

*St. Raphael Parish  
Children's Faith Formation  
Parent/Student Handbook*



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**THE MISSION OF CATECHESIS**

Faith Formation or “Catechesis” is derived from a Greek term meaning “to echo” or “to resound.” Catechesis invites (each one of) us to make our own the “attitudes of Christ” as we promote knowledge of the faith, engage in the Church’s liturgical life, embrace moral living, promote a life of prayer, focus on belonging to community, and enable our missionary spirit to come alive through Christian witness. As John Paul II indicates, “The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but also in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ.” Catechesi Trendenae, 5

Parents and guardians “have the unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators, or catechists. They catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives...Parents or guardians are catechist for their children precisely because they are parents or guardians, not because they have developed any specialized skills. When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to bring up their children in the practice of the faith, the church promises to help parents foster their children’s faith and assist them specifically in their role as catechist of the children”. National Director for Catechesis

## **WELCOME LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the St. Raphael Faith Formation Program for children. We thank you for allowing us to be partners with you in the faith formation of your children. Faith formation is both catechesis (education) and formation (spiritual nurturing). St. Raphael's children's program meets the basic level of religious instruction for children in elementary through middle school. The application and re-enforcement parents do at home increases this basic formation to its greatest level.

The Catholic Church believes and professes that, "The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith." (CCC 1666). Your children will learn to live their faith as they see you practice your faith. They will attend Sunday Mass when they are grown because you attend Sunday Mass with them now. You role model, by your words and actions, what it means to be an adult catholic who lives their faith fully, actively, and consciously. And you set forth a 'growth plan' by which your children can further embrace the faith as they grow. For this reason, the family is formally called 'the domestic church.'" Our role at St. Raphael Church is to support, assist, and encourage you, as you role model a Catholic Christian lifestyle for your family by your love and example. To this end, we have two approaches to the basic program of faith formation: our Sunday morning class and our Teach-at-Home Program. In the Teach-at-Home program parents are given lesson plans to formally instruct their children at home in-lue-of Sunday morning class. This option helps parents of children who miss class due to shared custody or family travel.

In the handbook that follows you will find additional information that will facilitate your involvement in your child's faith formation. Please feel free to call the Faith Formation Office with questions or for further information. We ask you to carefully read the material in this handbook. Then sign the acknowledgement part of the registration form as a pledge of your covenant with us so that we can both do the best to ensure a safe and enjoyable faith formation environment for your child.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

*Lynn Edmonds*

Director of Faith Formation

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The Mission of Catechesis .....                               | 1 |
| Welcome Letter from our Director of Faith Formation .....     | 2 |
| Table of Contents .....                                       | 3 |
| Curriculum .....  | 4 |
| Parish Faith Formation (CCD) Guidelines .....                 | 4 |
| Admissions .....  | 4 |
| Attendance .....  | 4 |
| Behavior .....  | 4 |
| Student Information .....                                     | 4 |
| Program Policies .....  | 5 |
| Non-Custodial Parents .....                                   | 5 |
| Harassment Policy for the Diocese of St. Petersburg .....     | 5 |
| Purpose of the Policy .....                                   | 5 |
| Explanation fo Harrassment .....                              | 5 |
| Confidentiality .....   | 5 |
| Communication .....   | 5 |
| Use of Parish Grounds and Facilities .....                    | 5 |
| Arrival and Dismissal Procedure .....                         | 6 |
| Early Dismissal .....   | 6 |
| Arrival.....  | 6 |
| Dismissal .....   | 6 |
| Hurricane Plan for Program Cancellation .....                 | 6 |
| Volunteers Needed .....                                       | 6 |
| Right to Amend .....  | 6 |
| Parent/Guardian and Student Agreement .....                   | 6 |
| Sacramental Preparation .....                                 | 7 |
| Baptismal Preparation .....                                   | 7 |
| First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Preparation Program..... | 7 |
| Confirmation Program .....                                    | 7 |
| Prayers Parents Are Expected To Teach Their Children .....    | 7 |

## CURRICULUM

Our Sadlier Publisher produces the Christ In Us textbooks used in Grade K through 5. All texts follow the curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Grade K – 5 will be learning from the same Catechetical Themes (categories) at about the same time. For example, a first grader will be learning about The Trinity in Unit One at the same time a fifth grader is learning about The Trinity in Unit One. The development of the topic will be different, but siblings will be learning the same overall topic. Parents will be able to reinforce all their children's religious formation at the same time through family discussion and website resources at [Christinus.com/@PAR337047989](http://Christinus.com/@PAR337047989). Use of the online resources for parents is especially helpful when attendance at in-person classes are postponed. The new portals include how-to videos to get acquainted with the programs offerings as well as Mini-Tasks that enable the student to assimilate and apply the new content learned.

Christ In Us offers a multitude of online resources; parents and children each get their own portal to the program. This is where parents can obtain make-up lessons when their child misses a class or for parents who are in our Teach-at-Home format. Families will be given login information at the start of each school year.

Grade 6-8 have two options for catechesis. Middle school students can meet once a month with their parents on a weeknight. Parents will enjoy a presentation on a topic similar to their child's who will be learning in another room. Then parent and child come together for discussion and prayer. The intention is to connect parents more closely to their child's faith development as they approach adolescents. Parents who do not use this option still have the Teach-at-Home format available. Formal faith formation in the eighth grade is a requirement for participation in Confirmation in the ninth grade.

## PARISH FAITH FORMATION (CCD) GUIDELINES

### Admissions

1. St. Raphael Parish Faith Formation Program for children (CCD) has an open registration policy for regular program participation grade K through 8<sup>th</sup>.
2. Families who wish to enroll children in Faith Formation classes must be registered parishioners, Parish Registration/Census forms are to be on file at the time of program registration.

### Attendance

1. Faithful attendance to all scheduled sessions is expected. An email ([ledmonds@st-raphaels.com](mailto:ledmonds@st-raphaels.com)) or phone call (821-0155) to the Faith Formation Office is appreciated to explain more than one absence in a month.
2. Some of our students do rotate their weekends with different households. If this is true for your child, please make us aware of that so we can assist you in making up any missed lessons. This is especially relevant to children being able to make First Communion.
3. Please have students arrive prior to the 10:45 bell. Arriving after class has begun is a distraction to both students and catechists and robs your child of valuable instruction time.
4. Families are expected to attend Mass every week at the Saturday vigil or on Sunday. Otherwise what the children are being taught in class is not matching their lived experience and will not take root.

## Behavior

1. **Students may enter classrooms only if the adult aide or Catechist is in their classroom.** Otherwise, students are to wait outside their classroom door for catechists to arrive.
2. Students are expected to model their behavior after Jesus Christ who instituted two Great Commandments: "You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 11:27).
3. The following are some guidelines for behavior based upon these simple principles:
  - a. Students properly respect and obey adults in authority.
  - b. Students properly respect the personal space and private property of others. (The Faith Formation Program meets in the Parish School classrooms, **therefore going inside classroom desks is not allowed at any time.** Each classroom has its own Faith Formation supply bin.)
  - c. Behavior or language that intimidates, belittles, harasses (including harassment of a sexual nature), makes inappropriate references or physically harms oneself or others will result in disciplinary action (see special Diocesan Harassment Policy page)
4. In the event a student engages in inappropriate behavior any or all of the following may occur:
  - a. Parental notification of infraction.
  - b. Meeting between parents, Catechist and Director of Faith Formation.
  - c. Parent attendance required at subsequent program classes on Sunday.
  - d. Temporary removal of student from Faith Formation program.
  - e. Permanent removal of student from Faith Formation program.
5. The Director of Faith Formation is responsible for ensuring that all sanctions against students are implemented in a fair and consistent manner by the Catechists and other volunteer staff.
6. If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with action taken by a Catechist, they may contact the Director of Faith Formation: Lynn Edmonds.

## Student Information

1. The Faith Formation Office keeps records of a confidential nature: Attendance, discipline, last grade completed, address, phone number, date of birth, place of birth, sacraments received, marital status of parents, disabilities, allergies, emergency contact information.
2. St. Raphael Faith Formation program abides by the Privacy Act and will not disclose personal information to third parties without written permission from the persons involved. (Note: Catechists will have student's phone numbers to contact families in case of emergency.) Parents and/or guardians have a right to review any records kept by the Formation Office pertaining to their child for any reason.
3. Catechists are provided limited access to personal information as is necessary for them to perform their job. Such information would include: last grade completed, disciplinary records, address, phone number, emergency contacts, disability, allergies, and other family information when it is appropriate.

4. Please make known to us any special learning needs of your child so that he or she may be better served in the classroom. All information is confidential.
5. Health concerns should be brought to the attention of the religious education office during registration. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition that we should know about, please inform the office and catechist as soon as possible. No medication will be administered to any student. Please contact the office if special accommodations need to be made.

## **PROGRAM POLICIES**

### **Non-Custodial Parents**

The Faith Formation program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records when such records are requested. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide us with an official copy of the court order. This is to be done at the time of program registration or as soon as a court order would become effective during the course of the school year.

### **Harassment Policy for the Diocese of St. Petersburg**

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires that each parish, Catholic school or early childhood center establish and adopt this policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of a Christian, professional and supportive educational environment for all persons engaged in or involved with religious education programs, schools and early childhood centers, and parish

youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school, or early childhood center will be responsible for off campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish, school, or early childhood center-sponsored event.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

This policy intends

- that each individual is free from physical, psychological or verbal intimidation and harassment in the schools, early childhood centers, religious education and youth ministry settings;
- that each individual involved in schools, early childhood centers, religious education and youth ministry programs maintain and further develop attitudes and behaviors which express respect for others and are reflective of each person's God-given dignity;
- to encourage a heightened sensitivity toward behaviors that others may find offensive and intimidating, whether these behaviors refer to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, familial status, veteran status or disability.

This policy is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students, and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the Sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries.

## **Explanation of Harassment**

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior involving verbal, written or physical conduct or communication. Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviors, which could include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical, mental or verbal abuse
2. Insults, jokes, or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status(es)
3. Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
4. Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors
5. Unwanted sexual comments (serious or humorous)
6. Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, texting, letters, e-mail, etc.
7. Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness
8. Unwanted forced involvement in activities (e.g., physical, religious, etc.)
9. Coercion of religious styles or personal beliefs upon a participant
10. Intimidation in front of a group or forced personal sharing in groups
11. Inappropriate media or music use which would violate this policy.

## **Confidentiality**

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible, but will be consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

*(Citation taken from Harassment Policy for Non-Employment Situations in Schools/Centers, Parish Religious Education and Parish Youth Ministry Programs of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Florida).*

## **Communication**

St. Raphael Faith Formation Office, along with the Church Universal, strives to maintain open communication with all who participate in Faith Formation. We also encourage catechists and parents to keep each other informed of student progress through informal contact at the beginning and end of each class time.

From time to time it may be necessary for parents to discuss issues of concern with the catechist or the Director of Faith Formation. In keeping with Church teaching and the Biblical tradition of subsidiary, issues of concern should be resolved at the lowest possible level. Parents/guardians should attempt to resolve any issues with a Catechist by first contacting the Catechist and discussing the issue.

If satisfactory progress is not made, then the parents/guardians may contact the Director of Faith Formation to discuss the issue and request that action be taken. If the parent is not satisfied with the Director of Faith Formation's action, only then, should the matter be taken to the Pastor.

## **Use of Parish Grounds and Facilities**

The classrooms, facilities and grounds of our parish are used by the school as well as numerous ministries and organizations. It is essential that all who participate in Children's Faith Formation exercise the greatest amount of respect for the facilities that we share, so that all may be good stewards and enjoy the gifts God has bestowed.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**

Children will only be released to those persons, other than parents/guardians, whose names are listed as emergency contacts or on the Registration Form. Photo identification may be required. **Please notify the office if there is someone to whom your child should NOT be released.**

### **Early Dismissal**

While early dismissals on Sunday mornings are discouraged, sometimes it is necessary for parents or guardians to make arrangements for an early dismissal of their child. If this becomes necessary, a signed note should be given to the catechist at the beginning of class and the Director of Faith Formation should be notified. **At the designated time, the parent or guardian may go to the classroom to pick up the student. This is the only circumstance under which a child may be picked up directly from inside a classroom.**

Please help us make these procedures as safe and easy as possible for all concerned. Thank you.

ELEMENTARY (Grades K-5) and JUNIOR HIGH (Grades 6-8)

### **Arrival**

A parent/guardian, not a sibling under the age of twelve, should accompany students in Gr. K-2 to the classroom. Older children, if not coming directly from the church, can be dropped off by a parent/guardian at the school building.

Students must wait *outside* their classroom door until their catechist/aide arrives. **No child is allowed in a classroom without a catechist or other authorized adult staying with the students.**

### **Dismissal**

Safety from both injury and from abduction is our top concern during arrival and dismissal. We also want to ensure a smooth and quick transition from class to home for our students. Please abide by our dismissal policy.

**At 12:00 P.M., catechists are instructed to bring all students to the rear parking lot for dismissal.**

**Any student who is walking home or not dismissing from the car line after class must have a previously signed Permission Slip on file or they will not be allowed to leave on their own.**

Parents may drive in the car line to pick up their child. The car line proceeds through the parking lot around to the back of the church property to the rear lot. A single-file line drives up along the sidewalk where students are waiting. Catechists will assist students with entering cars as they pull up. Students are to enter the car on the sidewalk side unless assisted by an adult. NO Double Lines of cars will be allowed. Please be patient and wait for the car in front of you to pull up rather than to try to pull around cars – as this reduces the safety factor for children.

**OR**

If parents choose, they may park their cars in the lot and walk to the child's classroom or the dismissal sight in the rear parking lot area to pick up their child. Please notify your child's catechist before you leave with your child.

Please Note: **FOR SAFETY REASONS** students may not be picked up in cars from any other location on the grounds. **DO NOT block**

**the driveway with your car to pick up a child walking home or to the parking lot.**

## **Hurricane Plan for Program Cancellation**

Should a tropical storm or hurricane be forecast to hit our area over a weekend or if flooding due to a storm should affect our area, it may be necessary for Faith Formation classes to be cancelled. The decision to cancel children's Faith Formation classes will be based on local (St. Petersburg, Shore Acres) conditions.

If you wish to confirm the decision to cancel classes, you may 1). call the parish answering service at 821-7989 or 2). Check the parish website [www.st-raphaels.org](http://www.st-raphaels.org) for a cancellation notice. Because the decision to cancel classes may have to be made several days prior to Sunday classes, it is important to remember that the decision to close will stand firm, regardless of how beautiful the weather may be on Sunday morning. We may have had to perform extensive preparation to protect against the storm and it may take time to reopen sandbagged buildings, or to "clean-up" and prepare the property again after a storm.

Please realize loss of electricity or standing water, among other conditions may make it difficult to reach us by phone or by car. It is better to keep your family members home and safe rather than to risk adverse weather conditions to bring a student in. Our catechists and volunteer staff have family and safety obligations as well.

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Don't Brush over this part! Our Faith Formation program at St. Raphael offers instruction for Kindergarten through fifth grade students. Please consider volunteering in the classroom as one of our catechists (teachers). Currently parents are required to take turns as a classroom aide on a rotating basis. This enables the parents to better understand their child's formal formation. On-going training, a diocesan certification program, and personal support are available to you as a member of our volunteer staff. Assistance on Sunday mornings is also needed for Liturgy of the Word held during the 9:30A.M. Mass. All volunteers who directly work with children undergo the Diocesan Background Screening and Diocesan Safe Environment Training.

## **Right to Amend**

The Pastor and Director of Faith Formation reserve the right to amend these guidelines at any time for any appropriate reason. Prompt notification of any changes made to this Handbook or any guidelines will be made in writing to all that are registered in the religious education and sacramental programs.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN AND STUDENT AGREEMENT**

By signing the separate Handbook Agreement Signature Sheet, the parent/guardians and students are agreeing to be governed by this Faith Formation Handbook and the rules and policies contained in it. This Signature Sheet is kept on file for the course of the school year. Parents/guardians and students will be asked to reaffirm their agreement with a new signature sheet each year.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

### **Baptism Preparation Program**

1. Parents of children that are infants to 6 years old are to contact the parish office at (821-7989) to register for Baptism class.
2. Parents of children and youth (7 years or older), are to contact Lynn Edmonds (821-0155 ex.2116) for more information regarding the Children's Catechumenate.

### **First Reconciliation/First Communion Preparation Program**

1. Families of students in the second grade or older are eligible to register for Sacrament Preparation once their child has completed one full year of faithful participation in a catholic parish faith formation program, a catholic parochial school, or an approved catholic home schooling religion program. Children's completion of a full school year of formation must immediately proceed the school year when they prepare for reconciliation and or communion. In other words, a fourth-grade child who did not attend class in third grade will have to complete a year of faith formation before they prepare for sacraments in the fifth grade,
2. Families of candidates must be registered in St. Raphael Parish and actively participating in Sunday Mass.
3. A copy of the child's Baptismal information must be provided at the time of registration.
4. The student's religious education continues in parish faith formation, the parochial school or religion home schooling while the student and parent(s) participate in the freestanding sacramental preparation process.
5. Faithful attendance is expected for scheduled sessions. A courtesy call (821-0155) or email ([ledmonds@st-raphaels.com](mailto:ledmonds@st-raphaels.com)) to the office explaining an absence is requested.
6. Parents are required to attend the sacramental preparation sessions with their child. Reception of First Reconciliation (confession) is usually in December. Reception of First Communion is in May.

### **Confirmation Preparation Program**

1. The invitation to prepare for Confirmation usually takes place in the ninth grade and will come through St. Raphael's Youth Ministry Office
2. Families of Confirmation candidates must be registered in the parish of St. Raphael and actively participating in Sunday Mass.
3. A copy of the student's Baptismal information must be provided at the time of registration for the Confirmation Preparation classes.
4. The student must have completed a full year of faithful participation in religious education or catholic parochial school or approved home school program immediately prior to enrollment. **Eighth grade is a Pre-Confirmation year, attendance is required for ninth grade Confirmation.**
5. Faithful attendance at confirmation class is expected. Being dropped from the program may occur if attendance is poor.
6. Other requirements will be made by the Youth Ministry Office at the time of registration.

## **PRAYERS PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN**

### **Kindergarten: Sign of the Cross**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Grade 1: Our Father; Hail Mary; Glory Be to the Father**

#### **Our Father**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. (For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever.) Amen.

#### **Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace; the lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of god, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

#### **Glory Be to the Father**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

## **Grade 2: Act of Contrition; Simple Mass Responses and Meal Time Prayers**

### **Act of Contrition**

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the occasions of sin. Amen.

### **Grace before Meals**

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from the bounty of Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Grace after Meals**

We give thanks for all your benefits, almighty God, who lives and reigns forever. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

## **Grade 3: Apostles' Creed**

### **Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He ascended into heaven on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

## **Grade 4: Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary**

**Joyful Mysteries:** The Annunciation \* The Visitation\* The Birth of Our Lord \* The Presentation in the Temple \* Finding Jesus in the Temple

## **Grade 5: Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary; Gloria**

**Sorrowful Mysteries:** The Agony in the Garden \* The Scourging at the Pillar \* The Crowning with Thorns \* The Crucifixion and the Death of Jesus

### **Gloria (from Mass)**

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will, we praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, God, Almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## **Grade 6: Glorious & Luminous Mysteries; Come Holy Spirit and the Memorare**

**Glorious Mysteries:** The Resurrection \* The Ascension \* The Descent of the Holy Spirit \* The Assumption of Mary into Heaven \* The Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

**Luminous Mysteries:** Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan \* His self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana \* His proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with the call to conversion \* Transfiguration of Jesus \* Institution of the Eucharist as sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery.

### **Come, Holy Spirit**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love,. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and you will renew the face of the earth. Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful. In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

### **Memorare**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen

## **Grade 7: Nicene Creed**

### **Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God, the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit the Lord the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified who has spoken through the prophets. And one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **Grade 8: Prayer to St. Francis, Rosary, All the Mysteries of the Rosary**

### **Prayer to St. Francis (also known as the Prayer for Peace)**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.