

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

CHILDREN AND YOUTH HANDBOOK



OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

Dear Families:

WELCOME!! The Faith Formation and Ministry team would like to welcome you and your family to OLA. Our team is here to support your family in their faith. The formation and ministry team supports our OLA community to live, serve, and grow in their faith. We hope that you find this booklet useful and informative. If there are ever any questions or concerns during the year, please email Elizabeth Piper at epiper@olachruch.org, Nick Ables at nables@olachurch.org, or Andrew Knuckles at aknuckles@olachurch.org.

Choices for Involvement:

Families Forming Disciples supports families with children in PK-5 grade. This program allows even the youngest in your family to participate in their own faith community. Each month we will gather on the first session for formation in a large group, the next session focuses each month on mission at home, then the final session of the month is focused on community in small group session. You have the choice to meet on Sunday from 10 to 11:15 am for in person groups or on Tuesday from 6:30 to 8pm. Mission weeks are completed as a family at home while the community sessions will be set by your small group leader. Conveniently all the information on this program can be found on the Archdioceses website at: <https://www.evangelizationatl.com/families-forming-disciples>

Edge with Purpose for our middle school youth ministry combines Life Teen's middle school program, Edge, with foundational confirmation preparation provided by Purpose. Over the 3 years in this group the child will receive formation to prepare them for their next step in their faith journey of confirmation. Edge takes place on Sunday nights from 6:30 to 8pm, after the 5:30 Mass.

Life Teen is our high school youth group, providing a space for High School teens to be involved, find a community in the Church, and encounter Jesus. This prepares the youth to become full members of the Catholic church at their confirmation and helps those who have been Confirmed to continue growing closer to Christ. Life Teen takes place on Sunday nights from 6:30 to 8pm, after the 5:30 Mass.

Sacramental preparation for First Eucharist is part of participating in Families Forming Disciples. The child interested in First Eucharist needs to have completed one year of formation prior to the year of their sacrament. Confirmation foundation is offered as part of Edge with Purpose. Two years are required of this formation prior to the year they receive Confirmation.

Thank you again for participating in Children and Youth Faith Formation. We hope you and your family have a blessed year of learning and growth.

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The Offerings

Families Forming Disciples FFD (PreK-3 to 5th Grade)

<https://www.evangelizationatl.com/families-forming-disciples>

The Archdiocese of Atlanta designed this program specifically to meet the needs of the parish in our area. Family Formation allows the church to support parents in their role as primary educator of the faith to their children. By parents participating along with their children, traditions of prayer and service can be supported in the home. Week one of each lesson is formation based on scripture and the catechism of the Catholic Church, week two is a mission/action that the family can do together at home, finally week three is a time to come together in community through small groups to talk about the experience provided in the mission. Each presentation is available on the FFD website for your review. These groups can meet in person or through a virtual format. Parents are part of this formation with their child.

Edge with Purpose (6th-8th Grade)

Our offering for Middle School Youth Ministry is Edge with Purpose. In Edge with Purpose, we strive to create an environment where our middle schoolers can deepen their knowledge of the faith, grow in relationship with Christ, and build community with their peers. Using Life Teen's middle school program, Edge, along with their confirmation program Purpose, the teens will receive the foundational preparation they need to move to the next step in their faith journey of confirmation.

Edge with Purpose meets weekly on Sunday evenings from 6:30 to 8pm, after the 5:30 Mass. We also have opportunities for retreats, service projects, and other activities and fun events offered throughout the year!

Life Teen (9th-12th Grade)

Also known as High School Youth Group, Life Teen meets weekly on Sundays from 6:30-8:30pm in the Youth Room. We start with dinner at around 6:30, but the door is open following 5:30pm Mass. Each week, we come together to grow in our faith as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ and grow closer to each other as we encounter God in conversation and in one another. Our hope is that every teen who comes through our doors finds a place that feels like home and people they feel like they belong with.

In addition to our weekly sessions, we also take students on retreats, various service opportunities, and other fun events throughout the year!

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Sacramental Preparation Program

Eucharist and Reconciliation

First Eucharist and Reconciliation sacrament is available to children in second grade and over after a year of faith formation from their parish or Catholic school. Once our records show that your child has completed this requirement you will be sent a registration for first Eucharist from Gretchen Heath at gheath@olachurch.org. You will be asked to provide a baptismal certificate as part of the registration for sacraments. This registration will have an additional fee as part of the registration. Parents will receive a calendar for informational retreats to assist you in preparing your child for each sacrament. Parents are required to attend the parent retreat for both reconciliation and eucharist. First Eucharist will be offered to children the two weekends after Easter. Parents after completing the parent retreats will have the opportunity to sign up for the date and time, they would like their child to receive first Eucharist.

Confirmation

Youth are typically confirmed in Tenth Grade. Confirmation in Tenth Grade requires youth to be enrolled in a Catholic formation program 2 years prior to their confirmation, in either a Parish or Catholic School. At OLA, the children receive this foundational confirmation preparation in Edge with Purpose. Then, in 10th grade, every teen (regardless of school) participates in OLA's Confirmation Preparation Program. There will be a separate registration for this sacrament along with a fee. You will also need to complete a sponsor form and send in your child's sacramental record to complete registration. Please email Andrew Knuckles at aknuckles@olachurch.org to learn more.

Logistics

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected for all our options. At FFD, Mentor families will mark an attendance sheet each time you gather. In the Life Teen group and Edge with Purpose groups the youth are required to sign in when they arrive. Attendance is particularly important in the years prior and during sacramental preparation. Please let us know if for any reason you and your family are having problems attending at the times offered.

In-person Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Parents are asked to let the Faith Formation team know if there is anyone who *should not* be allowed to pick-up their child.

Communication with Parents

Email is the primary source of communication. The email you give us on the registration form will be where we send all communications. Parents feel free to contact the Faith Formation team with any questions or concerns.

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Children with Special Needs

We welcome children with all abilities. We are here to help all our families with their faith formation needs. Parents, please notify the Faith Formation team if there are special needs that need to be addressed, such as dietary restrictions or other learning needs. This can help us in providing the best formation for your child. Each child is unique as is their relationship with God.

Registration and Fees

Parents need to register their children and youth to let us know they are interested in participating in our offerings. The registration asks for needed information such as emergency contacts, dietary restrictions, and special needs. The registration fee allows us to provide materials, food, and support to your child. Please contact Elizabeth Piper at epiper@olachurch.org for scholarship information if needed.

VIRTUS Protecting God's Children

Priests, seminarians, deacons, religious, employees, contractors, and volunteers are required by the Archdiocese of Atlanta to participate in Safe Environment Training. Our Lady of the Assumption Church complies with Archdiocesan safe environment policies and procedures. Also, the Archdiocese uses a program from VIRTUS for children's formation each year. This gives the child opportunities to better understand Say no, leave the situation, and tell a trusted adult. During the registration process you are given the opportunity to opt out of this formation if you do not want your child to participate.

(see next page)

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Volunteer Opportunities

The offerings provided to your children are enriched by planning teams and volunteers. You are needed to make these programs the best that they can be. Please plan on being part of the team to make a difference in your child's faith.

- **Mentor Family for Families Forming Disciples:** This family will host week 3 building community in small group setting, each month. They will set the date and time along with the location of the session. Lesson plans are provided on the Families Forming Disciples website.
- **First Eucharist Team:** This team will plan and execute the offerings for the children going through First Eucharist. They will help plan retreats and services along with recruiting volunteers. They will need to be available for regularly scheduled meetings to coordinate events.
- **Core team members for Edge and Life Teen:** These volunteers will meet with the teens each week guided by the youth minister. They will need to attend the Life Teen core team member training that is offered in August. This will give the needed formation to work with the age group.
- **Lead team:** This team will help plan and execute the Life Teen and Edge program. They are parents or Core team members that want to step up to help develop a better program for the youth.
- **Confirmation Team:** This group will plan and execute the Confirmation Formation and Mass. These need to be adult and teen leaders who have already been confirmed.

Registration Check List

- ✓ Read Handbook
- ✓ Online Application completed
- ✓ Volunteer to help