

# CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH

## FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

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### PARENT PARISH COVENANT

The Roman Catholic Church takes most seriously the role parents play in the education of their children in the ways of faith. The Second Vatican Council addressed the role of parents in documents such as, *The Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People* (#11) where we read that parents ***“are the first to pass on the faith to their children and to educate them in it.”*** The Church again reiterates this core principle in another document, *The Declaration of Christian Education* (#3) which states, ***“Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators.”***

This is why in the Code of Canon Law (#226) we read, ***“Because they have given life to their children, parents have a most serious obligation and enjoy the right to educate them; therefore, Christian parents are especially to care for the Christian education of their children according to the teaching handed on by the Church.”*** In addition, in Canon #774.2 we read, ***“Parents above others are obligated to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example.”***

Therefore, when you presented your child for Baptism, the priest read from the Rite of Baptism, ***“You are accepting responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us.”*** Simply put, children first learn the practice of the faith of the Catholic Faith at home by the example of their parents. At the appropriate time, the Church teaches the parish should assist the parents by providing a more formal catechetical program that helps to educate and form their children in the Catholic Faith.

***Canons #773-777 state the responsibility of the pastor to oversee the catechesis and faith formation of his parishioners. It is also his responsibility to make sure children and adults are properly prepared for the reception of the sacraments.***

In no way does the Church envision that the parish is to take over the role of parents and become the primary teacher of children in the ways of faith. In other words, the parents must continue to practice the faith in word and deed. Minimally, practicing the faith in the Roman Catholic Tradition means faithfully attending Mass each Sunday and Holy Day and not live a life that is contrary to the teachings of the Church, whose teaching is based upon the Word of God and Sacred Tradition. A parish religious education program or Catholic school exists to support and enhance what parents do in their role mentioned above, however, when parents fail to do this, the partnership that should exist between the parish and the parents breaks down and is severely hampered. Not only is this unfair to children but is confusing and abusive to moral and spiritual development of the child. In no way, should a parish be expected to be a partner to this unfortunate situation, through either the religious education program or the Catholic School.

Therefore, parents who enroll their children at Corpus Christi Faith Formation are hereby required to sign an affidavit stating that they intend to practice the Catholic Faith by regularly attending Mass at Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church with their child each Sunday and Holyday and that they will live in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

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Parents who do not sign this affidavit or who fail to fulfill this faith responsibility will be asked to remove their children from the Faith Formation Program. Lacking cooperation with regard to this matter, the child will not be advancing to the next level of the Faith Formation nor will the child be eligible to receive the Sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

**The Parish cannot, and will not, fulfill its responsibility alone but only in partnership with the parents.**

The Church teaches that missing Sunday Mass is a mortal sin, consequently our children are taught in Faith Formation that missing Sunday Mass for an unjust reason is a sin. We feel it is very damaging to children when they are told they are breaking their relationship with God by not attending Mass and then their parents do not regularly bring them to Sunday Mass or Holydays. It confuses them and they do not know what to believe.

For these reasons, regular Mass attendance on Sundays and Holydays here at Corpus Christi Church is a necessary part of our children’s faith formation. At Corpus Christi, we feel the only objective way to determine Mass attendance in through the parish envelope system. (“On-line Giving “is acceptable but with following *provision*: regular use of the child’s Mass Coupon/Envelopes and facial recognition by the Pastor, Faith Formation Director, Catechist are other valid means.) Envelopes are to be used weekly, even if they are empty. All students in the Faith Formation Program were given Mass Attendance Coupon/Envelopes to use.

As stated many times and in many ways, the pastor has a duty and a desire to have a spiritual and sacramental relationship with each child. Therefore, you are asked to sign a covenant stating that you as the parent(s) and their children will attend Mass here at Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above Parent Parish Covenant and I fully intend with the help of God to provide for the spiritual formation and education of my child according to my faith in Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic Church.

Failure to adhere to the Parent Parish Covenant will result in our dismissal from the Family Faith Formation Program.

I understand and agree fully that the parish cannot fulfill its responsibility alone but only in partnership with me as the parent who has the primary obligation to form my child in the faith and practice of the Christian life by work and example.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

R: 4/17