

Our mission and focus at St. Bernard's is to help the community grow in faith, develop a better understanding of the Church's teachings and strengthen personal relationships with Christ, through the light of instruction.

Faith Formation at St. Bernard's
Kindergarten through Fifth Grade
2023/2024

Registration for Faith Formation Classes this year at St. Bernard's will take place at all the Masses the week end of August 12th and 13th and August 19th and 20th. You may also register in the Parish Office after August 13th.

Fees for the coming year are **\$80.00** per student, for all grade levels, through the Fifth Grade. There is a family fee of **\$275.00** for families with four or more children in the Elementary Program. **If your child or teen is preparing for First Reconciliation, First Communion, or Confirmation, and they were not baptized at St. Bernard's, you must have a copy of their Baptismal Certificate that we can keep, turned in, preferably, at registration.** In this Diocese, First Reconciliation is celebrated in Second Grade, and Confirmation and First Eucharist in Third Grade. **Registration will not be considered complete until all forms and fees are in.**

The Program

St. Bernard's offers a Family Faith Formation Program. We offer formal faith classes to the youth taught by trained catechists. All of our programs are deeply rooted in Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. At St. Bernard's we raise the children in the faith together. The catechetical staff is committed to providing the very best in Faith Formation for your children and teens, but we cannot do it alone. The catechists only have the children for one hour a week in class. It is the parent's responsibility to teach their children their prayers and to bring them to Eucharist every Sunday. Children model the behavior of their parents. They need to see the example of their parents at prayer and at Sunday Eucharist.

The Diocese of Phoenix has restored the Sacraments of Initiation; Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, to their original order. This restored order helps us to recognize that sharing in the Eucharist completes our initiation into the Church. The reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation was moved to the Third Grade in September of 2007, in our parish. **All children and teens in Third Grade and above are eligible for the Sacrament of Confirmation. We changed our Faith Formation Program in 2007 in an effort to provide catechesis for those who were confirmed in the Third Grade and not attending Catholic School. Education in the faith cannot end in Third Grade, catechesis is lifelong.**

Our Fourth and Fifth Grade Programs are designed to continue study of the basic teachings of the faith in a more interactive process, including an in depth study of the History of the Church, Old Testament and New Testament, Church Architecture, Art and liturgy, including the Roman Missal, the Lives of the Saints, Scripture, Prayer and Worship.

All Elementary Classes this year will be offered on Tuesday's and Thursday's after school and early evening. Children will attend a one hour class each week beginning the week of September 12th thru April 25th. There will be 25 weeks of classes and our schedule is based on the Scottsdale School Calendar.



Sacrament Preparation – Curriculum: “Saints Among Us”

It is important to remember that formal Sacrament Preparation begins in Kindergarten at St. Bernard’s as the children will receive three sacraments by the time they are completing third grade. Parents are the primary educators of the faith for their children, so faith sharing for all families begins at your child’s Baptism.

Reconciliation and Eucharist are separate and distinct sacraments. In each sacrament we experience Christ’s action within us in a different way. Each gives us a share in Christ’s life and changes us in various ways if our hearts are open to Him. To combine preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist tends to give children the mistaken notion that somehow the two sacraments are the same or at least inseparable sacramental experiences. However, a natural link does exist between the two sacraments, because purity of heart is required of those who approach the “Table of the Lord”. These separate sacramental programs involve the child, family, and community in the preparation process. They help the children to see their need not only to accept God’s love and forgiveness each day, but also to frequently experience and celebrate this love and forgiveness, through Jesus, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Confirmation/First Eucharist program leads children to understand, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the “Real Presence” of Jesus, in the Eucharist, offering them the help they need to be happy and grow in His love, truth, and life. The catechesis for Confirmation and Eucharist proceed hand in hand. The catechesis is integrated into a single process thus emphasizing the close connection between Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as the culmination of Christian Initiation. Confirmation/First Communion preparation also includes a day of retreat for the children and parents.

Our “Heritage” classes are for children, third through fifth grade, who, for whatever reason, have missed the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation or Eucharist at the younger ages. Please call me at the Parish Center if you have an older child who is in need of these sacraments.

All children are welcome to “Children’s Liturgy of the Word” at the 9:00 A.M. Mass on Sunday. There is no registration for this. St. Bernard’s also offers Vacation Bible School in June for preschool and elementary children.

We want to provide the very best in Faith Formation for our youth and their families. Father Fred, Father Simon, the Catechetical team and I are here to assist you in your faith journey as a family. Please do not hesitate to call me at the Parish Office, 480-661-9843 ex314 or email at kstine@stboc.org with any questions, concerns, or comments about Sacrament Preparation or Elementary Faith Formation at St. Bernard’s.

The catechists and I look forward to meeting all of you!