

Prince of Peace Catholic Church

Family Faith Formation Policy and Information Handbook 2026–2027



“How precious is the family, as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!”

– Pope Francis

Welcome to POP Families and Elementary First Eucharist Preparation. We are honored to assist you in your family's faith journey. Faith formation is ongoing and lifelong. We must grow in the knowledge and practice of our faith. Our ongoing faith formation gives us strength for our spiritual journey as we discern what we must do next as disciples of Christ. Thank you for actively sharing the knowledge, blessings, and joys of our faith with your children. Through the example set by worshiping at Mass every week and continuing to grow in your faith, your children will come to know and understand the rich traditions of our Catholic faith and the blessings yet to be received.

Registration for faith formation and sacramental preparation for elementary children and their parents occurs each year. Please see our website, bulletin, and slides for announcements for registration open and close dates.

Family Faith Formation

POP Families is faith formation for children grades K-5 and their parents. Although content is geared toward parents with elementary-aged children, all families are welcome. Childcare is available for your littlest ones and there is a place for your 6th-12th grade children to serve. Families will gather in one space for the monthly Large Group Sessions and break out according to grade (or sacramental preparation) during the Classroom Sessions.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Preparation

Preparation for these sacraments is offered each year and is housed within our family faith formation program (POP Families). During your child's sacramental year, your family will participate in the Large Group Sessions and break out for sacramental preparation during the Classroom Sessions. One parent is required to attend the sacramental preparation classes along with the child. The sacramental year (2nd grade norm) also includes a retreat, Penance service, and First Eucharist Mass. Eligible candidates must be registered active members of the parish and should:

- Be between 2nd and 5th grade (For 6th-grade students entering into their sacramental year, contact the office to discuss your options.)
- Participate in Mass weekly
- Participate and maintain satisfactory attendance (at least 80%) of faith formation classes (For homeschooled children or children participating in Catholic school, please email the program coordinator.)
- To begin the sacramental preparation year, the child must have completed one full year of a formal faith formation program. This must be done in the year immediately before the child enters the sacramental preparation year. (Ordinarily, First Eucharist is received in 2nd grade. To do this, students must have completed a 1st grade faith formation program.)

Parents are responsible for indicating their child's sacramental needs upon registering for faith formation for the upcoming year.

A newly issued baptismal certificate must be submitted in the year the child is receiving the sacraments. New parishioners must submit transfer records to the Faith Formation Office upon registration.

Confirmation Preparation

NEW this year! Participation in POP Families in 5th grade will count toward year one of the two year Confirmation preparation. The parent-child retreat requirement for 5th grade Confirmation candidates is met through attendance and participation in the Large Group POP Families sessions. Attendance in Classroom, Parent, and Large Group sessions is critical during these years of Confirmation preparation in order to journey to the next phase. Expect more information about the full two-year Confirmation journey during the 2026-2027 school year.

Curriculum

POP Families Large Group Lessons will follow and celebrate the liturgical calendar with family discussion and hands-on projects.

POP Families Classroom Lessons will follow the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies curriculum. This lectionary-based catechetical program ties in the weekly lectionary (readings at Mass) with the teaching of the Catechism. Children will receive Gospel Weeklies to coordinate with each Sunday of the year to be completed during on-campus lessons and at home when not meeting in the classroom. To learn more, visit <https://www.gospelweeklies.com/>.

First Eucharist Preparation Classroom Lessons will follow the *Growing Up Catholic: Sacraments* program. Children will receive a booklet to accompany each on-campus lesson. At least one parent must be present with their child(ren) for all lessons. For more information about the *Growing Up Catholic* programs for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist preparation, visit <https://reconciliation.family/> and <https://eucharist.family/>.

Policies and Procedures

Mass Attendance

Mass attendance is essential in passing on the faith. Our faith formation program complements, but does not replace, your children's participation in the Sunday liturgy with your family. We encourage and support your commitment to ensure that your children attend and actively participate in weekly Mass, in addition to attending regular faith formation sessions. This will nourish and strengthen your family's understanding and practice of our faith.

Attendance

Only those registered for POP Families or First Reconciliation and First Eucharist preparation are permitted to attend classes. Families are expected to make attendance at large group and classroom sessions a priority for continuity for the children and to provide a foundation of faith to build upon. Children who miss more than five sessions will be considered at risk of not progressing to their second year of sacramental preparation, should they choose to seek a sacrament. Excused absences include illness and family emergencies. Sporting activities and vacations are not considered excused absences. In the instance of children having more than one custodial home, please contact the Faith Formation Office so that we may better serve your family's needs. Parents should convey reasons for excessive absences to the program coordinator via email.

When children miss class, parents are responsible for obtaining the lesson materials from their child's catechist at the session immediately following the missed lesson, assisting the children with the completion of the lesson, and returning the completed lesson the following week to the child's catechist. *If the absence is due to illness or a family emergency, parents are responsible for emailing the program coordinator the date and nature of the absence.*

Please help your children be on time. If Mass runs longer than expected, do not leave Mass early. We will delay the start of classes. If attending Mass prior to class, promptly make your way to the education wing of the building immediately after Mass. Early pick-up from class will only be allowed in special circumstances and with the express permission of the coordinator. Please be on time, stay for the duration of class, and make attendance a priority.

For non-sacramental year children during classroom sessions: only parents will be permitted to pick up their children from the classroom unless arrangements have been made ahead of time. If the person picking them up in the classroom is different from the person who dropped them off, please communicate this with the catechist at the time of drop-off. Parents should make their way to the parent session immediately after dropping off their child(ren) in the classrooms.

Conduct and Discipline

Life as a Christian is a commitment to live by the example of Jesus Christ. This includes accepting responsibility for conduct and actions, along with the commitment to respect others. Catechists will handle normal discipline problems. If a problem becomes persistent, the student will be walked to their parent. Disciplinary infractions include, but are not limited to, abusive language, fighting, vandalism, disrespect toward catechists or other students, stealing, and leaving the building during class time.

Inclement Weather

If the Hall County School District cancels classes as a result of severe weather, all faith formation sessions that day will be canceled. For weekend sessions, the parish staff will determine cancellations. In either case, an email notification will be sent to all participants. For additional information or on weekends, holidays, or after school, visit our website at popfb.org/children.

Health Concerns and Medications

Catechists and other staff members cannot dispense medication to students during class. Please note any health concerns on your registration form. A confidential appointment can be made with the coordinator to discuss special needs.

Child Abuse

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will follow archdiocesan policy on such matters. All catechists and volunteers have been background screened according to archdiocesan guidelines. These guidelines can be found at www.archatl.com.

Children's Safe Environment Training

The Archdiocese of Atlanta requires all students to participate in "VIRTUS - Teaching Touching Safety" (a safe environment training). Children are taught that God is a loving, listening, caring presence in their daily lives and that they should feel secure and safe in sharing information about problems or people that worry them with a trusted adult. This program is provided to us by the Archdiocese of Atlanta and is a part of our ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from sexual abuse.

Our Safe Environment session date will be communicated during classes and via email. Sessions are age-appropriate, and parents are required to attend. An opt-out form will be required for any parent who wishes to present this material at home or does not give permission for their children to receive the training. For more information on the Touching Safety program, visit the VIRTUS Online™ website at www.virtus.org.

Other Family Opportunities

Vacation Bible School and Family Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is open to children, preK 3 (must be potty-trained) through rising fifth grade. VBS is held from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm, Monday through Friday, for one week in June. Youth, rising in eighth grade and above, parents, guardians, and grandparents are all needed to volunteer and minister in many areas. Family VBS will be held in June as well and is for kids aged 0-18 and their parents. All are welcome! More information about dates, how to register your children, and how to register to volunteer will be announced at POP Families, Mass, on our website, and in the bulletin.

Family Adoration and Social

Teaching your children to adore Jesus in the Eucharist is a gift they will never forget. Join us for quarterly Family Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Family Social. Adoration will be held in the chapel after 9 am Mass until 11 am. Then from 11 am-1 pm, families are invited to a social where we will enjoy fellowship, food, and fun with one another! Wiggly and giggly kids of all ages and their parents are invited to come and spend time with Jesus and your brothers and sisters in Christ! Check your calendar for a complete list of dates and sign up to be a guardian through the link on our website.

Family Retreat

Families will have an opportunity to remove themselves from the business of daily life and enter into a slower, quieter weekend retreat at LifeTeen Camp Hidden Lake. More information will be posted on our website and in our bulletin.

General Information

POP Families Page	popfb.org/children
Elementary First Eucharist Preparation Page	popfb.org/eucharist-children

Contact Information

Coordinator of Family Faith Formation (K-5th grade)-Spanish		
Indira Armes*	678-960-0043	indira@popfb.org
Coordinator of Family Faith Formation (K-5th grade)-English		
Taylor Zuercher	678-960-0051	taylor@popfb.org
Faith Formation Administrative Assistant*		
Jenny Carrillo	678-960-0061	jenny@popfb.org

Other Faith Formation Opportunities

On our website, click on our Faith Formation and Sacraments tabs for all other faith formation needs. For questions concerning the various areas, please contact:

Baptism (Infant-10 years old)*		
Carmela Trevino	678-960-0069	carmela@popfb.org
Confirmation and Youth Ministry (6th-12th)		
JP Williams	678-828-8854	jp@popfb.org
Confirmation (6th-12th)		
Jacqueline Fotis	678-648-3419	jacqueline@popfb.org
Baptism and First Eucharist (6th-12th)*		
Indira Armes	678-960-0043	indira@popfb.org
Faith Formation and Sacraments (18 years old +)		
Suzanne Coughlin	678-960-0056	suzanne@popfb.org

**Bilingual English and Spanish*