



**“Let the little children come to Me.”**

**Matthew 19:14**

**PARISH RELIGION PROGRAM**

**PARENT AND STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

**2016-2017**

Dear Parents,

As the new Director of Faith Formation, I would like to welcome you and your family to our Parish Religion Program (PRP) for the 2016-2017 school year. We will begin our PRP program with a special kick-off gathering on Sunday, September 18, 2016 in Ventura Hall for all parents and children.

The task of teaching a child about the faith is an awesome responsibility and takes many people working together. As parents, you are the first catechists/teachers of your child and the *most important ones*. What does it mean to be the primary catechist? Saint John Paul II referred to the family as the “domestic church”. Every moment in your home (the domestic church) can be a teaching moment. In other words, your home is the heartbeat of faith where God’s love is lived out daily.

At an early age, your child learned intuitively about God, by watching you pray and go to mass. Your children have learned about charity and forgiveness by experiencing it from you. These early encounters of faith in the home and family provided the context for them to learn about God’s love and mercy. So, being the best teachers for your child’s faith development means that you practice your faith: you pray at home, go to mass every Sunday and make your home a place where love and forgiveness abounds.

Along with our PRP Catechists, I am looking forward to the opportunity to join with you in teaching and sharing our Catholic faith with your children. Our program is available for grades K through 8<sup>th</sup>, and is held on Sunday mornings from 9:15 am to 10:45 am in the St. Bernadette School building. Families are encouraged to attend the 11:00 am mass together after the program.

Every year we experience a need for catechists and assistants to serve our growing parish. I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider if God may be knocking on the door of your heart and asking you to help bring the children to him. It is not necessary to be a certified catechist/teacher in order to work in our program. I welcome all who want to share their gift of faith with others as a catechist or assistant.

Thank you for registering your children in St. Bernadette’s Parish Religion Program. Our PRP Handbook is available on our website at [www.stbameliaparish.org](http://www.stbameliaparish.org). I look forward to assisting you in the faith formation of your children. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns or home school options. You can count on my prayers for you and your family every day.

All for Jesus, All for His Kingdom,

Amy Zurlinden  
Director of Faith Formation  
St. Bernadette Parish

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Parish Religion Program (PRP) for faith formation of the children of St. Bernadette Parish, grades K – 8<sup>th</sup>. It is our hope that this handbook will serve as a guide and reference regarding various aspects of our program.

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. Bernadette Parish is a welcoming Catholic community, worshipping God and serving our neighbor.

## FAITH FORMATION MISSION STATEMENT

The parish family of St. Bernadette believes that lifelong faith formation is essential to grow in love and service of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We welcome and encourage all families; children, teens and adults to grow in knowledge of Jesus and the holy, Catholic Church by participation in a wide variety of programs designed to deepen our faith. With lives centered on the Mass and sacraments, we find unity when we recognize Christ alive in the hearts and minds of all who are called to witness.

## PROGRAM GOAL

Our goal is to provide an opportunity for nurturing and forming our parishioners of all ages, in the teachings of Christ our Lord, through the study of Scripture, the Catholic Catechism, traditions of the church and specifically selected programs designed for religious education of children.

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

### Director of Faith Formation

Amy Zurlinden 753-5566 ext 105

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### Faith Formation Associate

Jeanie Stephens 753-5566 ext 104

[jstephens@stbamaelparish.org](mailto:jstephens@stbamaelparish.org)

### Parish Office

Sylvia Guthrie 753-5566 ext 2

[sguthrie@stbamaelparish.org](mailto:sguthrie@stbamaelparish.org)

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1479 LOCUST LAKE ROAD  
AMELIA. OHIO 45102

ST. BERNADETTE WEBSITE  
[www.stbameliaparish.org](http://www.stbameliaparish.org)

#### ST. BERNADETTE FACEBOOK PAGE

St. Bernadette, Amelia Ohio



## CURRICULUM REVIEW

We will be using the **Pflaum Gospel Weeklies**. These Weekly Lessons flow from the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospels as celebrated at Sunday Mass. This helps parents participate in their important role as the first educators of their children. Each student will receive a Weekly Lesson and a Catechism Handbook. The Catechism Handbook will remain in the classroom for the student to use and will be sent home on the last day of class for the year. The Weekly Lessons will be sent home with the student each Sunday.

**Catechism Handbook:** Church teachings students need to master are covered in **What the Church Believes and Teaches**, a comprehensive, year-long resource and reference handbook. It includes teachings from all four pillars of the Catechism - - Catholic doctrine, sacraments, commandments, and prayer – plus a “Catholic Treasury” section with vocabulary, prayers, and other basics of the faith each student should know.

The **Weekly Lessons** are designed for each grade. They are specific to the faith formation needs of each grade.

### Grades K – 1: PROMISE

The Sunday Gospel message creates the foundation for young children to begin to participate in worship and the life of the Church. Concepts are introduced simply and powerfully, Jesus becomes immediate and real, and make-and-do projects explore Sunday Gospel ideas. Parent notes help get families involved.

### Grades 2 – 3: GOOD NEWS

The Sunday Gospel message creates the foundation for children to become more involved in Sunday worship as they see how the readings tie to their own lives. Concepts are introduced simply and powerfully, Jesus becomes immediate and real, saints' lives demonstrate the power of faith, and original stories and plays relate God's word to children's worlds.

### Grades 4 – 6: VENTURE

The Sunday Gospel message creates the foundation for older children to explore their expanding faith using Gospel dramatizations, current events, and original stories linked to the Gospel and kid's own lives. Saints' lives (illustrated comics) and

imaginative activities demonstrate the applications of the Gospel message, and “Think” questions reinforce doctrinal concepts.

## **Grades 7 – 8: VISIONS**

The Sunday Gospel message creates the foundation for lessons for emphasizing social justice, moral reasoning, and service. Current-interest articles, life dilemma stories, and real Christian-life examples help young teens explore links between today’s issues, the Sunday readings (including Old Testament), and their own lives. Activities reinforce learning based on the four pillars of the Catechism.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The Gospel Weeklies provides **The Gospel At Home**, a simple resource that connects you to your child(ren)’s lesson each week. Designed for busy families, *The Gospel At Home* provides a short description of the Sunday Gospel plus suggested activities and discussion starters for each age level. These easy-to-do ideas will bring families together to share what each member has learned about the Gospel that they heard on Sunday (and studied in class.) **The Gospel At Home** will return September 2016.

Visit <http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/parents/> to sign up and receive **The Gospel at Home** in your inbox.

**Seasonal Activities** are also available to extend your child’s learning experience with activities and prayers that you can do at home. Based on the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year, your family can have fun while learning about Jesus and his Church.

On the next page is a short but very informative explanation of what the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Faith Formation Program* is about, why it is unique compared to textbooks, and how it can help your family:

# Pflaum Gospel Weeklies: An Introduction for Families

The faith formation program we are using is called the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*. This program differs from other programs in a number of significant ways that make it an effective way to teach your children.

## 1 Liturgical Catechesis

This is a method of instruction that integrates faith formation lessons with the life of the parish community experienced in the Sunday Eucharist. The content of the program flows from the Sunday Gospel and children learn their faith within the rhythms of the liturgical year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time.

## 2 Sunday Mass

The Sunday liturgy is the heart of the parish community. The weekly celebration is more meaningful to young people because they are familiar with the Gospel proclaimed each week. They have studied it in class and wrestled with its meaning. With this program all students and their families hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They learn the Gospel. They love the Gospel. They live the Gospel in their daily lives. They share the Gospel both in the community of faith and, by their witness and loving service of others, with every person they meet.

## 3 Family Involvement

Your whole family can easily share in the learning because all children are studying lessons based on the same Gospel proclaimed in church on Sunday. You can gather all your children at one time to share what they have learned and to talk about it as a family.

## 4 Unique Materials

Because *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* do not use a textbook, they are very appealing to young people and easy to use in class and at home. Each child receives a "catechism handbook" called *What the Church Believes and Teaches* (or *Mi fe católica*, the bilingual version). This handbook contains all the doctrinal elements that are considered essential at each grade level. Each week your child will receive a new lesson dated for each Sunday of the liturgical year. These lessons are at the heart of the program and will be used in class and then brought home for you to see and talk about with your children.

## 5 Five Editions

The *Weeklies* follow the three cycles of Gospel readings in five editions used to cover all the grade levels: *Seeds* (Preschool), *Promise* (Kindergarten and Grade 1), *Good News for Children* (Grades 2 and 3), *Venture* (Grades 4-6), and *Visions* (Grades 7 and 8).

## 6 Online Resources

The free resources designed for families include *The Gospel At Home*, which is a weekly summary of the Sunday Gospel and suggestions for you to use at home. You can sign up to get an email reminder with a link to the resource. There are additional seasonal resources as well. All of these can be found at [pflaumweeklies.com](http://pflaumweeklies.com).

## REGISTRATION

Registration for all Faith Formation programs is ongoing for new families joining our parish or entering religious education for the first time. New students must provide Baptismal Certificate at the time of registration. All new and returning students must have completed registrations forms.

Registration forms can be found online at our website [www.stbameliparish.org](http://www.stbameliparish.org) .

## TUITION

\$75 per Child                      Additional \$25 per Child if a Sacramental Year

Please make checks payable to St. Bernadette.

Financial assistance is available; please contact Director of Faith Formation.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Our sacramental programs are based on these principles:

- Parents are the primary teachers of their children.
- Sacraments are gifts of grace.
- Sacramental catechesis can help invigorate the faith participation of families.
- All learning of faith seeks to draw persons into deeper communion with Christ and his Church.
- Sacramental Preparation is included in the Parish Religion Program classes with additional mandatory meetings, retreats and projects outside the classroom for students and parents. As such, we partner with parents and families to prepare for the celebration of the sacraments.

Typically Baptism is celebrated as an infant, First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are celebrated when the child is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Confirmation is celebrated when the student is in 8th grade. However for many reasons a child may not have celebrated these sacraments at the typical age. We welcome all children under any circumstances and will work to provide instruction necessary to celebrate these sacraments. Please contact the Faith Formation Director for assistance.

## HOMESCHOOL OPTION

Any family may elect to participate in St. Bernadette's Homeschool Option. This option is especially encouraged for families who homeschool. Families who chose this option will meet with the Director of Faith Formation who is available to help assist the family choose catechetical materials and plan out the year.

Families who select the family option will be expected to attend any retreats, meetings, and events associated with First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

Check the appropriate Home School Option box on the registration form.

**ST. BERNADETTE PARISH RELIGION PROGRAM 2016-2017**  
**\*CLASS BEGINS AT 9:15 AM TO 10:45 AM ON SUNDAY MORNINGS**

Opening Day September 18, 2016	Kick-Off Event Parents & Students	Ventura Hall
September 25, 2016	Class	Classrooms
October 2, 2016	Class	Classrooms
October 9 2016	Class	Classrooms
October 16, 2016	Class	Classrooms
October 23, 2016	Class	Classrooms
October 30, 2016	Class	Classrooms
November 6, 2016	Class	Classrooms
November 13, 2016	Class	Classrooms
November 20, 2016	Class	Classrooms
November 27, 2016	OFF	Classrooms
December 4, 2016	Class	Classrooms
December 11, 2016	Class	Classrooms
December 18, 2016	Class Christmas	Party Stievenard Hall
December 25, 2016	OFF Merry	Christmas
January 1, 2017	OFF Happy	New Year
January 8, 2017	Class	Classrooms
January 15, 2017	OFF	
January 22, 2017	Class	Classrooms
January 29, 2017	OFF	
February 5, 2017	Class	Classrooms
February 12, 2017	Class	Classrooms
February 19, 2017	OFF	
February 26, 2017	Class	Classrooms
March 5, 2017	Class	Classrooms
March 12, 2017	Class	Classrooms
March 18, 2017	Jesus Retreat for 1 <sup>st</sup> Communicants	Ventura Hall
March 19, 2017	Class	Classrooms
March 26, 2017	OFF	Spring Break
April 2, 2017	Class	Classrooms
April 9, 2017	Class Palm Sunday	Classrooms
April 16, 2017	OFF Happy Easter	He Is Risen!
April 23, 2017	Class	Classrooms
April 29, 2017 *	1 <sup>st</sup> Communion	5pm Mass
April 30, 2017 *	1 <sup>st</sup> Communion	9am & 11am Masses
April 30, 2017	Class	Classrooms
May 7, 2017	Class	Classrooms
May 14, 2017	Class	Classrooms
May 21, 2017	End of Year Event	TBD

- Dates and times for other parent and sacramental meetings TBD and subject to change.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **NONDISCRIMINATION**

The policy for admissions at St. Bernadette PRP entails no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or handicapping conditions. The Faith Formation Office will work directly with families to ensure that no student who has a learning or physical handicap is excluded or discouraged.

### **DISCIPLINE**

If a teacher/catechist corrects a student's behavior, speech or attitude more than once per class, then that student may be referred to the Faith Formation Director who will contact the parent(s) for disciplinary collaboration. Repeated and significant student disciplinary measures may result in a student's expulsion from the program. Such circumstances are rare and parents can be assured that all steps will be taken to work with a family and to allow a student's continued participation in PRP.

It is important in a learning community that all students be given access to an environment free from distraction. *Bullying is not tolerated at PRP.* St. Bernadette's PRP strictly follows the Decree on Child Protection, which includes the mandate by the Decree on Child Protection as well as the Ohio Revised Code to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

### **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

At the time of registration, the Faith Formation Office needs to be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent.

### **ATTENDANCE**

In the event of an absence, families will be assigned homework to make up for the class time. Make-up work must be returned at the next class in order for students to remain on schedule with the group. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that make-up work is picked up and completed. More than 3 absences and/or 3 tardies will necessitate communication with Faith Formation Director, including the Pastor, regarding the family's commitment to the PRP program.

### **RECORDS**

Performance and attendance records will be kept on file in the Faith Formation office. Parents may contact the Faith Formation office in order to access their student's records. Teachers do not keep such records, all attendance and performance accounts are kept on file in the office.

### **SHARING SPACE**

It is important that the students respect the property of others. The Parish Religion Program shares classroom space at St. Bernadette School. Everyone who uses the space must respect it and the other students who use it during the week. While the PRP students are in the classrooms they will be using the desks of the daily school children. Nothing in the desk is to be touched. PRP students are supplied with pencils, crayons, etc, so there is no need to use or borrow anything that does not belong to them. Any items damaged, destroyed, or missing will be repaired or replaced at the student's expense.

# **SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

## **ARRIVAL**

Students should arrive no earlier than 9:05, no later than 9:15. A teacher or other volunteer will be available to supervise and direct students beginning at 9:05. Students should be dropped off at main school entrance facing the cafeteria. Students who arrive after 9:15 are considered tardy.

## **DISMISSAL**

Students must be picked up at their classroom at 10:45.

\*Please help us ensure the safety of all the children and youth by following these arrival and dismissal procedures.

## **CANCELLATIONS**

For weather or facility related cancellations, please check the St. Bernadette Facebook page and your email. Cancellation decisions will be made by 8:00 a.m.

## **ILLNESS OR INJURY**

If a student should become sick or injured during PRP, parents/guardians will be called and appropriate medical protocol followed. If a student has a minor injury (e.g. requiring a band-aid), an incident report will be sent home.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Students may not attend PRP unless the Emergency Medical Authorization Form is on file. See registration forms.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE**

No medicine or personal prescriptions will be administered at PRP. Epi-pens and inhalers are the exception. Please contact the Faith Formation Director to coordinate the necessary medical awareness for your child.

## **FOOD AND DRINK IN THE CLASSROOM**

Food and drink are not allowed in the classroom. Students should finish eating and drinking before attending PRP. Teachers may offer a special beverage or snack at their discretion and only under advisement of student allergies.

## **POLICY CHANGES**

In the event that policies and procedures are added or amended, parents will be notified in writing.