



**Office of Catholic Christian Formation  
(CCF)  
Our Lady of Good Counsel Church  
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Vienna, VA 22182  
(703) 896-7415**

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Dear Parents,

Welcome back to those who are joining us for another Faith Formation year and a special welcome to all of our newcomers! We are excited to be assisting you in your vocation as a parent to raise and educate your children in the Catholic Faith. We hope that this year will be filled with many blessings and much growth in the faith. This handbook is designed to provide you with our program policies, procedures, and valuable information of ways you can become actively involved in the faith formation of your child.

The Faith Formation process is meant to be a supplement to your own role as your child's "first teacher of faith." We are at your service to assist you as you help your children to encounter Jesus and the Catholic Faith. Your personal involvement in the faith formation process will be one of the most important witnesses to your child as he/she explores the Christian life. We are blessed to have a dedicated team to assist in the passing on of the faith. Our catechists, catechist assistants, and catechist aides give much time and energy to help your child grow in faith. You are invited to communicate with them frequently if you need assistance, or to make them aware of special needs or circumstances.

As an active member of the OLGC faith community, you are encouraged to grow spiritually and nurture your adult faith by embracing the sacramental life and by participating in adult enrichment opportunities, parent gatherings, and parent/child activities offered throughout the year through the CCF program and parish. May God bless you and your family as you seek intentionally to encounter the living God and to grow in your knowledge of and participation in the faith.

In gratitude for you and in the love of Christ,

Amy Winkler  
Director, Catholic Christian Formation

Eileen Rafferty-Foré  
Coordinator, Elementary/Junior High CCF

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## Spirituality, Vision, Goals

As a community of faith, we proclaim the good news of the gospel through lived faith, prayer, liturgical and sacramental participation. We reflect the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales to “Live Jesus” through an active faith life and participation in the Christian formation process. We seek to experience the love of God through love and service to one another, and to be a visible witness to the Christian life. Christian Formation will strive to reflect the vision in the following ways:

### WORD:

*To make the word of God available and accessible to children and adults through resources and scripture study opportunities, such as:*

- Bibles for children in Grade 6
- Scripture study groups for youth and adults
- Family prayer services and scripture activities

### FAITH FORMATION:

- Provide a catechetical process (CCF classes) for children/youth preschool age through eighth grade.
- Adult enrichment, spirituality, and Scripture Study
- RCIA: Provide an RCIA process for adults and children of catechetical age
- Proclaim God’s Word through scripture study and reflection
- Provide liturgies, prayer, devotions and retreats for children, youth, and families

### SACRAMENTS:

- Provide second grade children and parents with a sacramental process for the celebration of First Penance and First Eucharist
- *Emmaus Formation: Eucharist Prep for Grades 3-8.* Provide sacramental preparation for children in grades 3-8 who have otherwise not missed much time in faith formation/religious education.
- *Children’s RCIA.* Provide faith formation and sacramental preparation for children of above the age of reason (ages 8-18) who are un-catechized, and are seeking any or all of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist).
- Provide a Confirmation preparation process for youth in the seventh and eighth grade.
- *Pentecost Confirmation Prep (older teens/adults).* Provide sacramental preparation for high school teens and adults who have otherwise not missed much time in faith formation/religious education.
- *Adult RCIA:* Provide faith formation and sacramental preparation for adults who are un-catechized, and are seeking any or all of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist).

### SPIRITUALITY:

- Retreats for children, youth, family, adults
- Prayer and devotions: family prayer, parish devotions and spirituality
- Way of the cross and rosary devotion for children and families
- Discussion groups/spiritual formation which embraces the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales
- Family & Youth Masses

## CCF Policies and Procedures

### Registration:

Faith formation opportunities are offered to all registered members and families of OLG Church. Parents need to register children/youth each year. Registration for those families already enrolled in CCF will take place during the months of April/May. Those who are new to the parish may register after they have become members of OLG Church. The registration process is necessary each year so records can be kept current. Tuition and a copy of each child's baptismal certificate are required for complete registration.

### Tuition:

The amount for tuition for each child is listed below. Payment of tuition is due by August 1<sup>st</sup>. Families who did not include payment with the registration form will be billed prior to the first day of CCF/CGS classes. If any parent/guardian is unable to pay the tuition amount, please contact the Director of Catholic Christian Formation to discuss your situation. Tuition grants are available. No child will ever be denied an opportunity to participate in parish CCF programs due to the inability to pay.

#### Tuition Fees:

##### Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS):

###### Parishioners

1 Child= \$200

2 Children= \$350

3 Children= \$475

###### Non-Parishioners

1 Child= \$375

2 Children= \$700

3 Children= \$1000

CCF Grades K-8:     \$175 = 1 child  
                          \$275 = 2 children  
                          \$325 = 3 children or more

Sacramental Supplies: \$50 = every child in Grade 2 preparing for 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist  
                              \$50 = every child in Grade 8 preparing for Confirmation

Early Bird Registration: \$25 discount per family. Must register before July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Programs

Parents whose children are enrolled in CCF are given the opportunity to attend an Orientation/Open House in September. The Orientation/Open House provides an opportunity for parents to obtain the necessary information for the CCF program and meet the child's catechist. All parents will be notified of their child's catechist and room assignments by the CCF Office via email before the first day of classes.

### **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)**

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based religious formation for children. Structured around Scripture and the Liturgy, children receive presentations to invite them into exploring the faith and their relationship with God. All sessions meet in the Atrium, a room in the School, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Our CGS sessions are:

Level I (3-6 year olds): Saturday 8:30- 9:30 am or 10:30-11:30 am

Level I- III (3-12 year olds): Tuesday 9:30-11:30 am

CGS RCIA- Sunday Afternoons

### **Elementary CCF (Grades K-6)**

Children meet on scheduled Saturday mornings. Session 1 meets on Saturday from 8:30-10:00 am and Session 2 meets Saturday from 10:30-12:00pm.

Class size is limited to 15 children. When registration opens in the Spring, parents are offered a choice of times. However, if all classes are filled in a particular session, children will be placed in the session where space is available. Registrations are processed according to the date received, and parents are asked to complete a volunteer form as part of the registration process.

On Saturday mornings, children in grades K-3 must be brought to and from the classroom by a parent. If you desire an older sibling to drop off or pick up your child please email your child's catechist with permission. Children will not be dismissed until a parent/guardian is present.

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's faith formation by being interested and involved in their child's faith formation. Parents are encouraged to discuss the lessons with their child, and facilitate the completion of assigned work. Parents are given many opportunities to be involved in the faith formation of their child.

### **Junior High CCF (Grades 7-8)**

Meets on scheduled Sunday evenings from 6:45 to 8:00pm. Those who intend to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation must enroll and participate in the CCF program during the seventh and eighth grade years. 6<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment is essential as well since the Old Testament study which takes place in 6<sup>th</sup> grade is indispensable for 7<sup>th</sup> grade studies.

### **Home Schooling**

Home study/catechesis is a viable option when special circumstances limit or prevent a child from participating in the existing CCF programs. Arrangements for short-term home study are made on a limited basis through the Director of Catholic Christian Formation and are subject to the Director/Pastor's approval. Home catechesis is generally not an option during sacramental preparation years (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> for 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist/1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> for Confirmation). Parents home schooling their children and taking responsibility for their child's faith formation are asked to contact the Director of Catholic Christian Formation. We want to offer our support, guidance, and keep you informed of Diocesan policies and guidelines.

## Parent Orientation

In September, the CCF Office will host a Parent Orientation for any families who are new to CCF or who would like a refresher on the logistics of our program. We also invite you to introduce yourself to your child(ren)'s catechist. We wish to honor your time and ask that if you would like to learn more about our program to attend this meeting. If you are familiar with this program, we strongly encourage you to attend your child's Grade Level Gathering.

## Parent/Child Activities

Twice a year parents of children in grades 1-6 are invited to their child's classroom for a parent-child activity. It is essential for your child to see your participation in their faith formation and this is a great opportunity to engage with your child on a particular topic of faith. Invitations for this event will follow and are also listed in the Parent Guides.

## Formation in Christian Chastity

The Diocesan program entitled *Formation in Christian Chastity* (FCC) provides an ongoing and progressive tool in assisting families to be formed in the virtue of chastity. For clarity's sake, this program is not a sex education program, rather, it is a safe environment program which is meant to help children develop an awareness of the dignity of the human person and the integrity and holiness of the human body. This program is age-appropriate, respecting the innocence of young children.

Students in grades 1,5,6,7 and 8 will receive lessons taught by the Director or Coordinator of CCF during their assigned CCF session. We will be sending home a calendar, a link to preview the lesson plans, and an opt-out form when the dates are closer at hand.

Students in Grades 2, 3 and 4 are taught by parents at home. The link for the lesson plan will be sent home or you can access them on the Diocese of Arlington website. It is essential for parents to be speaking with their children about these topics throughout their childhood and teenage years

## Arrival and Departure

Please Note: On Saturday mornings, children in Pre-K (CGS) through Grade 3 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to and from class. Parents are encouraged to wait outside the classroom and be present to their children upon dismissal. The dangers of moving vehicles, congestion, and vulnerability are all reasons why it is recommended that all parents accompany their child to and from class; particularly grades Pre-K-3.

Early Dismissal: Parents must notify the catechist at the beginning of class if a child/youth is to be dismissed early. You will be asked to sign your child out from the Early Dismissal Binder located at the front desk. This is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of each child/youth. This policy pertains to children/youth attending Elementary and Junior High CCF.

Tuesday CGS: Parents are asked to drop off and pick up their children in the narthex lobby of the School building. For late arrivals and early dismissals, please sign in at the front desk of the school and come to the Atrium.

## Parent Visitor Book

We welcome parents to remain in the school building during the CCF sessions. On Saturday mornings, we provide coffee and space to gathering in the CCF Library. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and/or explore the CCF Library to brush up on your Catholic knowledge. If you do decide to remain in the building, please sign the Parent Visitor Book at the front desk so that we can ensure the safety of everyone involved

### Attendance and Absenteeism

If your child(ren) will be late or unable to attend class due to illness, transportation issues, shared custody, etc., please notify your child's catechist or the CCF Coordinator.

Consistent attendance is an essential part of the faith formation process. Parents will be contacted by the catechist if any child/youth either misses two consecutive classes or is consistently late to class. If attendance continues to be a problem, you will be contacted by the CCF Office. The contact is an opportunity for the parent and Coordinator/Director to resolve problems or crisis which might be the cause of absence or late arrival. Please let us know if there are extenuating circumstances that we should be aware of, such as joint custody, etc.

We are keenly aware that many children participate in community-sponsored sports such as soccer and baseball during the year. When a game is scheduled during the child's scheduled classes, you are given the option of teaching your child the scheduled lesson at home. The CCF Coordinator provides Grade-Level Parent Lesson Guides for you via email so that you always know what is being covered during CCF. These can also be found on our Faith Formation Tab of the OLG Website. If you require assistance in teaching your lesson at home, the CCF Coordinator and/or your child's catechist can provide valuable guidance regarding lesson content and focus.

For our Saturday morning sessions, we do allow children from one session to attend the other morning session. This switching needs to be done on a limited basis and as a last resort. It is important for the children to be building community with their assigned class and catechist. In the event arises that your child does need to switch sessions for a particular day, please contact the catechists from both sessions. Your child's assigned catechist needs to know that child will be switching for a particular date and the catechist in the corresponding grade at the other session needs to know that one more student will be joining the class for the day.

There are no make-up sessions or switches for CGS Atrium classes.

### Excused Absence Policy:

A child's absence is "excused" when the catechist or coordinator is notified prior to class. An excused absence facilitates effective communication regarding your child's participation and attendance. Excused absences will not eliminate an absence from your child's attendance record, but will indicate that communication regarding a child's absence or situation has occurred.

## **Cancellation and Rescheduling**

During inclement weather, Fairfax County Public Schools policy will be followed regarding cancellations and rescheduling. Rescheduling of classes will be determined by the Director and Coordinator, and you will be notified well in advance of any additions or changes in the schedule.

## **Discipline**

If inappropriate behavior occurs during class, the catechist will speak to the child/youth after class. If the inappropriate behavior continues, you will be informed of the incident, and any disciplinary action will be entrusted to you. If inappropriate behavior continues after the above procedures have been followed, then the Coordinator will contact the parent for a meeting before the next scheduled class. In order to resolve the behavior fairly and sensitively, the parent, student, catechist and Coordinator will meet together.

## **Communication**

For communication to be effective, it is essential that everyone be open, honest, and sincere with one another. This pertains to the Director, Coordinator, parent, catechist, student, and committee members. We are called to be Christ-like in our words and actions.

The CCF Office will do its best to keep you well-informed of all program activities, events and changes through written and verbal communication. If there are any special problems or needs that we should be aware of, you may discuss these with the Coordinator over the telephone or schedule an appointment. The CCF program provides information and invites your input in a variety of ways.

If you ever need to contact us, please see the below listing.

Amy Winkler, Director: [dre@olgcv.org](mailto:dre@olgcv.org)

Eileen Rafferty-Foré, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation: [ccfcoordinator@olgcv.org](mailto:ccfcoordinator@olgcv.org)

Aneliese Carino, Coordinator of CGS: [Aneliese.carino@gmail.com](mailto:Aneliese.carino@gmail.com)

Lavinia Jacob, CCF Office Assistant: [ccfofficeassist@olgcv.org](mailto:ccfofficeassist@olgcv.org)

CCF Office Phone: 703.896.7415

Number to the Front Desk at the School (Saturdays and Sundays only): 703.938.2828 ext 350

## **Adult Faith Formation**

“It’s not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can’t tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it, myself.” -Joyce Maynard

As one of the most influential role models for your child, it is essential that your child sees you embrace and grow in your faith as well. Exploring the Faith will not only aid in your own formation, but will enhance the faith life of your whole family. One of the beauties of the human



life is that we never stop growing. God is always drawing us into greater understanding and communion with the Body of Christ. We offer an array of adult faith formation opportunities. Please consider taking advantage of one of them. You can find more information about these opportunities on our website. If you ever have an idea of an opportunity you would like to see, please give our office a ring.

## **Sacramental Preparation, Formation, Participation, and Celebration**

### **Parent's Witness to and Celebration of the Sacramental Life**

Parents, as the first teachers of faith, are actively involved in the sacramental preparation process and continued faith formation of their children. Parents model the Christian life by example, through active participation in the catechesis of their children, and attendance of parent meetings and parish liturgical celebrations, such as weekly Mass and the sacrament of Reconciliation. It is your responsibility and privilege to ensure your child's participation at Mass every Sunday. Having your child attend Mass is an extremely important component of faith formation as it fosters the prayer life of the child and the child's relationship with God, as well as builds community with the Body of Christ. Mass gives us the strength by which to be sent into the world to be Christ's hands and feet.

The catechists reinforce what parents have taught and lived each week through instruction, review, and discussion. The sacramental preparation process is thoroughly explained at the parent meetings.

### **1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist Prep (Grade 1-2)**

All second grade children enrolled in the Catholic Christian Formation program and OLG School and are given the opportunity to prepare to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time. Enrollment in CCF Grades 1 and 2 is an expectation for 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist and 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation preparation.

### **Children's RCIA (ages 8-18)**

Children and youth of catechetical age (ages 8-18) who are un-catechized, and are seeking any or all of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) are invited to participate in Children's RCIA.

### **Emmaus Formation: Eucharist Prep for older children (grades 3-8)**

Children and youth who have otherwise not missed much time in faith formation and are seeking to prepare for their first Eucharist are invited to participate in Eucharist prep for older children. The Eucharist Prep Course meets 14 times during the year on scheduled Saturday mornings, in addition to the child's grade-level CCF class or OLG School religion classes.

### **Confirmation (Grades 7-8)**

Purpose: To provide youth from our parish with a preparation process which offers

opportunities for spiritual growth and awareness of one's commitment to the Christian life when prayerfully considering the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Rite of Confirmation and the Diocese of Arlington guidelines clearly state that appropriate formation process will prepare youth for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to affirm their commitment to the Church and the Christian life through prayer, sacrament, and service. The Confirmation preparation process includes all parish youth in grades 7 & 8 who are enrolled in CCF and in the school. Enrollment in both Grades 7 and 8 CCF/OLGC School is an expectation for Confirmation.

**Pentecost Confirmation Prep for teens to adults (grades 9 and up)**

A Confirmation preparation process is offered for high school-aged youth and adults who have otherwise not missed much time in faith formation/religious education and are seeking to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Formation begins in the Spring and the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated on Pentecost Sunday with the bishop at St. Thomas More Cathedral in Arlington.

“The essence of prayer lies not in being always on your knees, but in conforming your will totally to God in all the events of life.” -Saint Jane de Chantal

“Be who you are and be that well so that you may bring honor to the Master Craftsman whose handiwork you are.” -Saint Francis de Sales