

EDGE Middle School Youth Ministry
PARENT HANDBOOK
2019-2020

OUR LADY OF LOURDES
CATHOLIC CHURCH

JOY BLEIKER

DIRECTOR OF EVANGELIZATION, LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION,
AND YOUTH MINISTRY
joy@ourladydunedin.org

SARAH DAVIS

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY
sarah@ourladydunedin.org

MARY ANN DOLSAK

FAITH FORMATION SECRETARY
maryann@ourladydunedin.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday – Thursday 9am-5pm
Friday 9am-12pm

750 San Salvador Dr
Dunedin FL 34698
727-733-0872

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 EDGE Year! Thank you for entrusting your children to us to complement your family faith formation. The Church teaches that parents are the primary educators of their children. We are here to support you in this mission. With the help of the Holy Spirit, catechists will pass on our Catholic faith to your children. Our team of catechists are well-equipped in this mission.

The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason, the family is rightly called “The Domestic Church.” God ordained the family as the place where life in Christ takes root in the human heart. Active participation in the sacramental life of the Church nurtures the spiritual life. Please ensure your child has opportunities for frequent participation in the Sacrament of Penance and attends weekly Mass, for “the Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church’s life” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1407).

This handbook was written to help make clear the mission and policies of the Our Lady of Lourdes EDGE Middle School Youth Ministry program.

Please take time to familiarize yourself with it, paying attention to the code of conduct and the important dates listed on the calendar. Feel free to contact us at the Faith Formation Office (727-733-0872) with any concerns you might have.

May God bless you and your families as you strive to imitate the Holy Family.

In Christ,

Sarah Davis
Director of Youth Ministry
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church
750 San Salvador Dr.
Dunedin, FL 34698
(727) 733-0872
sarah@ourladydunedin.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is a family of believers, embraced by the Father's love, nourished by Jesus in Word and Sacrament, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Inspired by Mary we commit ourselves to live and proclaim the Gospel of Salvation.

OFFICE

The Faith Formation Office is located in the DuBois Center across from the Parish Office. Please call or email with any questions.

EDGE CLASSES

EDGE is a dynamic, orthodox program created by Life Teen to engage middle school youth while teaching them about the Catholic Faith.

EDGE follows a six semester cycle that can be completed during the three years of middle school. The six semester themes are Scripture, Creed, Church History, Prayer, Sacraments, and Social Justice.

EDGE meets on Wednesday evenings throughout the school year. The youth are invited to socialize in the Youth Room (located in the Conmy Center) from 6:00-6:30 pm. The night runs from 6:30-8:00 pm and involves games, teachings, small group discussion time, and prayer.

REGISTRATION

To register for classes, go to <https://ourladydunedin.org/youth/> and select on the button "Register For EDGE" and follow the form. You may also register in person.

If you have a child in 1st-5th grade or a high school teen, please contact Joy and/or Sarah in the Faith Formation Office to get information on our Faith Formation and Life Teen programs. We also offer homeschooling as an option. Please contact Joy in the Faith Formation Office to set up a meeting to discuss our homeschool faith formation option.

REGISTRATION FEE

\$60 for each child, \$165 for family of three or more

Please contact the Faith Formation Office if the registration fee is a financial burden. No one is denied the opportunity to attend Faith Formation!

**PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN – We want this to be a positive experience for your child.*

Please feel free to have your child shadow the program for a week or two prior to registering him or her. If this is your child's first structured learning experience and you're hesitant about it, consider waiting a year

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL OF CLASS

Please drop off your children in the Youth Room (located in the Conmy Center, southwest entrance) no later than 6:30pm on Wednesday evenings according to the program calendar. The youth are invited arrive at Youth Room from 6:00-6:30 pm for time to socialize. We dismiss promptly at 8pm. You may pick up your children from the Youth Room or they can meet you at your vehicle. We will have an adult waiting outside with the youth. Parents are asked to make sure that their children know who is picking them up and to be on time. If carpooling, please make our office aware. If you are running late, your child will be brought back into the Youth Room and remain under the supervision of the EDGE core members until you arrive. Please come into the Youth Room when arriving late to pick up your children.

COMMUNICATION

The primary means of communication between the Faith Formation Office and your family will be email. We send a weekly email via Constant Contact detailing important information for you and your family to get the most out of their faith formation experience at our parish. The email is sent on Tuesdays at 2:00pm. Please send an email to sarah@ourladydunedin.org to be added to the contact list if you do not already receive our emails. Additionally, we communicate important information via our parish bulletin, pre-Mass slides, and post-Mass announcements.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is necessary. If your child will be absent, please notify the Faith Formation Office prior to class via email to Sarah.

8TH GRADE ATTENDANCE: Sacramental preparation for Confirmation is a two-year program (8th & 9th). 8th grade is the year of remote preparation for the sacrament. For those students in 8th grade, if more than four EDGE nights are missed over the course of the year, it may result in the delay of receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Youth who miss one year of preparation will not be eligible to receive that sacrament until the two-year requirement is met. If your child has an illness which puts him/her in danger of missing more than four EDGE nights over the course of the year it is the parent's responsibility to contact the Director of Faith Formation. At that time a determination will be made if your child will be eligible to receive the sacrament on time.

EMERGENCY CLASS CANCELLATION

Classes will be cancelled when weather alerts are issued. If the weather causes an emergency, please keep your children home. A message regarding emergency cancellation will be emailed to all parents when necessary.

CALENDAR

The latest and most up-to-date program calendar will always be available on the parish website at <https://ourladydunedin.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EDGE-Calendar-2019-2020-UPDATED.pdf> This calendar contains all pertinent dates for the EDGE Middle School Youth Ministry program. The online calendar supersedes any yearly calendar distributed at the beginning of the program year.

FIRE SAFETY AND DISASTER PREPARATION

In case of an emergency, children will be taken to a prearranged area. A map is posted in each room with the preferred exit route and gathering place outside the building.

HEALTH CONCERNS AND MEDICATIONS

Any special medical needs of your child must be provided during registration. Special circumstances regarding any medication the student takes, needs to be discussed with the Director. Allergy information is very important to provide. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition after registration, please inform the Faith Formation Office as soon as possible.

ELECTRONICS POLICY

Our office realizes that devices such as cell phones and smart phones have become a necessary and convenient tool in maintaining communication between parents and children. In order to prevent such devices from becoming a distraction while in class, students who bring cell phones or smart phones to school must keep these devices turned off and out of sight in book bags. At no time during the session are students permitted to use such devices.

The director and/or catechists reserves the right to revoke this privilege for any student who uses the device during the program. Any misuse of an electronic device during program hours will result in the student leaving the device with the director until dismissal time or the loss of permission to bring the device to the program.

Other electronic devices such as video games, iPods, iPads, mp3 players, etc., may not be brought to the program. These items will be confiscated and returned to parents only. The Office of Faith Formation is not responsible for damage to or loss of any electronic device that a student brings to the program.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The first premise of this code is that children and youth function best when behaviors and expectations are clearly defined. It is accepted that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children in all aspects of their development. This experience aims at developing upright citizens and good Christians, following the new commandment Jesus gave His disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

In Timothy 4:12, we read "Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity." Timothy is urged to rely on the gifts he has received from God. This code urges our children and youth to rely on God's gifts to them, especially charity, chastity and purity. This calls the young person to acknowledge and promote one's personal dignity and the rights that go with it.

It becomes important for children and youth to know the difference between "right" and "not right" relationships. "Right" relationships foster personal, spiritual, and emotional growth, e.g., the ability to communicate, to forgive, to show affection, to be honest, vulnerable, dependable, etc. "Not right" relationships become harmful and hurtful, and even abusive. Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another's boundaries, uses power, tricks, threats, or violence to cross or change another's boundaries, or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual) on another person.

This code is used in conjunction with existing local or diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

When engaging in formal and informal activities, functions, and programs, children and youth are expected to behave appropriately at all times, respecting the rights of others.

1. Christian behavior is expected at all times.
2. Respect for individuals, the community and facilities being used is required.
3. Cooperation and self-control are necessary when participating in programs and activities.
4. Dress must be in accord with the activity and appropriate for a Christian environment.
5. Unacceptable behavior and lack of cooperation will not be tolerated, but will be addressed appropriately. Examples of unacceptable behavior are as follows, though not limited to:
 - a. disrespect for adults and peers
 - b. use of vulgar language or gesture, use of racial slurs
 - c. damaging of property
 - d. fighting or intent to injure others

- e. constant disturbance of others at work or in an activity
 - f. cheating
6. Possession of weapons, possession, sale or use of alcohol or drugs are forbidden.
7. No child or youth has the right to treat another in any manner that will cause physical or emotional pain. Therefore, harassment of any kind is unchristian and unacceptable.
8. Coercion or threats to do something physically hurtful or for the purpose of exposing someone or something about another is unacceptable behavior.
9. Chastity is a virtue to be held in high esteem and promoted in practice. Sexual abuse of any sort, coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically touching the sexual parts of another's body, treating a person like a sexual object are unacceptable and abusive behaviors. Consensual sex between students or initiated by minors to adults must never occur.

References:

Diocese of Omaha, NE (2002). Sample Youth Code of Behavior.
Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002). Code of Conduct, Bishop Moore Catholic High School.
Code of Conduct, Annunciation Catholic Academy.
Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002).
McCarthy, Robert J. (2002). Protecting Young People, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers, Washington, D.C.
23rd General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco (1990). Educating Young People to the Faith.
Third Draft 03.06.03

DIOCESAN HARRASSMENT POLICY

Harassment Policy for Non-Employment Situations in Schools/Centers, Parish Religious Education and Parish Youth Ministry Programs of the Diocese of St. Petersburg

POLICY:

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:

The 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 persons' 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:

- Physical, mental or verbal abuse
- Insults, jokes, or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status(es)
- Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
- Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors
- Unwanted sexual comments (serious or humorous)
- Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
- Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness
- Unwanted forced involvement in activities (e.g., physical, religious, etc.)
- Coercion of religious styles or personal beliefs upon a participant
- Intimidation in front of a group of forced personal sharing in groups
- 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.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Please visit the below link to read the Diocesan policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

<http://www.ourladydunedin.org/policy-for-the-protection-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-7-17-update/>

In June 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter), which required background screening and Safe Environment Program training for all who may have the care, responsibility, and/or supervision of Children and young people. Additionally, dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children (ARTICLE 12).

This year the Safe Environment Parent Education program will be held during the parent information meeting on Wednesday, August 21st at 6:00pm.

Parent/Student Parish Faith Formation Policy Acknowledgement Form

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and my child/children and I agree to abide by the Policies contained in the Parent/Student Faith Formation Handbook including the local Parish program policies and procedures, the Harassment Policy in Non-Employment Situations and the Safe-Environment Policies of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. I understand that my child will receive instruction in Safe Environment practices within the regular program class time.

Please sign/print/date as appropriate in the spaces provided.

___ I will attend the Parent/Student Safe Environment Education program session as scheduled on the date designated on the Faith Formation/Parish Calendar

___ I cannot attend the Parent Safe Environment Education Program, but I wish to receive all materials related to the Safe Environment Parent Education Program

___ I cannot attend the Parent Safe Environment Education Program and do not wish to receive the materials related to the program

(Signature) Parent/Guardian

(Signature) Parent/Guardian

(Name Printed) Parent/Guardian

(Name Printed) Parent/Guardian

Date

Name of Parish

Student Name(s) Printed

Student(s) Signature(s)

