

St. Martin de Porres Christian Formation Office

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the parishioners of St. Martin de Porres of Warren, reflecting the qualities of our patron saint, are striving to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the mystery of God's love in our midst, to serve one another and the wider human community, thus continuing the mission of Jesus.

**St. Martin de Porres
Christian Formation Office
Phone: (586) 264-7970
Fax: (586) 264-4013
Email: formation@smdeporres.com**

Office Hours

Monday 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Sandy Acord – Director of Christian Formation (Ext. 233)
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Prayer to Unleash the Gospel in the Archdiocese of Detroit

God our Father, you have called us
to be witnesses to Jesus
and have commissioned us to lead
all people to encounter him.

Send your Holy Spirit
to enlighten our minds
so that you will be clear to us
and that we may accept it.

Dwell within our souls
and make our hearts your own.

Transform us into a band of
joyful missionary disciples
embracing the fruits of Synod 16
so as to share the good news
of Jesus Christ in southeast Michigan
through joyful evangelization and service.

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful and
kindle in them the fire of your love.

Amen.

Saint Anne, pray for us.

Unleashthegospel.org

Sundays Family Prayer Events

Children's Liturgy of The Word

During the 11:00 Mass, we offer Children's Liturgy of The Word. This interactive and engaging celebration is a worship experience for children in grades one thru five. It allows the children to hear the Sunday readings in a language they can easily understand.

Children come to Mass and gather with the congregation. After the Opening Prayer, Father will invite the children to the front of the church to join with the Leader of the Word. The children will proceed to the back of church with their leader to listen, respond to, and reflect on the readings of the day. The children will rejoin the congregation in time for the Offertory Procession.

This is a wonderful program. If you would like to participate in this ministry as a Leader of The Word, contact the Christian Formation Office for more information at 264-7970.

Sacraments

Reconciliation

The preparation for this Sacrament takes place in level two before First Eucharist. We will begin our preparation with a parent meeting. Our Program is held during regular class time, although we do ask that you also work at home with your child in preparing for this Sacrament. **All the necessary materials will be given to you at the parent meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. A parent is required to attend.**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place on Saturday, April 2, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. A reception will follow in the Parish Center after the Sacrament.

First Eucharist

The preparation for the Sacrament of First Eucharist is in level two, but we frequently have some children from other levels participate. **A parent is required to attend our parent meeting and Enrollment Mass on Saturday, February 5, 2022 beginning at 3:45 p.m. in the Parish Center.** At that time you will receive your information packet, and we will go over the program. Our program is held during regular class time. We ask that you also work at home with your child in helping us to prepare her/him for this Sacrament.

Following the meeting, all children and parents are to attend the **Enrollment Mass at 5:00 p.m.** At that time you will bring your signed Commitment Form to the Mass. They will be presented to the priest. There will be a special blessing given during the liturgy.

On March 19, 2022, there will be a First Eucharist Parent/Child Retreat from 10:00 a.m. until noon.

The First Eucharist rehearsal will be on Friday, April 22, 2022 in church from 7:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. A parent is required to attend. The Sacrament of First Eucharist will take place on April 24, 2022 at the 11:00 a.m. Mass.

Sacraments (continued)

Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in level nine. Students will attend classes on Tuesday evenings from 7:45 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

The Confirmation Candidates and Sponsors are required to attend the retreat at St. Martin de Porres on Sunday, October 10, 2021 beginning with the 11:00 a.m. Mass.

The Confirmation rehearsal will take place on Friday, January 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the church. A parent must attend.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be on Saturday, January 15, 2022 at the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

Family Events

Children's Rosary

During the month of October the children in our program come together with their families in church to pray the rosary. It is a living rosary with the prayers being read by many of our children.

All catechists and students are required to attend our Rosary. This family event takes the place of classes for that week. You have received a letter and attendance card in your family envelope regarding this evening. Please place your family attendance card in the basket by the Baptismal font at the Rosary.

The Rosary will be held on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the church.

Family Mass

Mass is an important part of our formation program. Throughout the year the Christian Formation families will have the opportunity to come together in faith for the celebration of the Mass. We ask that you attend the scheduled Family Masses with your children. Watch your mail and check your formation calendar for additional information.

May Crowning

May Crowning will take place in the church on Sunday, May 1, 2022 at 10:45 a.m. The 11:00 a.m. Mass will follow the May Crowning. All children are to attend.

Family Events (continued)

Bring Your Parent to Class Day

On October 26, 2021 and March 1, 2022 each student must bring a parent with them to class and stay with them for the entire class. If a parent can't attend, the students can bring another adult with them. There will be a theme for each class, activities, and prayer that the parents (or other adults) will do with the students.

Tree Trimming Service

During the season of Advent, the Christian Formation families will come together with the parish community to share in our annual holiday tradition, the Tree Trimming Service. This special holiday celebration gives families an opportunity to reflect on both the spiritual and sharing nature of the holiday season. The students in our Faith Formation Program will make an ornament in class to decorate our parish Christmas tree.

The Tree Trimming Service will take place on Sunday, December 12, 2021 beginning with 11:00 a.m. Mass. Additional information will be sent home at a later date.

Circle of Grace

The Circle of Grace lessons are taught every year in each of the grades. The program emphasizes the love and goodness of God that surrounds us. The program helps children and youth understand their own sacredness, the sacredness of others, and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. We show the students their Circle of Grace by having them do the following exercise:

Raise your hands above your head.
Then bring your outstretched arms slowly down.
Extend your arms in front of you
and then behind you.
Embrace all of the space around you.
Then slowly reach down to your feet.
Knowing that God is in this space with you,
this is your Circle of Grace; you are in it.

Below is a summary of the key concepts of the Circle of Grace program that is taught in each grade with age appropriate material.

- God is “Present” because He desires a relationship with us. God is with us when we are happy and sad. He does not cause bad things to happen to us. He loves us very much. Having faith may not take away all of life’s struggles. It is because of these struggles, God promised to always “be present” providing guidance and comfort in our time of need.
- God helps us know what belongs in our Circle of Grace. Our feelings help us to know about ourselves and the world around us.
- God helps us know what does not belong in our Circle of Grace. He desires to help us when we are hurt, scared or confused (unsafe). The Holy Spirit prompts (alerts) us that something does not belong in our Circle of Grace by giving us “an uncomfortable feeling” that something is not safe. This feeling is there because God wants us to be safe.

Circle of Grace (continued)

- God helps us know when to ask for help from someone we trust. He gives us people in our lives to help us when we are troubled or struggling with a concern. God wants us to talk to trusted grownups about our worries, concerns or uncomfortable feelings so they can help us be safe and take the right action.

If you do not want your child to be present for the Circle of Grace lesson, please fill out the Circle of Grace Parent Opt-out Form that is in your family packet. A parent will have to teach the lesson at home. It is mandatory that every child does the Circle of Grace lesson every year.

If a student is absent the day the Circle of Grace lesson is taught, a parent will have to teach the lesson at home.

Summer Events

Vacation Bible School

Every summer during the month of June, we host an exciting, fast-paced week of Vacation Bible School. Children between the ages of four and ten are welcome to attend this week of activities.

We are in need of adult/teen volunteers to help with this program. If you are willing to share your time and talents, or are in need of further information, please contact the Christian Formation Office. **Our volunteer meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in room one of the Parish Center.**

Mark your calendars! Vacation Bible School is scheduled to begin on June 20th through June 24th from 9:30 a.m. until noon.

Policies

Attendance

We realize that the whole body of Catholic doctrine is not conveyed in any single year, but builds upon those that preceded and lead to what follows. To assure continued quality formation for your child, regular participation in class and family events is important.

If your child will be absent from class, please notify the Christian Formation Office. If absences exceed six classes or more during the formation year, without having made up the lessons, the child will be given the choice of being retained or going into home study for the make-up work.

Early Dismissals

Upon entering the building, you will need to ring the doorbell located on the right hand side of the glass double doors. No student will be dismissed early without a release form signed from the parent/guardian. A parent/guardian will need to come to the office prior to the start of class and complete an Early Release Form. At the appropriate time, a Christian Formation staff member will go to pick up your child. Catechists are not allowed to release any child to anyone except a staff member, even if they know you. Please notify the office of any unusual circumstances regarding custody situations or other circumstances which might create a potential problem.

Dismissal

We have a very busy parking lot. Children have a tendency to run to the car, presenting a real safety hazard. Please mind the large cones blocking off our sidewalk. Do not drive between them or drop your child off beside them. The cones are there for the safety of the children.

The general rule is that a parent or older siblings are to escort the children in and out of the building if they are in grades one through three. Children in grades four through nine may enter/leave the building unescorted. Parents are to wait beyond the double glass doors until classes are dismissed.

Policies (continued)

Cancellations and Weather Emergencies

As a general rule, if Warren Consolidated Schools have cancelled or dismissed classes early because of inclement weather, formation classes would automatically be cancelled. Parents are asked to cover that week's lesson with their child at home.

In the event of an early dismissal, each household will be contacted with information pertinent to the situation.

Parental Role/Expectations

We expect you to attend Mass with your child/children. It doesn't matter which Mass you attend. The Mass is an important part of the formation program. By attending Mass as a family, you and your children will become part of the parish community and become acquainted with our priest and worship.

Show your children that their formation is important to you each week by asking them questions about class and checking their folders for homework, family projects or communications from our office. Teachable moments with your children can be found by reading our monthly newsletter – *Partners in Faith* that is on the parish website – www.smdeporres.com. The bulletin will also contain information regarding the formation of children and adults.

We expect you to accompany your child/children to our Family Events offered during the year. We also expect you to attend parent/child meetings.

If a problem with behavior and discipline arises, we hope that through mutual cooperation of parents, child, and formation staff the problem or situation is resolved.

To keep our records up to date, please inform us of any changes in your email, home address or phone number. (Including any person listed as emergency contacts).

Policies (continued)

We ask that you notify us of any information about your child that would be of benefit. Please contact the office if there has been any changes regarding a physical condition, disability, allergies, and medications or if there is a death in the family, moving, divorce, custody situation or other circumstance which might create a potential problem. This information will be kept confidential, telling only those people who need to know.

The continued growth and success of any program depends a great deal on the feedback from parents and participants. Suggestions or comments from parents and participants are welcome.

Code of Conduct for Students

- All people will be treated with respect at all times.
- Respect will be shown to the rights and property of others.
- Vandalism will result in parents being held responsible.
- Vulgarity in any form will not be tolerated and will result in the student being sent home.
- Students are expected to come to class prepared and on time.
- Students are expected to complete and return all assigned work.
- Any physical violence or use of unlawful substance or items will not be tolerated.
- Students will follow the dress code published in the Family Handbook.
- Students may not bring headphones to class.
- Cell phones must not be visible in the classroom.
- Students may not chew gum during class.

Catechist Rights

- To have a classroom that provides the optimal learning environment.
- To expect appropriate behavior from students in the classroom.
- To ask for help from parents, Christian Formation staff when assistance is needed.

Policies (continued)

Student Rights

- To be provided a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning.
- To receive positive support and recognition for appropriate behavior.
- To be given clearly stated limits and consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Discipline

Good behavior is expected. The role of a catechist is not that of a disciplinarian. If a child is causing a problem that hinders the learning environment, the catechist will speak with the child and assess the problem. A decision will be made at that time if the matter should be brought to the attention of the Director. Parents will be contacted if a discipline problem arises repeatedly or is of a serious nature.

Conduct that will result in immediate suspension and notification of parents are: possession of any illegal drugs, alcohol and/or use of alcohol, weapons, vandalism, smoking, *sexual harassment and fighting.

*Sexual harassment may be defined as unwelcome sexual advances that is personally offensive and fails to respect the rights of others. Harassment can be either conduct or communication. Sexually inappropriate behavior means inappropriate touching, gestures, and language of a sexual nature directed at staff or students.

Sexual harassment also includes conduct or communication that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with another student's education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive education environment. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: sexual propositions, off-color jokes, sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons, unwanted and unnecessary physical contact, innuendoes, sexual offers, looks and gestures, or unwelcome comments about appearance.

Any staff member, student or catechist who feels that he or she has been a victim of sexual or other forms of illegal harassment should bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Director.

Policies (continued)

Dress Code

Students' clothing should be clean, neat, and appropriate for formation sessions. No spandex, very short skirts, or clothes with inappropriate words or pictures are permitted. No underwear and sleep wear as outer clothing. No hats, caps, bandannas or other head coverings are to be worn in the building unless required in class for safety reasons.

Guest Parents and Students

Any people wishing to visit are to make arrangements in advance through the Christian Formation Office. No visitor may see a student unless it is with the specific approval of the Director. If an emergency situation arises and requires a child to be called to the office to meet with a visitor, a member of the formation staff must be present during the conference. No child will be permitted to leave the building with anyone who is not clearly identified as his/her parent or an appropriately authorized person.

Any parent who wishes to observe their child's class must discuss it in advance with the catechist and Director.

All guests must register in the Christian Formation Office and receive a visitor's badge before entering the classroom. Children are not permitted to bring friends into their formation class.

Medications

Should your child become ill or injured during class, the Christian Formation Office will contact you using the phone numbers available to us on the registration form. We do not administer any type of medicine. If your child is injured, we will place ice on the injury or if needed a Band-Aid on a cut.

Policies (continued)

Field Trips

Students may be invited to participate in field trips as part of their formation. Children attending any field trip sponsored by St. Martin de Porres Christian Formation Program are to abide by our Code of Conduct. For all off-site activities, special forms from the Archdiocese of Detroit must be completed for both students and parent drivers and chaperones. No student will be allowed to participate in a field trip without a signed permission slip. Parent chaperones are subject to background checks.

Background Checks

The Archbishop of Detroit mandated that a criminal history background check be conducted for all church personnel, as well as volunteers, working in any parish who has unsupervised contact with a child, the elderly or persons with disabilities. The Archdiocese of Detroit has made significant progress in making improvements to create safe environments. In compliance with this directive, all paid staff and volunteers in our formation program have received a background check. In addition, all staff will attend or has attended the workshop, Protecting God's Children, to educate themselves in the awareness of the signs and impacts of abuse, along with invaluable ways to create a safe environment for our children.

The information within this handbook is intended to help parents, students, catechists and the Christian Formation staff to work together in faith formation. By no means is this manual all inclusive. Many guiding statements are within this handbook, but by no means does it cover every situation. Every effort will be made by the formation staff and those who are in a working relationship with St. Martin de Porres Christian Formation Program to help children understand what is expected of them.

Registration

St. Martin de Porres is open to all children, early childhood through level nine. We also welcome children from families of other parishes in the surrounding area. We ask that families be registered in St. Martin de Porres Parish, but it is not mandatory.

Whether a family is from St. Martin de Porres or another parish, it is vital for a family to have active participation in Sunday Mass each week.

Registration forms for the 2021/2022 were mailed out in the month of April, 2021. Forms will also be available on our website: www.smdeporres.com. Click on the Faith Formation link. We ask that you go over the registration form thoroughly, fill it out completely, and sign the back. You can return the form in person, by mail to the attention of the Christian Formation Department or by emailing us at www.formation@smdeporres.com on or before September 1, 2021.

If you have an outstanding balance for the previous formation year, full payment is needed at the time of registration. If you do not have a balance, no money needs to be sent back with the registration form.

We ask that all fees for the 2021/2022 formation program be paid in full by January 15, 2022.