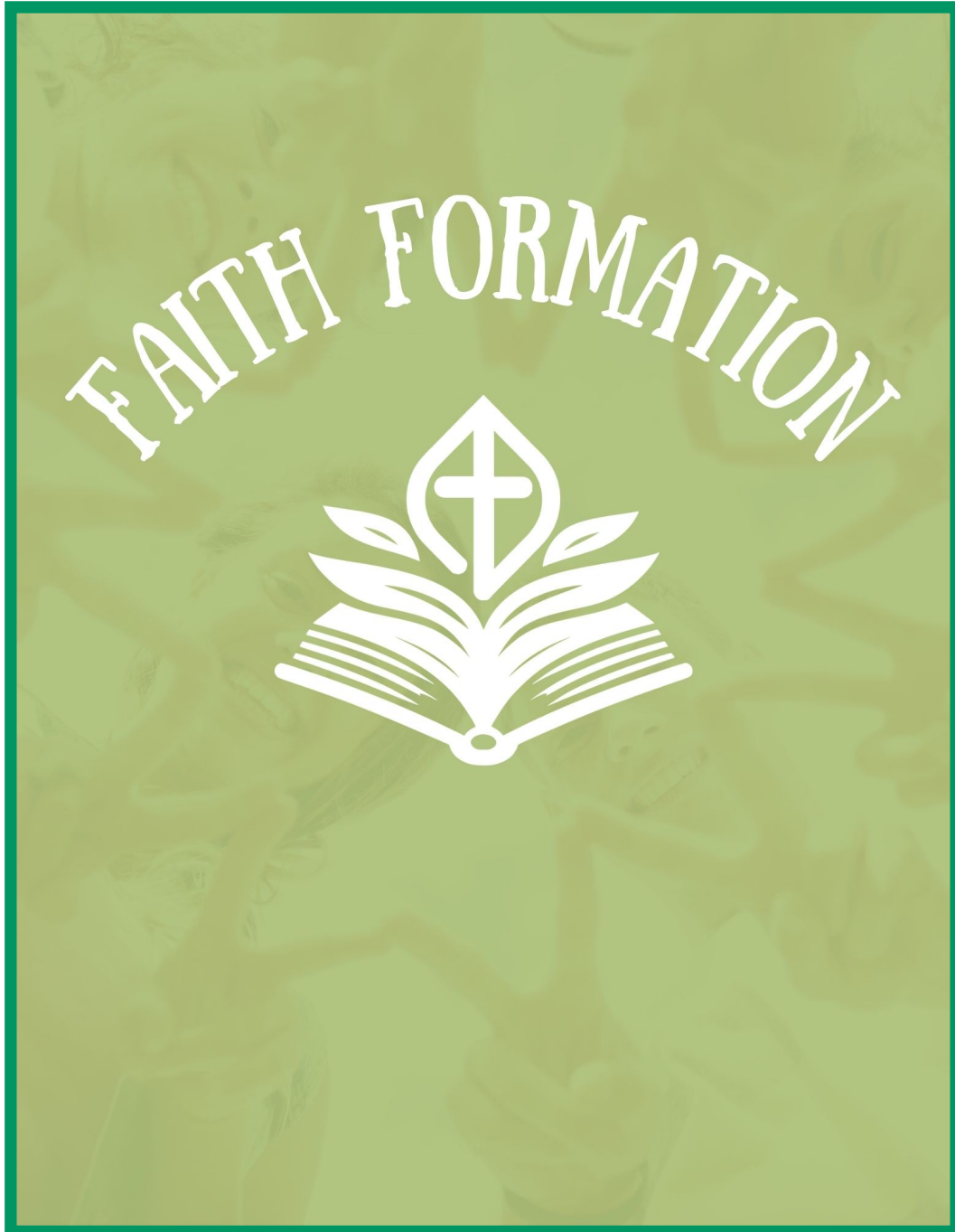


Faith Formation 25-26



Welcome

Letter from Pablo Youth Coordinator:

Hello New Life Families,

It is a privilege I don't take lightly to be a tool of the Holy Spirit in forming faith in the lives of our youth. I am honored that this congregation has entrusted me with the great responsibility of leading the youth. I am writing to share some news and updates for our Faith Formation program this coming year.

To those who are new to the program—**WELCOME!**
I am truly excited that you are choosing to enrich your faith with us.

To those returning from last year—**WELCOME BACK!**
Please keep this handbook handy so you'll have the schedule and topics we will be covering. As always, don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

My goal is for New Life Faith Formation to be the most fun, real, and engaging faith program for middle schoolers in Norwalk. Our purpose is to expose, instill, model, and practice a living, daring, and active faith in the daily lives of students and their families. My prayer is that the kids are led by the Holy Spirit so together we can say: *Come, Holy Spirit, come!*

Here are a few important details:

- Classes will meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm at the church.
- Dinner—**The Gathering**—will be served at 5:30 pm, followed by youth-led informal worship at 6:00 pm.
- Students will be invited to have a mentor walk this faith journey with them. Parents will also be included; once a month, either parents or mentors will join the group.
- If you have friends, classmates, or teammates who might be interested, please share my information with them. We would love for them to join this New Life community.
- Our three-year rotation includes one year each on the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Living Faith. For 2025–2026, we will be focusing on the Old Testament.
- Our first class will be held Wednesday, September 10th at 6:30 pm at the church.

Please use the online registration form to register your student for this year's Faith Formation. This helps us know your student is ready to **rock and roll!**

I am excited to walk alongside your student in their faith journey this year. Once again, thank you for entrusting me with the grand task of leading Faith Formation.

With much love in Jesus,
Pablo Guardiola

Vision for the Year:

Our goal at New Life is to provide the best possible faith formation experience for middle and high school students in Norwalk. We aim to nurture a living, daring, and active faith that matters for daily life and makes a difference in Norwalk and beyond.

Program Overview

Program Structure: This year, our focus is on “The New Testament.” We will explore this theme through monthly topics designed to deepen our understanding and practice of faith

Our three-year rotation has the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students focus one year on the Old Testament, one year on the New Testament, and one year on Living Faith. This year (2024-2025) is our Living Faith year.

Yearly Calendar:

September 2025 — Getting Started, What is the Bible?

October 2025 — The Life of Jesus (Gospels Unit 1)

November 2025 — The Ministry & Mission of Jesus (Gospels Unit 2)

December 2025 — Acts & the Early Church

January 2026 — Paul’s Letters (Part 1)

February 2026 — Paul’s Letters (Part 2) & the General Letters

March 2026 — 1 & 2 Peter, Revelation & Hope

April 2026 — Living the New Testament Today

May 2026 — Service Project Presentations

Wednesday Night Schedule:

5:30 PM: Meal

6:00 PM: "The Gathering" - Youth-led informal worship

6:30 PM: Faith Formation

Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Students: Students play a central role in their own faith formation:

Attendance and Participation: Attend weekly sessions, participate actively in discussions and activities, and respect peers and leaders.

Worship and Service: Complete 25 worship notes from (Sept.-Sept.), help with worship services twice a year, and complete 8 hours of community service.

Projects and Memory Work: Engage in a year-end Faith and Others Project with proposals due by March 11 and presentations on May 13.

Parents: Parents are essential partners in faith formation:

Engagement: Engage with children's faith journeys by attending designated classes and supporting homework and memory work.

Support: Assist with meal preparations and provide transportation to classes and youth group activities.

Worship: Make weekly worship a priority and partner with Pablo in faith formation efforts.

Mentors: Mentors provide guidance and support, enhancing the spiritual growth of students:

Presence and Availability: Be authentic, affirming, and available to your mentee, meeting at least six times each year.

Engagement in Faith Discussions: Engage in meaningful "God talk" and introduce your mentee to the congregation before their Affirmation of Baptism.

Community Integration: Look out for your mentee, greet them at worship, and help them connect with the church community.

Influences on Faith Formation

Understanding the various influences on a child's faith can significantly enhance our communal approach:

- **Parents** are the primary formers of faith, impacting their children's spiritual development positively or negatively.
- **Another Caring Christian Adult**, such as a mentor, plays a critical role in providing additional guidance and support.
- **Significant Experiences** like camps or retreats offer profound opportunities for spiritual engagement and growth.
- **Pastors** and faith leaders provide leadership and nurturing within the faith community, guiding both children and adults in their spiritual journeys.
- **Elephants** just kidding, well, not really, if an elephant is charging you, it might influence your faith REAL QUICK.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What should I do if my child will miss a class? A: Please communicate, regularly and often. We can provide materials for any missed lessons.

Q: Are there any dietary restrictions for the meals? A: We strive to accommodate all dietary needs. Please let us know of any specific restrictions as soon as possible.

Q: What if my child is allergic to homework? A: Fear not! While we can't prescribe antihistamines for homework allergies, we do offer supportive guidance to help them tackle any challenging assignments. Remember, a little homework never caused anyone to sneeze!

Q: How many mentors does it take to change a light bulb? A: None. Mentors are here to help your child discover how to change it themselves! But seriously, if there's any confusion, we're always here to shed some light on the situation.

Q: Can my child bring their pet to help them with memory work? A: As much as we love furry (or scaly) friends, we ask that pets stay at home to keep the class from turning into a zoo. However, we encourage students to teach their pets at home what they've learned—pets are great listeners!

Q: What happens if we forget what day it is? A: You'll fit right in with the rest of us! Just give us a call or check our online calendar. We promise we'll know at least the day of the week, with a 1-in-7 chance of being right!

Q: My child forgot to do their memory work. Can they still come to class? A: Absolutely! While memory work is important, we know everyone can have a "whoops" moment. Have them come to class anyway, and we'll help jog their memory.

Q: Is it true that snacks will increase my child's ability to learn? A: While we can't guarantee a direct correlation, we firmly believe in the power of snacks to boost morale and maybe even attentiveness. Snacks are provided to keep energy up and minds open, not necessarily to enhance learning superpowers—but it's worth a try!

Q: What do I do if my child wants to bring their imaginary friend to class? A: Bring them along! Our classes are open to all, real or imagined. Just make sure their imaginary friend also respects the classroom rules!

Affirmation of Baptism

Affirmation of Baptism is scheduled for the following dates:

- Eighth Grade: May 17, 2026
- Seventh Grade: May 16, 2027
- Sixth Grade: May 21, 2028

In preparation for this important and public declaration of faith, students will prepare a written faith statement and have an interview with Pastor Nate. This is a significant moment in the life of any individual as they publicly declare their faith in Jesus. Students should plan to be introduced to the congregation in the weeks prior to this celebration. It's important to understand that this declaration doesn't mean we have everything figured out or that we've answered every question perfectly. Instead, it means we trust in Jesus and place ourselves in the care of Almighty God.

Programs and Activities

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 2025 - Getting Started

- SEP 3 - PARENT NIGHT - Why Faith Formation Matters
- SEP 10 - LARGE GROUP - What is the New Testament?
- SEP 12 - Movie Night
- SEP 17 - SMALL GROUPS - Canon & Context
- SEPT 21 - Sunday Nigh Youth Night (Church, Glow in the dark football)
- SEP 24 - MENTOR NIGHT - (Memory Work #1: Books of the NT)

OCTOBER 2025 - The Life of Jesus (Gospels Unit 1)

- OCT 1 - LARGE GROUP - Birth & Early Life of Jesus
- OCT 8 - SMALL GROUPS - Jesus' Teachings & Parables
- OCT 15 - SMALL GROUPS - Miracles of Jesus
- OCT 19 - Pumkin Patch, 4pm - 7:30pm
- OCT 22 - PARENT NIGHT - Why Four Gospels Matter
- OCT 29 - SMALL GROUPS - (Memory Work #2: Gospel Key Verses)

NOVEMBER 2025 – The Ministry & Mission of Jesus (Gospels Unit 2)

- NOV 5 – LARGE GROUP – Passion Week: From Palm Sunday to the Cross
- NOV 12 – NO CLASS (District Conferences)
- NOV 16 – Sunday Night Youth Night
- NOV 19 – MENTOR NIGHT – Resurrection & Great Commission
- NOV 26 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

DECEMBER 2025 – Acts & the Early Church

- DEC 3 – LARGE GROUP – The Church Begins (Acts 1-7) — Tie-in: Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit
- DEC 10 – SMALL GROUPS – Peter & the Gospel Spreads — Tie-in: Peter’s time with Jesus
- DEC 17 – CHRISTMAS PARTY – (Memory Work #3: Acts 1:8)
- DEC 24 – NO CLASS (Winter Break)
- DEC 31 – NO CLASS (Winter Break)

JANUARY 2026 – Paul’s Letters (Part 1)

- JAN 7 – LARGE GROUP – Paul’s Conversion & Mission — Tie-in: Jesus’ personal call to Paul
- JAN 14 – SMALL GROUPS – Galatians & Philippians — Tie-in: Joy & grace in Jesus
- JAN 21 – MENTOR NIGHT – Romans: The Gospel Explained — Tie-in: Jesus as Savior
- JAN 28 – PARENT NIGHT – Paul’s Legacy & Jesus’ Lordship

FEBRUARY 2026 – Paul’s Letters (Part 2) & the General Letters

- FEB 4 – LARGE GROUP – 1 & 2 Corinthians: Living as the Church — Tie-in: Jesus’ command to love one another
- FEB 11 – SMALL GROUPS – James: Faith in Action — Tie-in: Jesus’ teaching on doing God’s will
- FEB 18 – NO CLASS (Ash Wednesday)
- FEB 25 – MENTOR NIGHT – Hebrews: Christ Our High Priest — Tie-in: Jesus’ ongoing presence

MARCH 2026 – 1 & 2 Peter, Revelation & Hope

- MAR 4 – PARENT NIGHT – 1 & 2 Peter: Standing Firm — Tie-in: Jesus as the cornerstone
- MAR 11 – NO CLASS (District Conferences)
- MAR 18 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)
- MAR 25 – LARGE GROUP – Revelation: Hope, Not Fear — Tie-in: Jesus as the victorious King

APRIL 2026 – Living the New Testament Today

- APR 1 – LARGE GROUP – Love Your Neighbor — Tie-in: Jesus' greatest commandment
- APR 8 – NO CLASS (Holy Week)
- APR 15 – LARGE GROUP – Prayer & Worship — Tie-in: Jesus' prayer life
- APR 22 – MENTOR NIGHT – Scripture & Spiritual Practices — Tie-in: Jesus using Scripture
- APR 29 – PARENT NIGHT – Serving in Jesus' Name — Tie-in: Jesus washing feet

MAY 2026

- MAY 6 – SERVICE PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." -Matthew 5:16 (NRSVue)

Affirmation of Baptism 2025

