

Frequently Asked Questions

Catechetical Year 2022-2023

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

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1. Why are there no more in person Faith Formation Classes?

Answer: Father Eckert, and the staff at Sacred Heart, have been taking a closer look at the Faith Formation structure. After much evaluation, prayer, and research, Father felt that the current formation system was not serving the students and families of the parish well and was not producing the results that he would like to see. This is due to no one's fault. The weekly classroom model As it says in Canon Law, "Parents above others are obliged to form their children by word and example in faith and in the practice of Christian life" (Can. of faith formation, which has been in place for the last 100 years, is no longer serving the needs of the community and Father Eckert felt it was time for a change to the system.

2. How will my child learn about the faith?

Answer: "Faith is caught, not taught." The goal is to have the children of the parish learn about the faith in a more organic fashion without having to sit in the classroom for an hour each week. Father Eckert desires to empower the parents to be the primary educators of the faith. 747.2). Also in the Catechism of the Catholic Church it says, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children....*Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God" (CCC 2223, 2226).

However, the parents are not the ONLY ones required to educate their children about the faith. Canon Law also says, "Under the direction of legitimate ecclesiastical authority, solicitude for catechesis belongs to all members of the Church according to each one's role" (Can. 747.1). And finally, "The duty and right of educating belongs in a special way to the Church, to which has been divinely entrusted the mission of assisting persons so that they are able to reach the fullness of the Christian life. Pastors of souls have the duty of arranging everything so that all the faithful have a Catholic education" (Can. 794.2).

So while parents are the primary educators of the faith, the Church, Pastor, and all the members of the faithful are required to assist in the education of the faith.

3. What will Faith Formation look like then?

We have recently hired a Director of Evangelization (EJ Cerdeiras) to build a new structure for our Faith Formation. In following Father's desire to give faith formation to the parents EJ has come up with a structure called *FIDE* (Formation in Discipleship & Evangelization). *Fide* is Latin for Faith, which is what we are trying to help you and your family grow in so that you may become greater disciples of Jesus Christ. With *FIDE*, the focus of our formation will no longer be toward children, but toward the parents to educate their children. Our hope is that by taking this approach we are not only helping your children grow in the Catholic Faith, but your whole family.

In registering for FIDE there is only one formation requirement and that is to practice the Precepts of the Church.

4. What are the Precepts of the Church and why do I need to follow them?

There are 5 Precepts the Catholic Church has asked the faithful to follow as the bare minimum of what is needed in order to be faithful Catholics and grow in our spiritual life.

These 5 Precepts are:

1. Attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
2. Confession of serious sin at least once a year
3. Reception of Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season
4. Observance of the days of fast and abstinence
5. Providing for the needs of the Church

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that Precepts are, "meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor" (2041). By requiring all who sign up for *FIDE* to follow the Precepts of the Church, we are embracing the

Church's mission to lead the faithful into a deeper relationship with God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

5. What if I do not know my faith well enough to teach it to my children?

Answer: The Church is here to help! The requirement of the Church and Pastor to educate the faithful does not just apply to children. The Church has a duty to educate ALL the faithful. This new Catechetical system does not only consider the education of the children of the parish but everyone! The parish will be renewing and reinvigorating our efforts to educate the adults of the parish so everyone is prepared to share their faith with others.

6. What is a Sacramental Accountability Partner (SAP)?

Answer: SAPs are individuals who guide and assist the faithful in growing in the Catholic Faith. Fr. Eckert, and the staff at Sacred Heart, hope that providing parents with SAPs will help enable parents to further take on the role as primary educators in their households. In bringing the role of SAPs to the family, the SAP will assist and be a source to parents in the faith education of their children in order to help the family fulfill their Baptismal obligations and embrace the precepts of the Church. As such, SAPs will not only be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church but will be well educated in Church teachings and Christian living so as to assist the faithful in growing in their Catholic Faith.

7. How does my family get a SAP?

Answer: Fr. Eckert, and the staff at Sacred Heart feel that the best way to promote community and form a natural relationship with your SAP is to allow the family to choose their SAP. Each SAP, however, must meet the following requirements:

1. Must be a practicing Catholic
2. Must be a member of Sacred Heart
3. Must be Virtus certified.

In the case that you cannot find a SAP or are unsure of who to choose, we will provide a list of volunteer SAPs for you to choose from. If you are still unsure after reviewing list of SAPs provided, we will then assign a SAP to you.

8. Is there an outline of what I am supposed to be teaching each month?

Answer: Yes! Though it is not a requirement for *FIDE*, the Director of Evangelization (EJ) has made a monthly catechetical resource booklet called “Heart and Soul” to help assist and keep you organized in the faith formation of your family. Each month will have its own topic to focus on. With those topics there will be explanations, resources, events, and ways for your family to experience the truth, beauty and goodness of our Catholic Faith at home. In addition to the catechetical resource, remember that your SAP and the Director of Evangelization are here to help.

When is my family supposed to meet with our SAP?

Answer: It is encouraged that you meet at least once a month. We believe that it is important that your SAP form a good relationship with your family. Therefore, the more frequently you meet the more your SAP can get to know your family and assist you in the journey of faith in your household.

9. What if our SAP is not doing anything or does not fit well with our family?

Answer: We understand that personalities sometimes do not match, which can make it difficult to build a relationship with your SAP. In the case where your SAP is not a good fit for your family, we will meet with both parties to see if we can find a solution. If we cannot work out a solution, then we will allow you to choose a different SAP. The goal is for the SAP to help you, so if the SAP is not helping you we will do the best we can to make sure you find the right SAP for your family.

10. Other than having a SAP, will there be other ways to help parents educate their kids in the Faith?

Answer: Yes, the Director of Evangelization is at your service! He will be working on additional resources and events to further help parents be the primary educators of their children. Moreover, the Director of Evangelization is willing to meet one-on-one with you to help you at a personal level. It can also be helpful to consult other families to share ideas with.

11. How do I register for *FIDE*?

Below are steps on how to Register for *FIDE*:

Step 1. Registration begins July 5th. Registration will take place in the Parish Office. During registration the Director of Evangelization will have a short meeting with you about the process, what the expectations are, and your Sacramental Accountability Partner (SAP).

*You must bring the following for the children in you family in order to register: birth certificate, Baptism, First Communion certificate (if applicable), and Confirmation certificate (if applicable).

Step 2. You will then select a SAP. You will be able to choose your own SAP as long as they meet the requirements listed in question 7. In the case that you cannot find a SAP we will assist in providing one for you. After choosing your SAP please inform the Director of Evangelization who your SAP is. You will not be signed up for *FIDE* until your SAP's name is sent to the Director of Evangelization.

Step 3. Optional: You will then have the opportunity to meet with your SAP and the Director of Evangelization to discuss goals and approaches to help you in the faith education of your children. (This can be over zoom or in person at the Parish Office).

12. Will Mass, Adoration, and Confession on Wednesday night continue as normal?

Answer: Yes. The Sacraments are essential to helping you and your family live out the Faith. Therefore, we want to make sure they are available to you as often as possible. In addition, the Director of Evangelization will be present one Wednesday a month for open hours to assist you in anyway necessary.

13. What if my child is planning to receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion or Confirmation this year?

Answer: Since the goal of *FIDE* is to assist parents as the primary educators of the their children in the Catholic Faith, Sacramental preparation will naturally be included in implementing *FIDE*. Furthermore, the "Heart and Soul: Monthly Catechetical Resource" will include whole months dedicated to the Sacraments which can be helpful in preparing your child for the reception of

the Sacrament. The reason for this is because we have realized that the reception of the Sacraments is a life long journey and not a one day experience. The prior education format for the Sacraments did not prepare the candidates for this lifelong journey, but for the one day “experience.” Meeting once a week with several children in a classroom does not allow for the faith to be absorbed and lived out. Therefore, because education at home is daily and extends until adulthood, we find that the best way for us to help form your children to be disciples of Christ is to provide the means for you to educate your children at home. It is at the home where faith can be lived out and experienced daily.

14. Do we still need to register for our children to receive Sacraments?

Yes, though the parents are the primary educators of their children in the Faith, the Church still has responsibility to assure that your child has been properly prepared to receive the Sacraments. Therefore, you will find below the requirements and steps that need to take place before your child can receive the Sacrament.

Step 1. Register for *FIDE* as stated in the steps in question 11. In meeting with the Director of Evangelization you will discuss the following:

- Requirement to follow the precepts of the Church as indicated in question 4.
- Parent’s responsibility to teach their child about the Catholic Faith including Sacramental prep.
- The role of the SAP in assisting the parents in the education of their children.

Step 2. Fill out a Sacrament application. Sacrament applications will be available online from October 3rd and end December 9th.

Step 3. After the application is complete you will be contacted shortly after to set up an interview with a Sacred Heart staff member to discuss whether your child is prepared/desires to receive the Sacrament.

*The child receiving the Sacrament, at least one parent, and the Families’ SAP must be present at the interview.

Step 4 (a): If determined that your child is prepared and desires to receive the Sacrament, your child will officially become a candidate for the Sacrament. You will also receive a calendar of events regarding additional information.

Step 4 (b): If determined that your child is not prepared and/or does not desire to receive the Sacrament, you will be asked to practice *FIDE* for one more year and apply to receive the Sacrament in 2024

15. What age do my children have to be in order to receive First Communion or Confirmation?

First Communion:

- Those who are Baptized and are of the age of 6 by January 1st

Confirmation:

- Those who are Baptized, have received First Communion, and are of the age of 12 by January 1st

16. Who do I contact if I have any questions or problems with this new catechetical model?

Answer: Director of Evangelization, Eduardo (EJ) Cerdeiras.

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Office Phone- (704)633-0591 ex. 114

Cell Phone- (305)979-4043

Hours to call- M-F 8am-4pm