

**INITIAL FAITH FORMATION
PARENT/STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2011 – 2012**

**St. Patrick Faith Formation
403 St. Croix Street
Hudson, WI 54016
(715) 386-9209**

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ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH FAITH FORMATION STAFF

Rev. Eugene A. Murphy	Parochial Administrator
Dr. Larry Huiras	Faith Formation Director
Mrs. Mary Piasecki	School Principal
Mr. Craig Swanson	High School/Confirmation Coordinator
Mrs. Becky Swanson	High School/Confirmation Coordinator
Mr. Tim O'Brien	Middle School High Coordinator
Mrs. Jeanne Darnold	Elementary Coordinator
Mrs. Pamela Philips	Administrative Secretary
Ms. Katie Preston	Secretary

OFFICE HOURS*

St. Patrick Faith Formation is staffed at the following times (excluding Holidays):

September – May (when school is in session)

MON, TUE, THU, FRI	9:00am – 12:00pm 1:00pm – 3:00pm
WEDNESDAYS	9:00am – 12:00pm 1:00pm – 7:40pm

June – August (when school is not in session)

TUE, WED, THU	9:00am – 12:00pm 1:00pm – 3:00pm
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*** individual staff members are available during their posted office hours or by appointment.**

To report an absence

Grades K-5 at any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week call (715) 386 – 9209, press “2” for the Faith Formation menu, then “1” for the attendance mail box. Please leave your child’s name, grade, date, and session time (5:00 OR 6:30) they will be absent.

Middle and High School youth should call their Small Group Catechists directly.

Basic Fee Schedule	
Number of Children	
One Child	\$105.00
Two Children	\$210.00
Three or More Children	\$315.00

ADDITIONAL FEES	
Reconciliation	\$30.00
Eucharist	\$30.00
Middle School Retreat	\$10.00
Confirmation Fee	\$30.00

No child will be denied enrollment in the Faith Formation program due to inability to pay fees. Please call the Faith Formation staff to seek alternative options.

SESSION TIMES*

Wednesdays	5:00pm – 6:10pm	Grades K-5 Session I
	6:30pm - 7:40pm	Grades K-5 Session II
	6:00pm – 7:30pm	Middle School
	7:00pm - 8:30pm	High School

Sessions Begin: **K- 5 and High School**
 Wednesday, September 21, 2011
 Middle School
 Wednesday, September 28, 2011*

Sessions End: Wednesday, April 25, 2012

All 5:00pm and 6:30pm sessions are scheduled to be held at St. Patrick Education Center (school) unless otherwise noted on the schedule.**

All 6:00pm & 7:00pm Small Groups meet in the catechists' homes and Large Group meetings are at St. Patrick Church.**

* = Except Middle School groups meeting at the school begin their sessions on Wednesday, September 21, 2011 at the school.

* = All dates and times are subject to change. Please read the Parish Bulletin or check the Formation page at:

<http://www.stpatrickofhudson.org>

for any updated information or additional details.

A Vision of Initial Faith Formation

The faith community of St. Patrick has the privileged responsibility of assisting the parents or guardians in the Initial Formation of the young people of our parish, preparing them for the moments when faith and life meet. These catechetical experiences, to be effective, must be followed by a personal response of faith, trust, and love. Such experiences become the source of prayer and continuing reflection as the child grows in their faith. The parish joins with the parents and guardians who are the child's primary faith educators (catechists) to empower the child's spirit with appropriate formation.

Every young person comes with a natural desire for truth and openness to the Word of God. Every response elicited through formation experiences should seek to deepen in the participant a willingness to be open to the power of the Holy Spirit and enliven the mind, body and spirit with the peace, love, and joy of the Lord.

Initial Faith Formation at St. Patrick, strives to meet the catechetical goals and objectives set forth by the Initial Faith Formation Committee, the Parish Council, and the Diocesan Office of Religious Education and Youth Ministry. These goals and objectives are founded in Catholic tradition and are accomplished in accord with the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) and the National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Every effort is made to empower all parents and guardians to be the primary catechists (faith educators) of their children. It is our privilege to join parents as "partners" in their role as catechists.

Initial Faith Formation is about journeying with our young people as they complete their Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. The process of initial formation is a collaborative effort of the entire parish and prepares our young people to live as disciples seeking to deepen their relationship with Christ Jesus.

Simply put, the goal of initial faith formation for young people is to provide them with opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord. Through those opportunities, rooted in the Catholic tradition, we hope to bring them to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Catholic Christian.

Initial Faith Formation At St. Patrick

St. Patrick Elementary Faith Formation uses Sadlier's *We Believe* series as its basic text. It is a comprehensive series that is faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church and holistically embraces the six tasks of catechesis as our children Learn, Celebrate, Choose, Pray, Share, and Live the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The content of each lesson is presented in the spirit of the General Directory for Catechesis and formatted to contain three components that echo the way in which Jesus taught:

We Gather – engages children in prayer, and invites them to share their life experiences.

We Believe – presents the truths of the Catholic faith found in scripture and Tradition in age appropriate, culturally inclusive and easy to grasp ways.

We Respond – invites children to respond to God's call and grace, to put their faith into action through prayers, activities, and reflection.

Additional sacramental texts are used by students and their families preparing to celebrate Reconciliation and First Communion.

St. Patrick Middle School Formation uses the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* series as its basic curriculum guide. Each week the Middle School teens receive a weekly magazine that covers the Gospel lesson for the coming weekend so that teens are ready to enter into the action of worship at mass. Teens meet in small groups hosted by at least two unrelated adults in a home setting. Catechists guide the discussion of the topic in a small group session where the young person's voice both "needs to" and "can" be heard. Additional service opportunities and social sessions round out the Middle School curriculum providing teens with the connections to each other, the parish, and the community.

Senior High Faith Formation is accomplished in a small group setting hosted in the catechists' homes. The curriculum is centered on engaging our high school teens in conversations about their faith, morality, and the catholic church as they go through a period of tremendous change and increased personal responsibility for their own decisions. Preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation is accomplish in the Junior year as the focus becomes service and discipleship. This three-year process includes large group or gathered presentations, service opportunities, retreat experiences, prayer, and praise and worship. The goal of the process is to integrate young people into the Christian life and active participation in the parish.

Parent Participation

Catechists supplement, in a more formal way, the formation in faith which occurs informally in the home. It is important for parents and catechists to support and encourage each other. It is asked that parents of children and youth in our program be supportive of Faith Formation in the following ways:

- Participate regularly at parish liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days and receive the Sacraments frequently. Your example speaks volumes. Decide how to put the Gospel into action throughout the week.
- Be examples of people who pray. Teach your children to pray in their own words as well as to learn the traditional prayers of our faith.
- Join your child in participating in the parish service opportunities offered in the parish and by their formation catechists.
- Show an interest each week in what is happening in their formation. For younger children, spend some time reviewing the chapter covered in *We Believe* (see website for details). For older children and teens ask about the topic covered or the details of any flyer brought home.

Catechists

Our faith educators in all the Faith Formation processes are called *Catechists*. A catechist is *“one who echoes the Word of God.”*

Our catechists are ministers of the Word answering the call of St. Patrick Catholic Community to assist parents in the faith formation of their children. They are fulfilling the promise of the Christian community made at the baptism of all infants.

Catechists freely share their time, talent, and faith with the children and young people of the parish.

They regularly spend several hours each week in preparation for the session that they will lead. They commit to leading 24 sessions over a 32 week period from September to May each year.

Please support them in prayer through the coming year as well as any time they might need assistance with their sessions.

Elementary, Middle and High School Policies

Attendance

The young people attend approximately 24 sessions per year; therefore, regular attendance is expected. It is recommended that parents schedule all extra-curricular activities at times not conflicting with Faith Formation sessions.

Session Times

- Elementary Sessions will begin promptly at 5:00pm & 6:30pm.
- Middle School Sessions both small and large group begin at 6:00pm. (Note those groups that meet at the school follow the elementary schedule.)
- High School Sessions for both small and large group begin at 7:00pm.

All sessions are held on Wednesdays except where noted on the calendar.

Parents should read the Parish Bulletin or check the Formation page at: <http://www.stpatrickofhudson.org> for any updated information or additional details.

Tardiness

As part of our effort to provide a safe environment in the elementary sessions, children who arrive late to their scheduled session must obtain an “Admittance Slip” from the main desk in the lobby.

Tardiness in the small group setting is not only disruptive but also disrespectful of the time of others in the group. Please make every effort to be on time to all small group session.

Absences

All students are expected to attend all scheduled formation sessions. In the case of illness or other serious reasons, parents of elementary students are to notify the Faith Formation Office of

any absences (in advance, if possible) by phone or written note. Middle and high school parents should notify their young person's group catechist(s) directly.

Parents of any students who are recorded as "absent" during a session will be called at home during the session unless the Faith Formation Office has been previously notified.

The number of absences during sacramental preparation years (Grades 2 and 11) is an outward sign of the readiness of a young person to participate in the celebration of Sacraments. Excessive absenteeism may delay the first celebration of sacraments until a time that is more suitable in the child's formation process.

Note: It is the responsibility of the Parents to check on any lessons or materials which have been missed.

Dismissal Procedure at the Education Center

The front door of *St. Patrick Education Center (school)* on 4th Street is the ONLY entrance that is used for entrance or dismissal. Young people must walk at all times. Parents and/or an older brother/sister of children in grades K-3 must go to the classroom to pick up their child(ren) at the end of each session. If you are delayed, your child will be brought to the front desk of the Education Center. Each parent will receive a parent/guardian dismissal form to indicate who the family has assigned as appropriate dismissal guardians. Anyone not listed on this form will not be able to leave with the child and will be held at the front desk for further dismissal authorization.

Young people (Grades 4-8) who are dismissed directly from class are to exit from the front doors of the *St. Patrick Education Center (school)*. All children are to meet their parents/guardians car-pool persons in the parking lot on the WEST side of 4th Street. While crossing guards are usually on duty immediately before and after Wednesday formation sessions, if a student needs to cross the street when a crossing guard is not on duty they are to proceed with the utmost caution. All cars are to be "parked" in the parking

lot in accordance with the Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures found at the back of this manual.

All parents/guardians/car-pool persons are fully responsible for the safety of the student(s) for whom they are providing transportation.

Early Dismissal

No child will be dismissed early without a written note from their parents or guardians. The note should be brought to the Faith Formation Office or given to the head hall monitor at the front desk of the building, not the Catechist, before class. Only the Faith Formation Office staff may give permission for early dismissal. Your child will be escorted to the front desk of the building upon the parent/guardians arrival.

Parents must pick up their child(ren) in person. No child will be allowed to leave the school building unescorted. The person picking the child(ren) up early must come into the main entrance of the building to sign the child(ren) out. For “safety’s sake” children will not be allowed to run out to a waiting car.

Small Group Dismissal - small groups will set their own policies for dismissal and pick up and inform the parents at their first small group meeting of the year.

Discipline Policy

Zero Tolerance for Violence

There is a Zero-tolerance policy regarding violence or the threat of violence. If a child threatens a catechist or another student with harm – that student will be removed from their class or group immediately. The pastor and the police will be notified. All threats will be taken seriously.

Discipline Procedure

Thoughtfulness and consistency is our guide for discipline in the Faith Formation program. Conscious effort in resolving any substantial or ongoing problem will be taken immediately within the classroom setting by the Catechist. Catechists will not tolerate inappropriate behavior by your child(ren). Most inappropriate behaviors are the result of boundary testing or the different levels of socialization skills taught in families. Most of the time a simple comment by the catechist will solve the situation. For those other or recurring situations the following discipline “steps” are followed regarding inappropriate behavior:

First Step:

The individual is issued a verbal warning by catechist. It should be clear to the young person that failure to modify the behavior at this point will result in student being sent to the Faith Formation Coordinator or Director for a conference.

Second Step:

The individual is accompanied by a student messenger, hall monitor, or other formation minister, to meet with Faith Formation Coordinator or Director regarding young person's behavior. A written covenant will be agreed to and signed by the individual, the catechist, and the Faith Formation Coordinator or Director prior to the student returning to the group. Parents will be advised of the cause and outcome of this meeting.

Third Step:

The individual is sent to the Faith Formation Coordinator or Director, accompanied by a student messenger, hall monitor, or other formation minister. The individual is removed from the group pending a conference with the parents/guardians of the young person to discuss alternative formation options. The catechist is removed from the process at this point.

Chronic and Caustic Attitudes or Behavior

Attitudes, if outwardly and actively expressed, are the same as disruptive behaviors. If an individual is constantly preventing the

other learners from entering into the spirit of the session or is consistently undermining the session content or the catechist, this is chronic or caustic behavior. The catechist is the sole determiner of this behavior in their session.

It is unfair to the individual, the rest of the group, and the Catechist to ignore or live with this situation. If a chronic or caustic condition exists with behavior or attitude of a student, the catechist will follow the discipline policy outlined above.

Dress Code

Young people are expected to dress appropriately for each session. It is the parents' responsibility to see that this expectation is met.

Young people should NOT wear hats, cutoffs, torn jeans, short/cropped tops, short shorts, and clothing that would not be acceptable in a regular school setting. Clothing that has language or pictures that are offensive, inappropriate and/or identify or promote tobacco/alcohol/drugs/gang paraphernalia are not acceptable

Roller shoes, shoes with wheels, or other clothing that presents a potential safety hazard to the student are not allowed to be worn in any parish building.

Evaluations

Evaluations are only helpful to the extent that they are useful to the parent in fostering their child's continuing spiritual growth.

Objective measures such as knowledge, attendance and observed behaviors are only indicators of the deeper reality of faith. None the less, these objective measures together with the fresh perspective of the catechist can provide a good grounding to the parent in their role as the primary faith educator of their child.

Formal evaluations will be conducted twice a year, in January and May. They will be mailed to the parent at home. Please use them as a tool for having a conversation with your child(ren) about faith and its experience in their lives.

Medication

St. Patrick Faith Formation program is forbidden to administer medication without prior authority to do so. Students who are under a doctor's care must have a medical permission form on file in the Faith Formation office. The form can be obtained in the Faith Formation office and must be filled in by the doctor. The doctor and parent signatures must be on the form before any medication is administered. All medications are to be brought to the Faith Formation office in the prescription bottle with signed instructions for administration immediately upon the students arrival at Faith Formation.

Visitation at Formation Sessions

Prior to attending a session experience, all visitors must first communicate with the Faith Formation Office. Upon approval of visitation, the visitor is required to "Check-In" at the front desk of the building before proceeding to the session. He/she must sign-in on the "Visitor's Log" and identification may be required.

Homework

Occasionally, an assignment may be given for homework by the Catechist. These assignments serve as an extension of the lesson covered in class. Parental assistance is encouraged if needed.

If a student is absent, he/she will be expected to make-up the lesson missed. Again, parental assistance is encouraged if needed. Parents are asked to review materials with their child (ren) and see that the missing lessons are completed and returned to the Catechist upon the student's return to class.

Special Sacramental Preparation Sessions

Any young person, preparing for their First Reconciliation and/or their First Eucharist, who is in *2nd grade or older and is just entering Faith Formation* for the first time or after an absence of one or more years may need to attend two years of preparation sessions prior to celebrating their first sacraments. The Formation Director in consultation with the Parents will determine a suitable timetable for preparation that respects the age and development of the child.

First Sacrament Preparation

The First Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion are generally celebrated in the second grade. The preparation for these sacraments is conducted by the parents in the family setting. This process begins in the fall of the second grade year. Parents will receive materials and instructions at a special parent meeting held just after the beginning of formation sessions for the year.

Parents and families engage together in the fall to study the sacrament of Reconciliation. The celebration of the sacrament is then experienced as part of a special *First Reconciliation Service* held January or February.

Families continue the formation process in the new year with preparation for First Communion, which follows sequentially after Reconciliation preparation. The celebration for First Communion is held during the Easter season – usually the first part of May.

Family meetings that include parents are held for each Sacrament. The meetings empower the parents as catechetical leaders in their families to lead and guide their entire family through the preparation process and toward the lifelong commitment of celebrating the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. Information will be available in September with a list of the meetings dates for the year.

Snow Days / Cancellation of Scheduled Formation Sessions

In case of hazardous road conditions in the winter, Faith Formation classes will be cancelled. In general, if classes have been canceled for Hudson Public Schools or for St. Patrick School, then Faith Formation Sessions are also cancelled. Information regarding the closing can be obtained from one of the following sources:

AM Radio stations: WCCO (830)

TV stations: WCCO 4, KSTP 5, KMSP 9, KARE 11

Internet: www.hudson.k12.wi.us

www.stpatrickofhudson.org under “Formation”

Faith Formation Calendars

Individual one page calendars for Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High processes for the 2011-2012 year will be available at: www.stpatrickofhudson.org under the “Formation” tab or from the Faith Formation Office, normally by the first of September.

We will continue to send home notices about updates or changes in individual process calendars. Please be sure to consistently read all notices sent home with your child(ren) as that will be the normal method for notifying parents of any changes in calendar dates. Also, consult your parish bulletin each week that you attend Sunday liturgy (Mass), as there will be schedule updates included for any Faith Formation events or activities.

Crisis Plans

Crisis Plans have been put in place to address various emergencies. The staff will use code signals through its P.A. system to alert staff without panicking students.

The crisis plan codes include:

Evacuate – evacuate everyone according to fire drill.

Hold – Hold everyone. No one leaves. All is quiet.

Lock down – Hold everyone, lock room, and hang sign on door to show it is secure. Lights off.

Children move away from windows and doors. Catechists take attendance to insure all children on premises are accounted for. There will be one spokesperson for Faith Formation: the Director, Pastor, or their designee. When the situation is ended, an ALL CLEAR signal will come over the P.A. system three times.

In the case of such a crisis, every visitor inside the building MUST report to the Faith Formation Office. If they are in a hold or lock down situation, they must report by phone to the office where they are on the premises.

Evacuation Plans & Drills

In the event of situations requiring evacuation, everyone will be evacuated to the Oak Street Gym of Willow River School. Authorities will be called immediately.

Staff and young people will follow the same procedures as for fire drills. Children participate in fire and severe weather drills to learn to quickly evacuate the building. Young people must WALK at all times and observe silence and order during the drills.

Tornados

When there is a tornado warning, an announcement will be given over the P.A. System. Young people must follow their catechist's instructions and proceed to the designated area in silence. The basement under the Parish Education Center provides areas for the young people and staff to gather for cover during tornados.

Hazardous Compounds

Some hazardous compounds are in the building for various purposes, such as cleaning, and these are all carefully labeled. Protective clothing is provided for staff that need them, and the Poison Control number is posted in classrooms. Precautions are taken to store all chemicals carefully, and authorities shall be immediately called if there is a danger to anyone caused by a chemical on-site.

Age Specific Information

Middle School

Middle School Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry is the response of the Christian Community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community. St. Patrick Parish embraces this challenge by focusing the Church's ministry with young people on three essential goals: Spiritual, Social, and Service. Youth Ministry in the Junior High years begins to address the call to growth as a disciple in recognizing personal involvement and responsibility as a Christian in the world.

Middle School Retreat

All Middle School Students are encouraged to attend Middle School Retreat. The Middle School Retreat is an important piece of the middle school curriculum. It introduces the idea of contemplative prayer and retreat spirituality to the middle school student for the first time.

The middle school retreat is scheduled for an extended session on a Wednesday evening during the regular faith formation year and will be listed on the Middle School Formation Calendar.

High School

High school formation is a three year process.

Confirmation

Formation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is offered during the Junior year of High School.

The Confirmation process has undergone some restructuring so as to help the young people feel prepared for the awesome

responsibility they are undertaking in being a Confirmed Catholic Christian.

Preparation for Confirmation should not be seen as a crash course in Christian doctrine as it will be assumed that the candidates have already had several years of sequential catechesis both through the church and in their homes. Since Confirmation does not signal the completion of faith formation, the young people will come to understand that spiritual formation is a lifelong process through study and the development of their faith.

The process of preparation for Confirmation occurs in 9 sessions and includes the history and theology for the sacraments of initiation and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Each session helps the candidate prepare in a more personal, intense, and prayerful way for the celebration of the rite of Confirmation. Spiritually, Sponsors are engaged as an integral guides to the candidates entry in the Christian Life and the faith community. Additionally a retreat, service opportunities, and other events/activities are planned to complete this process.

High School Session Times

Senior high sessions for both small and large group meetings begin at 7:00pm, Wednesdays, except where noted in the calendar. Small Group meetings are held in catechist's homes, Large Group meetings are held at St. Patrick Church.

Reporting an Absence

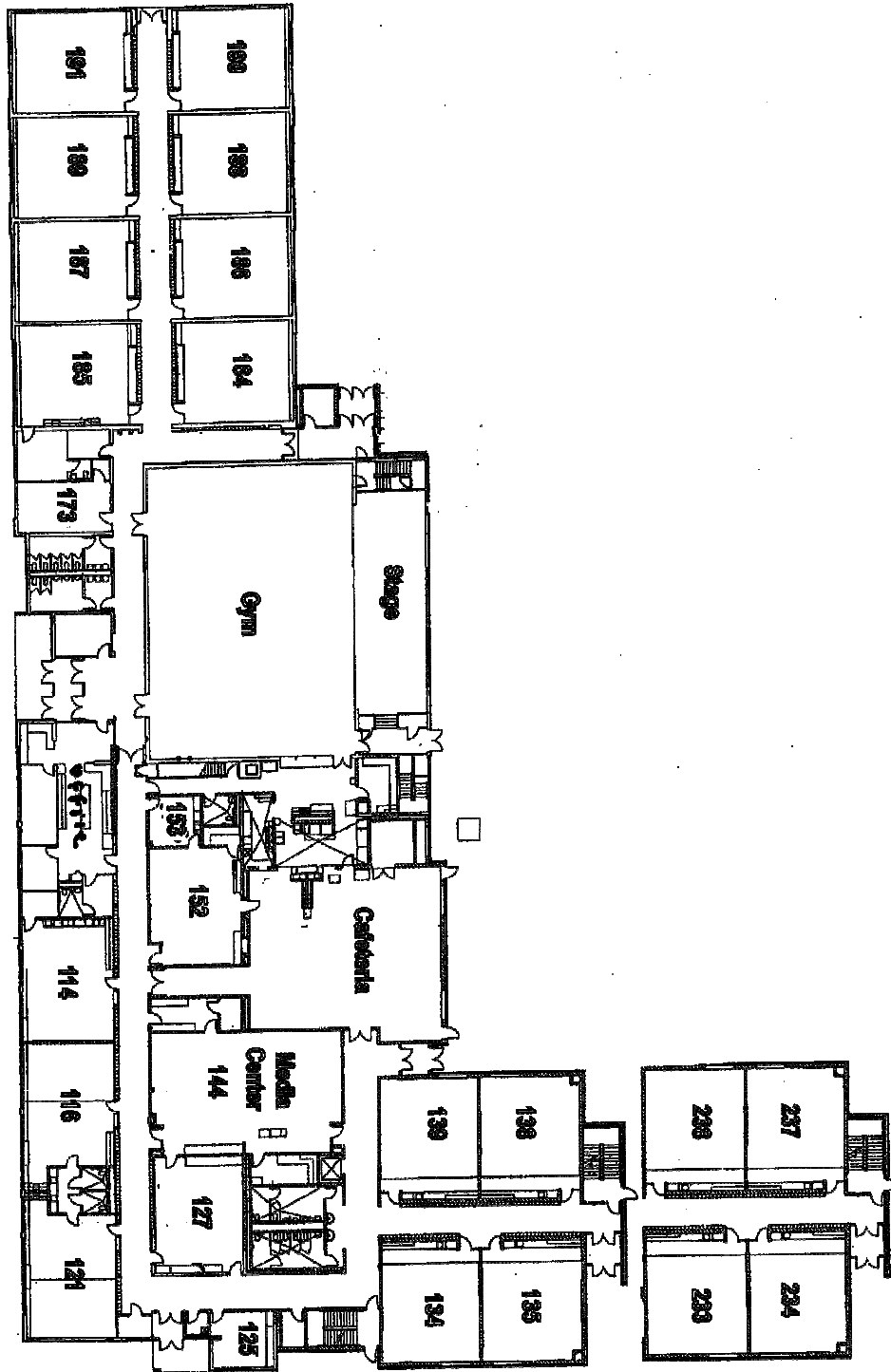
Parents of Middle School and Senior High youth should call their teen's Small Group Facilitators at least an hour in advance to report any absence from either a large or small group session.

The number of absences during these sacramental preparation years (Grades 9-11) is an outward sign of the readiness of a young person to participate in the celebration of Confirmation. Excessive absenteeism may delay the celebration of Confirmation until a time that is more suitable in their formation process.

School Building Map

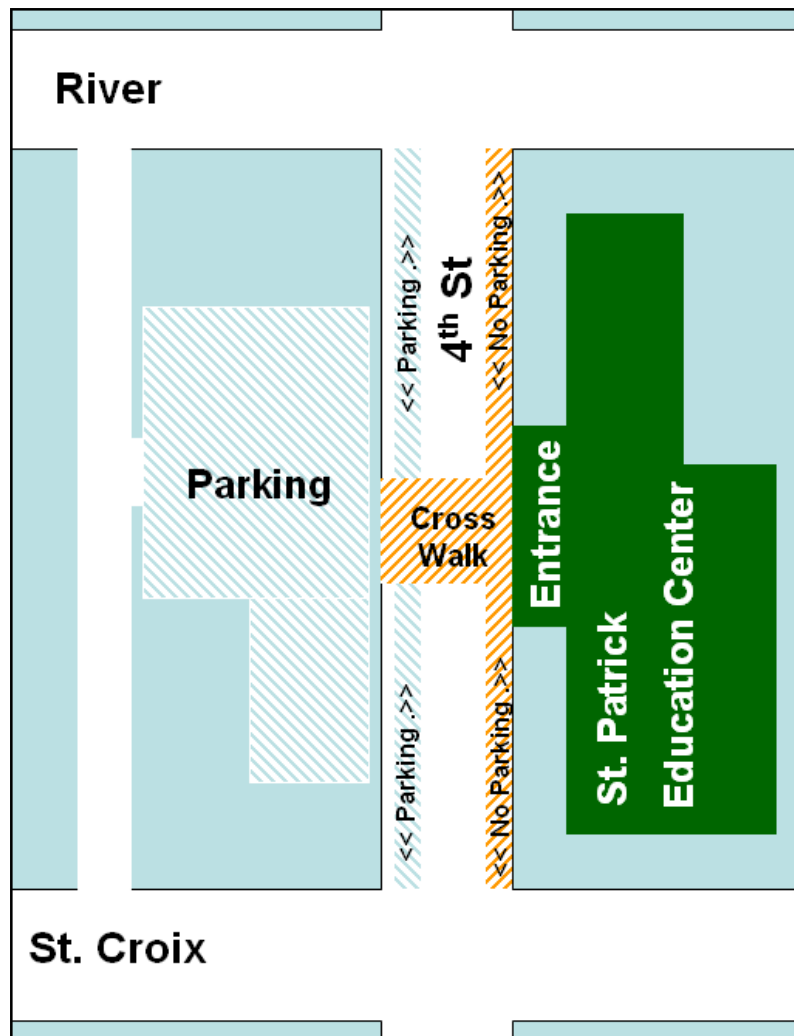
Elementary Faith Formation sessions are held in St. Patrick Education Center - School Building (map below).

St. Patrick Faith Formation Office is located on the 2nd floor.



Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures 2011 – 2012

Young people may be dropped off or picked up in the parking lot or on the WEST Side of 4th Street- enter from the Alleyway between St. Croix and River streets. Young people may also be dropped off or picked up from the curb side of vehicles along the WEST Side of 4th Street – outside of the crosswalk area.



For SAFETY SAKE:

- Obey the directions of the crossing guards.
- Please Do Not Park on the EAST Side of 4th Street in front of the building from 4:45pm to 7:45pm.
- Please remember we are in a residential neighborhood and that small children play all around the school — drive responsibly!