Press' Theology*

of the Body programs, which include videos and guided discussions. All materials are approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and are fully in harmony with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD BRING EACH WEEK

To help our time together run smoothly, children are asked to bring:

- **Two sharpened pencils with erasers** (no pens or markers, please)
- **A folder**
- **Their textbook**, which will be given out at the first class
- **Their Bible** (Levels 6, 7, and 8), received at the Level 6 Mass

Supporting Learning at Home

Each family will receive a **syllabus** outlining the topics covered each week. If your child is absent, this makes it easy to review the lesson at home and stay connected to what the class is learning.

Homework

From time to time, children may receive a small assignment to help reinforce what they are learning in class. We appreciate your support in helping your child complete these activities—they are meant to deepen understanding, not to overwhelm.

Children in **Levels 1–8** are also invited to complete **monthly Mass reflection forms** after attending a weekend Mass at St. Mark's. While weekly Mass attendance is an essential part of our faith life, we collect these reflections **once a month**. The first reflection should be brought to class during the first or second week, with additional forms submitted monthly.

These reflections are not meant to be completed by the child alone. They are a beautiful opportunity for **parents and children to share faith together**, noticing what touched them at Mass and how God is speaking to their family. Reflection forms are available on our parish website.

ASSESSMENT

Growing in faith involves both the heart and the mind. To help us understand each child's progress, children are assessed informally and formally throughout the year. This helps us support their spiritual growth and ensure they are ready to move forward with confidence and joy.

IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

We want every family to feel heard, supported, and valued. If you have any concerns about our Faith Formation program, please feel free to speak directly with Mrs. Fein. We are here to partner with you.

RESPONSIBILITY AND CONDUCT

With Jesus as our model, we strive to create a community where every person is treated with dignity and kindness. We ask parents to help their children understand the importance of showing respect to both adults and peers. This helps create a peaceful, faith-filled environment where all can learn and grow.

As followers of Christ, we never tolerate **bullying or unkind behavior** of any kind. Our goal is to help children learn how to treat others with the compassion and respect that Jesus teaches.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate dress reflects a reverence for Our Lord; it assists our young people to develop a respect for the virtue of modesty and promotes a sense of self-respect and mutual respect for one another.

- NO tops that are low-cut, cropped, or see-through
- NO hats or hoods worn inside the building
- NO short shorts *or* short skirts
- NO sports or team uniforms

USE OF RESTROOMS

To minimize disruptions, please encourage your child to use the restroom before leaving home or upon arriving at the parish center. If your child has a medical need that requires frequent restroom use, please let **Mrs. Fein** know so the catechist can be informed discreetly.

SNACKS

In keeping with Diocesan policy, **no food, drinks, candy, or gum** are permitted during class. This helps us maintain a clean environment and protects children with allergies or choking risks. It also respects the choices parents make regarding their child's nutrition.

RESPECT FOR OUR SPACE

Our parish center is a shared home for many ministries. We ask everyone to treat it with care—keeping rooms tidy, respecting furniture and equipment, and leaving spaces as we found them. This helps us maintain a welcoming environment for all who use our facilities.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES, TOYS, AND PERSONAL ITEMS

To help children stay focused and fully present:

- Please do not send toys, stuffed animals, or personal electronic devices to class.
- Talking or texting during class is not permitted. Cell phones are required to be placed in a basket at the beginning of each class.
- Occasionally, phones may be used for a specific formation activity under the catechist's guidance.

If a child needs to contact a parent during class, the **Faith Formation office phone** is available. For emergency situations ONLY, if a parent needs to contact their child call (631)744-2800 x103.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Our goal is always to guide children with patience, understanding, and respect. When challenges arise, we handle them gently and in partnership with families.

- The catechist will first speak kindly with the child to help redirect behavior.
- If the behavior continues, Mrs. Fein will meet with the child to offer support and guidance.
- If further help is needed, Mrs. Fein will reach out to the parents so we can work together toward a positive solution.
- In the rare case of serious misconduct, a parent may be asked to pick up the child for the day.

Our hope is always to help each child feel safe, supported, and able to participate fully.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The safety and well-being of our children is a sacred responsibility. We follow all Diocesan guidelines to ensure a secure and caring environment.

1. All volunteers are fully compliant with the **Diocesan Child Protection Policy**. This includes completing a volunteer application, undergoing a background check every five years, signing a Code of Conduct, and attending a **VIRTUS** training session. Volunteers also receive ongoing safety updates from VIRTUS.

2. The full Diocesan Child Protection Policy is available at www.drvc.org.
3. Please inform **Mrs. Fein** of any custody arrangements or orders of protection. A copy of the order, along with a photo of the individual named, is required to ensure your child's safety.
4. Fire drills will be conducted during class sessions, and emergency procedures will be explained to the children.
5. Please let us know about any medical conditions your child has. Catechists are not permitted to administer medication.
6. Any accidents during class will be documented and discussed with the parent.
7. For safety reasons, only cleared volunteers may be in the parish center during class. Parents are asked to remain in the designated waiting area (the hallway connecting the church and center).
8. Each year, children in Levels 1–8 will participate in the Diocesan Safety Program, taught by Mrs. Fein, who is fully certified and trained. All lessons are age-appropriate and presented with care.

COMMUNICATION

Faith Formation is a shared ministry—one we carry out together as a parish family. Our pastor, **Fr. James-Patrick Mannion (Fr. Jim)**, **Mrs. Fein**, our catechists, parents, and the entire community all play a part in nurturing the faith of our children.

We warmly encourage open communication. Parents are always welcome to reach out with questions, concerns, or ideas.

The Office of Faith Formation will keep families informed through:

- Notices sent home with the children
- Email updates
- Announcements in the parish bulletin
- Information posted on our parish website

Because email is our primary and most efficient means of communication, we ask families to check it regularly.