

# **St. Francis Xavier Parish**

## **Religious Education/Faith Formation**



**Program Handbook**

**Revised 2020**

## *Welcome from Pastor*

Dear Families and Friends of Saint Francis Xavier:

Jesus calls all of us. That is why you are reading this. You are being called to help us help you in passing on the Faith, as we partner with each other in sharing this mission with your Children. I hope that you find our Faith Formation Program an integral service to this call.

While this year is an extraordinary year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, I look forward, with our Teachers, Irene, Parishioners, journeying with you and your families to know who Jesus is for us and how to hear His call. I hope that you find Irene as a great support to answer any questions for you or to assist you with any questions you may have in Faith formation.

In the meantime, please be assured of my support and prayers for you as we journey together to know Jesus' Call in our lives. If there is anything I can do for you, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via phone or email.

In the Lord,

*Fr. Jason*

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age. (Mt. 28:19-20)*

Recognizing our common pilgrimage towards eternal life, the Faith Formation/Religious Education program assists parents in raising their child to imitate Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Through education, worship, and service, children and youth foster a love for Jesus, Mary, the Saints, and the whole Church.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Jesus calls each of us to be His disciples. As disciples we are to share our love and knowledge of Christ with the world. Through catechesis (religious instruction) students form a relationship with Jesus, “encountering Him, and discover themselves and the meaning of their lives in Him.” (National Directory for Catechesis 19.B)

Guided by the principles found in the documents of the church concerning the ministry of catechesis, the catechetical program of this parish will include the following elements:

### *Message*

The story of Salvation History found in Sacred Scripture, and the Revealed Truth explained through Tradition will be communicated at the child appropriate age level and made relevant to the current times.

### *Community*

Following the example of St. John XXIII, we will “open the window so we can see out and others can see in,” efforts will be made to build a Christian community and bring awareness to our role in the parish, local and global Catholic Church.

### *Worship*

Students will encounter Jesus in the Sacraments, especially the Mass and Reconciliation. They will also experience different forms of prayer, allowing them to deepen their personal relationship with Jesus.

### *Service*

Jesus asks each of us to serve as He served. Opportunities at all levels will be identified, allowing students to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

St. Francis Xavier Parish strives to be a Christian community faithful to the Gospel and the Catholic Tradition. The parish is, in reality, a community of communities: youth, staff, farmers, townspeople, commuters, all united in the endless struggle and search to know, love and serve God, others, and self. The unique diversity of the parish offers at once a challenge and a rich resource for learning. The goals of St. Francis Xavier's program are:

- To provide a program of formal religious instruction that leads to a personal encounter with and knowledge of who Jesus is, supporting parents in their role as primary educators of their children.
- To prepare children and youth for the reception of the Sacraments according to the recommendation of time celebrated by the Bishop of Erie.
- To help youth discover the richness of truth found of Sacred Scripture and the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, enabling them to make good choices throughout life.
- To build a strong Catholic identity and deep prayer life.
- To help youth know the Truth of who God created them to be and motivate them to live the faith, and participate fully in the life and mission of the Church in the world.
- To foster an environment that allows youth to discern their Vocation in life.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

When parents presented their child to be baptized, they accepted the responsibility of teaching their child the faith, to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Through their example and family traditions, children learn the beauty of the Christian faith. "The Church supports parents through suitable pastoral initiatives, assisting them in the fulfillment of their educational mission." (Directory for Catechesis 124)

*Parents who would like their child to attend the program:*

1. Must be a registered member of the parish or have a valid reason for attending this program and have the permission of the home parish's pastor.
2. Is responsible for providing the parish with information regarding the child's baptism and other sacraments if applicable.

3. *Attends Mass weekly with the child.* Responsible to see that the child receives Communion and the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.
4. Takes responsibility for their role as primary educator.
5. Collaborates with the catechist in the program by sharing faith with the child(ren) at home.
6. Takes part in family sacramental preparation programs.
7. Teaches the child the traditional prayers of the Church.
8. Maintains an open line of communication with the child's catechist.
9. Brings the child to class at the prescribed time and picks them up promptly at the conclusion of class.
10. Makes sure the child enters the building where classes are held and goes to the classroom.
11. Brings his/her child to class dressed appropriately, ready to participate.
12. Attends parent meetings when requested.
13. Is supportive of the catechist, especially in the area of discipline.
14. Reads this handbook, completes and turns in the forms necessary for registration, and events.
15. Informs the faith formation leader of the rights of the noncustodial parent in the case of divorce. This is essential to ensure that the program acts in the best interest and safety of the child(ren).
16. Informs the faith formation leader of any pertinent medical and emergency information.

## **FAITH FORMATION/RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICIES**

### **Catechists**

Catechists that teach in the faith formation program are vetted volunteers. The parish also offers training courses that increase the skills needed for the catechists to be successful. The faith formation leader supervises the catechists in order to help them fulfill their responsibility. Parents are asked to recognize the challenges involved in being a volunteer catechist and to support them in whatever ways possible. If a concern arises, please discuss it with the catechist first. If that does not

lead to a satisfactory resolution, please contact the faith formation leader. All parishioners have the right to final recourse from the pastor of the parish.

*All catechists are in compliance with the Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese of Erie.*

## **Enrollment**

Students attending public, private or are home schooled from K-11th grade are encouraged to attend. Youth are typically enrolled in the grade in which they are currently attending in school, unless other arrangements are made with the faith formation leader. An example of an exception to this may be need to meet specific requirements for sacramental preparation.

Parents have a choice of model for catechesis.

- 1) Hybrid: In-Person with a Digital Component
- 2) Fully Digital
- 3) Special Arrangements made with the Director of Evangelization
- 4) Completion of Faith Formation is integral for the reception of the Sacraments. Sacramental Preparation for all students of the parish (both Catholic School and public/private/home school) will be conducted in-person according to the calendar.

## **Registration**

A registration form is required for all new students to the program. Families already enrolled in the program are to ensure that their records are updated correctly each year. Baptismal Certificates must be provided for all new children at the time of registration. Children who have not been baptized will be accepted into the program provided the family intends to have them baptized and is willing to enroll them in the children's initiation program. Transferring families need to provide the name of the program they attended for verification.

Parents have the right to decide if their child's image can be used in various parish communications. A photo/video release form needs to be completed annually by the parent for each child.

## **Fees**

The Pastor, in cooperation with the Parish Finance Council and the Faith Formation Leader, determines the annual fees for the program. A fee schedule is provided at the time of registration. *A separate fee for*

*Sacramental years may be implemented.* Book and material fees are **non-refundable** after the start of classes. If a family is unable to pay the fees, please contact the Pastor or Director of Evangelization to discuss options. The cost of the program should not be a deterrent to participation.

### **Program Times**

The Faith Formation program is typically held on Sundays from 9:00-10:20 am. Schedule changes are noted on the Annual Calendar. All Catechists are in the rooms 5 minutes before the beginning time. ***Please have your child here on time as security measures will be in place to ensure the safety of the children.***

### **Curriculum**

St. Francis Xavier Parish follows the Diocese of Erie *Curriculum Guidelines* issued by Bishop Lawrence Persico. Textbooks and other materials used are in conformity with the teachings found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. They have been chosen because they offer catechists the resources necessary to conduct classes, and include all the elements of the ministry of catechesis. Presently the programs used are:

- Kindergarten — *Allelu!* Published by Our Sunday Visitor  
Grade 1— 8 — *Alive in Christ!* Published by Our Sunday Visitor  
Website for home support <https://osvcurriculum.com/faithathome>  
Grade 9 – 10 *Diocesan High School Curriculum*  
(Center for Ministry Development)  
Grade 11 *Diocesan High School Curriculum (CMD) &*  
*Confirmed in a Faithful Community*  
Published by St. Mary’s Press  
*Decision Point*, Published by Dynamic Catholic

All of these texts have been evaluated and found acceptable by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Catechism of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

### **Digital Component**

Utilizing the technology available to us, lessons are available online through *Flipgrid*. This will help communication between the Director of Evangelization, Catechists, and Parents. Students are expected to complete lessons online according to the chosen enrollment option.

## **Sunday Liturgy**

The Mass is the “Source and Summit” of our Faith, and from the beginning God has told us to “Keep Holy the Sabbath Day.” Families are to join in the celebration of the Mass weekly. The Mass allows us to encounter Jesus Christ in ways that are beyond our ability in the classroom or home.

## **Sacramental Guidelines**

The Sacramental preparation process for Reconciliation (Grade 2), Eucharist (Grade 3) and Confirmation (Grade 11) will require more specific curriculum and attendance policies. These are covered separately in this handbook and will be conveyed to the candidates and their families at the appropriate time.

## **Attendance**

All children of Saint Francis Xavier Parish are to receive Faith Formation. Whichever model the parent chooses, parents are to ensure that their child is participating fully. Communication with the Catechist and/or Director of Evangelization is essential.

## **Missed Sessions/Incomplete Digital Classes**

Each class session builds on the material covered in the preceding classes. *Children who are absent miss a great deal and are required to make up the material covered in the missed class.* Parents are encouraged to help their child complete the missed lesson at home. Lessons will be available on the FlipGrid digital platform to allow for students to stay current with the lessons. In the event of an absence, as a matter of courtesy, a written excuse from the parents would be appreciated. These excuses should be sent with the child upon his/her return to class.

*If a child does not complete more than 12 lessons in a program year they may be required pass a test on the material in order to advance to the next level.*

## **Arrival/Dismissal**

Classes are held in the classrooms in the basement of the church and in the parish center. The program time is 9:00-10:20 am. All children should enter through the main entrance of the Church steps, or the parish center front door. In order to insure the safety of our children in the parking lot, we request that cars pull completely into the parking lot on the church side and exit on opposite side of the property. We request

that there be no stopping in front of any doors for pick up. All classes held in the basement are dismissed from the Gathering Space. Parents of kindergarten and first graders are urged to come into the Gathering Space to meet their child/children.

### **Early Dismissal**

Any child requesting an early dismissal is required to present a note from his/her parent to the Catechist before class begins. No child will be dismissed early without a note.

### **Illness/Injury**

A child who is not feeling well should not attend classes, even if only thought to be a mild cold. If a child becomes ill during class, the child's condition will be assessed and the parent(s) may be called to take the child home. If the parent is unavailable, attempts will be made to reach the backup person listed. Every effort will be made to keep the child comfortable. Medications will not be administered to the child. If an injury occurs, first aid will be administered in accordance with the policy of the Diocese of Erie and the parent(s) notified. If the injury requires immediate medical attention, the Faith Formation Leader will call the appropriate emergency services, followed by a call to the parent(s).

### **Change of Address/Phone Number**

Please inform the Office of Faith Formation as soon as possible of any changes in address, phone number, or email address. In case of emergency it is essential that we have correct information on file.

### **Emergency Cancellation**

In the event of severe inclement weather, families will be notified by *MyParish App*, *Facebook*, and *Email*. The answering machine will also state canceled classes. As always parents are free to use their own discretion when classes are not canceled.

### **Homework/Special Assignments**

Recognizing that the family is already a “classroom” of faith, Parents are encouraged to incorporate lessons from the classroom into discussion and activities that can be done at home to help the teachings of Christ to enter more fully into our hearts.

## **Special Events**

Parents will be notified regarding any event or field trip for which the children will be taken off the parish grounds. If the child desires to attend a field trip or special event, the parent must fill out a permission slip and turn it in to the faith formation leader. No child can be taken on such trips without the required permission/medical forms. Phone permission is not permitted.

## **Progress Reports**

The role of the parish is to provide a formal program to reinforce the teaching of the faith in the home. Formation, of any sort, especially religious education, requires tremendous cooperation and communication among parent/child/catechist. The purpose of this progress report is to inform you of your child's participation, performance, weak and strong areas in the class and other information pertinent to our Faith Formation Program.

Progress reports are given out twice a year, in December and April. To successfully complete a grade level the child must: consistently participate in the program, complete course work, display a working knowledge of the material for the grade level, take part in service projects, activities & retreats, and take an active role in the Liturgy.

## **Announcements**

Announcements will be published in the parish bulletin and website, sent through email, and/or shared via *MyParish App* and *Facebook*. On occasion important information will be sent home with your child. Please ask them if they have any announcements for you.

## **SACRAMENTS**

### **Baptism**

A person begins their initiation of becoming a child of God and member of the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism. This gift from God cleanses us from Original Sin. Today this often takes place during infancy with the parents promising to teach their child the practices of the faith. However, there are occasions where someone never received this sacrament. If an older child or adult desires to become Catholic, they can participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation (this Rite dates back to the earliest times of the Church). Please contact the parish office for more information.

## **Reconciliation**

After baptism, we continue to suffer from effects of original sin and commit personal sins. Through God's mercy we are able to be restored to grace through the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The first time this can be celebrated is when a baptized person reaches the age of reason, since for one to sin he/she needs to know what they are doing is wrong and choose to do it anyway. This is usually by the time they are in 2nd Grade. A child who has reached this stage of development should have already begun formal Faith Formation through the parish's religious education program or by attending Catholic School. Designated classes will be held to prepare them for the celebration of the Sacrament. Parents/Guardians are expected to attend these specific classes with their child. The celebration of the Sacrament will occur during Lent.

## **Eucharist**

Catholics believe that Jesus is Truly Present in the Blessed Sacrament. Through Holy Communion, Jesus nourishes us with His love, giving us the grace to Imitate Him more fully. All the Sacraments of the Church are directed towards the Eucharist.

Pope St. Pius X decreed that children who have reached the age of reason can and should receive Holy Communion. In the Diocese of Erie, formation to receive this Sacrament continues into the **Third Grade**. The preparation is a family based preparation program that requires a parent to attend classes with their child. First Holy Communion is celebrated during the Easter Season usually the first Sunday in May.

*After celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time, Catholics are to avail themselves of these gifts frequently (at a minimum once a year.)*

## **Confirmation**

Confirmation celebrates the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit into Christian lives to enable them to bear effective witness to Christ. The Spirit comes not only to enrich them personally, but also to build up the Christian community through them. A person who has been Baptized, Confirmed and has received Holy Communion, is fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

In the Diocese of Erie, Confirmation is celebrated in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Candidates for Confirmation are to attend Confirmation Preparation

Classes in addition to Catechetical classes. Candidates are also to complete service hours, imitating Jesus who first served us. Confirmation is celebrated in the spring with the date set by the Bishop.

In accordance with Diocesan policy candidates for Confirmation must have successfully completed a 9th and 10th grade faith formation program (or attended a Catholic high school in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade). They will be asked to display knowledge of the catholic faith. They must be actively involved in the preparation process (with good attendance), properly instructed, and choose freely to be confirmed. They are expected to be participating members of Saint Francis Xavier Parish. The Confirmation process will be clearly communicated to the Candidates, Parents and Sponsors.

**Baptized Adults who have not received Holy Communion and/or Confirmation and wish to be fully initiated into the Church are asked to contact the church office.**

### CONTINUING FAITH FORMATION

“The Church’s pastoral ministry exists to sustain the work of the Gospel. One way it does this is by nourishing and strengthening lay men and women in their calling and identify as people of faith, as contributors to the life and work of the Church, and as disciples whose mission is to the world. To grow in discipleship throughout life, all believers need and are called to build vibrant parish and diocesan communities of faith and service.

*#3 Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us. A pastoral plan for adult Faith formation in the United States*

Faith Formation is not just for children and youth. The world recognizes that we need to continue learning. God is calling each of us to a deeper relationship with Him each and every moment of the day. We are called to support each other and continue to bring the Truth into the world.

We urge the adults of Saint Francis Xavier Parish to avail themselves of the opportunities for adult faith formation offered by our parish community as well as our Diocese. Announcements for classes will be made in the bulletin.



## **PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

### **SAFETY CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES**

After the start of class, doors will be locked to the classroom level. Students are still able to leave in-case of emergency. There is a safety procedure posted in each room for fire emergencies. Catechists will instruct the students in these procedures the first week of class. In case of emergency, attendance will be taken after an emergency evacuation and no child will be dismissed without their parent or guardian. Parent (s) must check with their child's Catechist before leaving with their child to avoid unnecessary search and rescue operations.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Everyone involved in the program is challenged by the words and example of Jesus to respect each person's right to be treated not only with dignity and respect but also with love. In order to provide for a safe and well-ordered program in which children and catechists can learn to follow Jesus' call to love, some rules for behavior are necessary. Children are expected by their behavior to make the classes safe and positive experiences for themselves and their classmates. The program exists for individual growth and in turn children are expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Show respect to catechists, other youth and other adults leaders.
2. All youth are expected to display Christian values in their manner of dress, speech and behavior. No hats are to be worn during class time. Cut offs, offensive T-shirts, mid-riff or revealing shirts are NOT acceptable.
3. Treat the property, good name and physical safety of others with respect.
4. No chewing gum. Personal cell phones or electronic devices / toys are to be turned off unless the Catechist has given permission for use in class or will be collected by the catechist until the end of class time.
5. Be present only in the areas of the building for which they have permission at a specific time.
6. Act in a safe manner in and around the building.
7. Use voice and display actions in a manner appropriate for a classroom.

8. Be respectful of the study time of others.
9. Use of, or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is strictly prohibited. Such items will be seized and parents notified immediately. The child will be immediately removed from the environment.

Good discipline is self-discipline and is always aimed toward growth. We recognize that children may make mistakes and the role of the catechist at times will be one of guiding and correcting those mistakes in a positive manner. These corrections will always be done with the best interest of the child in mind and at no time will St. Francis accept the demeaning or intimidation of children in the name of discipline.

### **Disciplinary Process**

At the time of the first correction, the child will be warned. Children whose behavior becomes a continual problem in the classroom will be sent to the office to complete the lesson of the day. If a child has been sent to the office three times in a 2 month period that child's parent(s) will be contacted.

If the child's behavior continues to be a problem, the child will be removed from the class and the parent(s) will catechize their child at home for a length of time of at least two weeks but not to exceed six weeks. In order to return to the classroom, the student and parent(s) will meet with the catechist and faith formation leader to resolve the issue. At this time the parent(s) may be asked to sit in on the class for a few weeks to observe their child and his/her interaction with the catechist and other students. If the situation cannot be resolved, the child will be placed in another class (if one is available) or the parent(s) will be asked to complete the year at home. The child will be treated as one who is being home schooled and will follow parish policy for homeschooling. The child will be admitted into the program in the next calendar year with no prejudice.

### **Weapons Policy**

In order to ensure a safe and Christian environment, it is forbidden for anyone to possess a weapon or any object/material/substance that could be used as a weapon or confused with a real weapon by any reasonable person (toy guns, etc.) in the buildings, or within the geographic boundaries of St. Francis Xavier Parish, or in any location used by the

parish to conduct any catechetical activity, or in any conveyance providing transportation to or from any activity related to the religious education program.

Weapons or potential weapons will be confiscated when this action does not place anyone in danger. If the someone has used a weapon against another person or will not surrender the weapon or offending object/material/substance immediately and willingly, the local police will be called first, followed by notification of the parent(s). This is a zero tolerance policy. Any child who violates this policy will be subject to immediate parish disciplinary action over and above any civil/criminal action brought by the injured parties.

If a student, they will be removed from his/her class and an alternative method of religious education will be negotiated with the parent(s) for the remainder of the year. Judgments about re-admittance to the program for the following year will be made on a case by case basis and this decision is at the sole discretion of the pastor.

If the incident involves an exchange of bodily fluids (for example, as in a wound which breaks the skin), the student(s) will be asked to submit to medical tests for transmittable diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B as recommended by a doctor. These tests will be at the parent(s) expense. In the name of being a community of Christians motivated by care and respect, this policy asks that the results of these tests, which are governed by guidelines of strict confidentiality, be openly shared with the respective parties on a need-to-know basis.

### **Threats of Violent Behavior**

As a community of believers who value patience over aggression, and love above all else, it is inconsistent with our basic values to tolerate an environment of threat or fear. Threats of harm made against another individual or group of individuals are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy recognizes that in any community of people there will always be some conflict. Children will always be encouraged to manage their conflict in a positive, non-aggressive manner. Behavior such as cursing, pushing or fighting will not be tolerated.

In cases which are deemed by the catechist or faith formation leader to be “minor” (meaning: no reason to believe the situation would lead to physical harm) the children will be separated and encouraged to work out their differences after a “cool-down” period.

If the catechist regards the altercation as “serious” (meaning:

reasonable expectation that the conflict will lead to physical harm) the children will be immediately separated, the faith formation leader will be notified, and the parent(s) of the children will be called. The faith formation leader must determine that the conflict is resolved before the children will be readmitted to the program.

Children are expected to report to their catechist or faith formation leader any threat made by a child, which mentions the killing of any person. Such threats will be immediately reported to the police for investigation. The person making such threats will be suspended from the program until such time as the police investigation is completed and the appropriate authorities are satisfied that there is no real threat of harm. In such a case, judgments about re-admittance to the program will be made on a case by case basis and this decision is at the sole discretion of the pastor.

### **Harassment**

Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual is a basic precept of Catholic doctrine and therefore of St. Francis Xavier parish. Each person is entitled to work in an environment free from discriminatory practices such as any form of harassment based on race, sex, creed, color, age, or disability. Parish leadership wishes to be vigilant regarding harassment whether between or among catechists and/or parish leaders, among students or between catechists/parish leaders and students. Such behavior will not be tolerated and if persistent harassment is proven, the offender will be dismissed when this is appropriate. Harassment of all forms is illegal as well as immoral and individuals will be encouraged to seek legal protection when necessary.

The term “harassment” refers to behavior that is not welcome, that is personally offensive and that fails to treat others with dignity and respect. It includes treating someone unfavorably because of his or her race, sex, creed, color, age or disability. Harassment may take the form of discrimination, unwelcome or critical comments or action. Harassment on the basis of sex might include unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demand for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct, including, but not limited to:

1. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, intimations or comments.
2. Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.

3. Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements, or interfering with work, study or play because of sex.
4. Retaliations for having reported or threatened to report such harassment.

The term “sexual harassment” refers to harassment based on the gender of the offended individual when the people involved are of different “levels” within the parish. It involves threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of employment, grades or other benefits or to avoid some other loss and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors. It also means creating a hostile environment for the student or employee such that it is an unfit environment for learning or work. Examples include, but are not limited to repeated unwelcome sexual advances, repeated sexually explicit jokes or comments, or the displaying of sexually inappropriate materials.

Allegations and complaints of any type of harassment must be reported as soon as possible. Parent(s) who become aware of incidents of sexual harassment should report them immediately to the pastor or to the religious education leader.

## **CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

The Diocese of Erie is committed to protecting the children and youth who are entrusted to its care and to ensuring that those in ministry with our young people are in right relationship with the children/youth receiving services. Here at St. Francis Xavier Faith Formation program, we realize sharing in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility. The *privilege* is the joy of sharing in the mission of Jesus Himself. The *responsibility* is acting in a way that conforms to the attitude and actions of Christ.

In this spirit, the diocese is updating policies and resources constantly. The current *Policy for the Protection of Children*, the requirements for those whose ministry brings them into contact, with children and youth as well as other resources and how to report abuse can be found on the Diocese Website <https://eriercd.org/childprotection/index.php> For more information, you may contact Mrs. Cindy Zemcik, at the diocesan offices at 814-824-1195.

At St. Francis Xavier Parish, diocesan policies are completely adhered to by our staff and volunteers that have contact with parish children and youth. All Catechists have complete and current *Safe Environment*

*Clearances and Forms.* They are considered *Mandated Reporters* by the State of Pennsylvania and are required to report any suspected abuse to the appropriate State agency. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the Director of Evangelization at 814-476-7657 x7.

According to the policy, children are also in-serviced on safety issues each year in an effort to create awareness and informed citizenry. Parents have the choice if their child attends this in-service. If they choose decide not to have their child participate they will be given the information to present to their child themselves. Prevention is the best of all possible outcomes when it comes to child safety.



*St. Francis Xavier Faith Formation/Religious Education Program is a Diocesan Accredited Program.*