

Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish Faith Formation Parent Handbook 2026–2027

**Holy Angels Center
South Meriden, CT**

Faith Formation Classes
Sundays • 9:00–10:15 AM

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Welcome to the 2026–2027 Faith Formation Program at Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish. We are honored to partner with you in helping your child grow in their faith. Parents are the primary educators of their children in the Catholic faith, and our parish is committed to supporting your family.

A Welcome from Father Sam

Dear Families,

Welcome to another wonderful year of Faith Formation. I encourage every family to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Thank you for entrusting us with your children.

May God bless your family throughout this year.

In Christ,

Father Sam John

Pastor, Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish

Message from the Director of Faith Formation

Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish for your family's faith formation. Our catechists and volunteers are committed to providing a welcoming, safe, and engaging learning environment where your children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Please know that I am always available to answer your questions, address concerns, or help in any way.

In Christ,

Melanie Abissi

Director of Faith Formation

FaithFormationDirector@ourladyqueenofangels.net

(860) 748-7375

Program Information & Policies

Contact Information

Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish

109 Goodwill Ave

Meriden, CT 06451

Sunday Office Hours: 8:00 AM–10:15 AM during class sessions

Phone: (860) 748-7375

Families should contact the Director of Faith Formation with any questions regarding registration, attendance, sacramental preparation, or volunteer opportunities.

Program Overview

Our Faith Formation program is designed to help children understand the teachings of the Catholic Church and celebrate the sacraments. Weekly classes supplement, but never replace, participation in Sunday Mass.

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children in the faith. The greatest gift parents can give their children is the example of a Christ-centered life.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation with their children
- Pray together as a family
- Participate in parish events and activities
- Model the faith through words and actions

Class Schedule, Arrival, and Dismissal

Classes meet on Sundays from 9:00–10:15 AM at Holy Angels Center.

Arrival:

- Students should arrive no earlier than 8:45 AM
- Catechists are present beginning at 8:45 AM
- Students arriving after 9:00 AM must check in with the Director of Faith Formation before joining their class

Dismissal:

- Parents are responsible for their children until they enter the building
 - Children may only be released to a parent or another authorized adult listed on the registration form
 - Please notify the Director of Faith Formation if dismissal arrangements change.
- Prompt arrival and dismissal are appreciated.

Registration

Registration is required each year for every child. A completed registration form, including emergency contact information, must be submitted before classes begin. Families who register after the start of classes should contact the Director to determine placement.

Baptismal Certificates:

- If your child was baptized at Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish, your certificate is already on file.
- If your child was baptized at another parish, please provide a copy of the baptismal certificate at registration.
- For children preparing for sacraments, certificates must be received before preparation begins.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance and punctuality are expected because each class builds upon previous lessons.

When a child must miss class:

- Notify the Director of Faith Formation in advance when possible
- Make-up work, additional assignments, or family lessons may be assigned for excessive absences.

Excessive absences is defined as students who accumulate more than three unexcused absences.

For sacramental candidates, attendance requirements are strictly enforced.

Health & Illness

Children who have a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other contagious illness should stay home until they are well enough to participate. Please notify the Director of Faith Formation if your child will be absent due to illness.

For the safety of all children and volunteers, children should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to class.

Medication

Medication will not be administered during Faith Formation sessions.

Life-Threatening Conditions:

If a child has a life-threatening allergy or medical condition requiring emergency medication (such as an EpiPen or inhaler), parents must remain on the premises during class sessions in case these medications are required.

Communication

Communication will primarily occur through:

- Email FaithformationDirector@ourladyqueenofangels.net
- Parish bulletin
- Parish website
- Faith Formation Facebook page

Parents are responsible for:

- Keeping email addresses and phone numbers current
- Reading program communications throughout the year
- Notifying the Faith Formation Director immediately of any changes to contact or emergency information

Inclement Weather

If Sunday morning weather requires cancellation:

- Information will be posted on the Faith Formation Facebook page and via email.
- Every effort will be made to communicate cancellations as early as possible.

Student Expectations

Each student is expected to:

- Participate fully in class activities and discussions
- Follow catechist directions
- Bring required materials (Bible, folder, homework, etc.)
- Listen respectfully while others are speaking
- Bring a positive and open attitude
- Treat classmates, catechists, and volunteers with kindness and respect

Code of Conduct

We are committed to ensuring that our Faith Formation program provides a safe, positive, and welcoming experience for every student.

The following behaviors are not acceptable:

- Bullying, intimidation, or exclusion of others
- Fighting or threatening others
- Disrespectful language or gestures

- Destruction of property
- Dishonesty or cheating
- Possession of inappropriate items (weapons, inappropriate materials, etc.)
- Repeated disruption of class
- Leaving the classroom or building without permission

Disciplinary Process

1. The catechist will first address behavior concerns in the classroom.
2. If concerns continue, the Director of Faith Formation will contact the parent to develop a plan for success.
3. For serious or repeated violations, a child may be removed from the program

Electronic Devices

Cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, tablets, and other electronic devices should remain silent and put away during class. If a child needs to contact a parents, they should ask their catechist for permission.

Dress Expectations

Students should dress modestly and appropriately for church and parish activities. Clothing displaying offensive language, inappropriate graphics, or messages contrary to Catholic teaching are not permitted. Closed-toe shoes recommended for safety.

Safe Environment

Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish follows all Archdiocese of Hartford Safe Environment policies. All clergy, employees, catechists, and volunteers who work with minors must complete the required Safe Environment training (VIRTUS) and background screening.

Child Protection:

Any concern regarding the safety or well-being of a child will be handled promptly and in accordance with Archdiocesan policy. All allegations of abuse or misconduct will be reported to civil authorities and the Archdiocesan Office of Safe Environment.

Parents who have concerns about their child's safety should contact:

- Director of Faith Formation
- Parish Office
- Archdiocese of Hartford Office of Safe Environment:

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion

First Reconciliation

During preparation, children learn about sin, forgiveness, examination of conscience, and the beauty of God's mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Parent Responsibilities:

Parents preparing a child for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are expected to:

- Attend all required parent meetings
- Participate in Sunday Mass every week with their child
- Help complete any family lessons or home activities
- Practice prayers with their child (Our Father, Hail Mary, Act of Contrition)
- Attend the retreat and rehearsal
- Notify the Director of any concerns as early as possible

Retreat and First Reconciliation Celebration:

-Children should arrive early and dress neatly and respectfully. A parent or guardian must accompany the child.

-Candidates and parents will attend a parish retreat and rehearsal before celebrating First Holy Communion. Attendance is required because important preparation and instructions are provided.

First Holy Communion:

During preparation, children learn that Jesus is truly present—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—in the Holy Eucharist. This is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith.

Dress Code:

- Girls: White dresses or other appropriate formal attire. Veils are optional.
- Boys: Suits, dress pants with a dress shirt and tie, or other appropriate formal clothing

Photography:

Families are asked to respect parish guidelines regarding photography. Specific instructions will be shared before the Mass. Photographers should remain in designated areas.

After First Communion

Receiving First Holy Communion marks the beginning—not the end—of a child's Eucharistic life. Families are encouraged to:

- Continue attending Mass weekly
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly

- Remain active participants in parish life and Faith Formation classes
- Encourage children to receive the Eucharist reverently and with growing understanding

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Checklist

- The child was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church
- If baptized in another Christian denomination, the child follows the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children (OCIA/OCIC), as appropriate (contact the Director for more information)
- A copy of the baptismal certificate is on file at Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish
- Child participates in Sunday Mass with their family
- Appropriate attire is obtained and ready
- The child is prepared through prayer and home activities
- Completion of any assignments or home activities
- Child is enrolled in and regularly attends Faith Formation
- Attend all required parent meetings, retreats, rehearsals, and liturgical celebrations
- Child demonstrates an age-appropriate understanding of the Eucharist
- Child knows the Act of Contrition and other required prayers

Confirmation Preparation

Purpose of Confirmation

Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism and strengthens candidates through the gifts of the Holy Spirit to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Preparation is intended to foster lifelong discipleship rather than simply prepare for a ceremony.

Program Overview

Confirmation preparation includes:

- Regular class attendance
- Participation in parish life
- Family support and prayer
- Service to others
- Retreat participation

Twenty Service Hours

Candidates complete at least 20 hours of service before Confirmation. Hours may be completed through:

- Parish ministries
- Community outreach programs
- Visiting the homebound or elderly
- Assisting with parish events
- Vacation Bible School
- Food drives or collections

- Other approved service opportunities

Requirements:

- A service log should be maintained and submitted by the required deadline
- Service should be performed with a generous heart, not simply to fulfill a requirement
- Service hours completed outside the parish must be approved in advance

Confirmation Retreat

Attendance at the Confirmation retreat is required. The retreat includes:

- Prayer and reflection
- Teaching on the Holy Spirit
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Group activities and discussion
- Preparation for the Sacrament

Choosing a Confirmation Saint

Candidates choose a saint whose life inspires them. The saint should be a model of Christian virtue and someone the candidate can look to as a patron and intercessor.

Saint Report Guidelines:

- Length: 1–2 pages typed
- Include:
 - Biography of your saint
 - Major accomplishments
 - Feast day
 - Patronage (what they are the patron of)
 - Virtues demonstrated
 - Why you chose this saint
 - How you hope to imitate this saint in your own life

Confirmation Sponsor

Based on Canon Law (Canon 874), the sponsor must:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Be a fully initiated Catholic (Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation)
- Be living a life consistent with the Catholic faith
- Regularly participate in Sunday Mass
- Not be the candidate's parent

Requirements:

- The sponsor should be a person of faith who can serve as a role model
- A non-Catholic Christian may serve as a Christian witness but not as a sponsor

Candidate Commitment

By preparing for Confirmation, I promise to:

- Participate fully in my Confirmation preparation through class attendance
- Attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation

- Complete my service hours with generosity
- Show respect for my catechists, classmates, and parish community
- Grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ

Parent Commitment

Parents of Confirmation candidates agree to:

- Encourage regular Mass attendance
- Support service opportunities
- Attend required meetings
- Pray for and with their child during this journey

Confirmation Checklist

- Have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Holy Communion with all certificates on file at Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish
- Choose an approved Confirmation sponsor
- Submit the Archdiocese of Hartford Sponsor Certificate
- Complete required 20 service hours and submit the service log
- Participate in the required Confirmation retreat with Reconciliation
- Participate in Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation
- Select a Confirmation saint and complete the saint report
- Be registered and attend weekly Faith Formation classes
- Successfully complete the parish's Confirmation preparation program
- Demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of:
 - The Holy Spirit and His gifts
 - The meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - Basic Catholic teachings and prayers
- Attend all required meetings
- Complete any parish-specific assignments or interviews with the pastor
- Attend the Confirmation Mass

Living the Catholic Faith at Home

The Liturgical Year

The Church celebrates the life of Christ throughout the year:

- Advent – Joyful preparation for Christmas
- Christmas – Celebration of the Incarnation (birth of Jesus)
- Lent – Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (40 days of preparation for Easter)
- Holy Week – The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus
- Easter – Fifty days celebrating the Resurrection
- Ordinary Time – Growing as disciples each day

Holy Days of Obligation

Families are encouraged to attend Mass every Holy Day of Obligation. Holy Days in the United States include:

- Mary, Mother of God (January 1)
- Ascension (40 days after Easter)

- Assumption of Mary (August 15)
- All Saints Day (November 1)
- Immaculate Conception (December 8)
- Christmas (December 25)

Faith at Home Ideas

Family Prayer:

- Pray the Rosary together as a family
- Pray before meals and before bedtime
- Read the Sunday Gospel together before Mass

Family Faith Activities:

- Celebrate saints; feast days
- Display a crucifix and Bible prominently in your home
- Participate in parish events and activities
- Practice the Corporal Works of Mercy (feed the hungry, visit the sick, etc.)
- Attend Mass together weekly and sit as a family

Seasonal Practices:

- Advent: Use an Advent wreath, Jesse Tree, or Advent calendar
- Lent: Choose a family sacrifice or service project
- Easter: Celebrate the full 50-day season with joy

Recommended Catholic Resources

- A family Catholic Bible
- Parish bulletin (available weekly at Mass and online)
- Parish website for updates and resources
- Formed.org (access free through many parishes—ask for parish code)
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Catholic apps for daily readings and prayers (Hallow, etc.)

Parish Policies & Safety

Emergency Procedures

Medical Emergency:

- 911 will be called immediately when appropriate
- Parents or guardians will be contacted as soon as possible
- Emergency contact information must be kept current throughout the year
- To update contact information, please notify the Director of Faith Formation immediately

Fire, Evacuation & Lockdown:

All catechists and volunteers receive instructions regarding emergency procedures. Students will be guided calmly through evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown procedures whenever necessary. Please do not come to the building during an emergency.

Social Media

Parents are encouraged to use social media responsibly and respectfully. Photos or comments involving other children should not be shared without permission from their parents or guardians.

When posting about parish events:

- Always obtain consent before tagging others
- Protect children's identities (avoid sharing full names with photos)
- Remember that you represent the parish community online

Visitors

For the safety of all children, visitors should check in with the Faith Formation Director before entering classrooms. This includes parents and family members.

Parent Visits:

- Parents are always welcome and encouraged to visit
- Classroom visits should be coordinated with the Faith Formation Director in advance
- All visitors must follow Safe Environment protocols

Volunteers

Our Faith Formation program depends on dedicated volunteers. We welcome:

- Catechists
- Retreat volunteers
- Vacation Bible School volunteers
- Event coordinators

Requirements for All Volunteers:

- Complete a volunteer application
- Complete VIRTUS Safe Environment training
- Pass a background screening
- Attend an orientation or training session
- Sign the safety handbook

To volunteer: Please contact the Director of Faith Formation to begin the process.

We are grateful for your willingness to serve!

Please note-all dates are subject to change. Families will be notified of any updates via email.

Parent Acknowledgement Form

Please sign and return this form to the Parish Office.

I have read and understand the policies and expectations outlined in the Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish Faith Formation Parent Handbook for the 2026–2027 year. I agree to support my child in meeting these expectations and to partner with the parish in their faith formation.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Preferred Email: _____

Preferred Phone: _____

Thank you for entrusting your children to us. We look forward to a year of growing in faith together!

Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish
109 Goodwill Ave • Meriden, CT 06451
203-235-6381
www.olqoa.org
Facebook: @OLQAMeriden