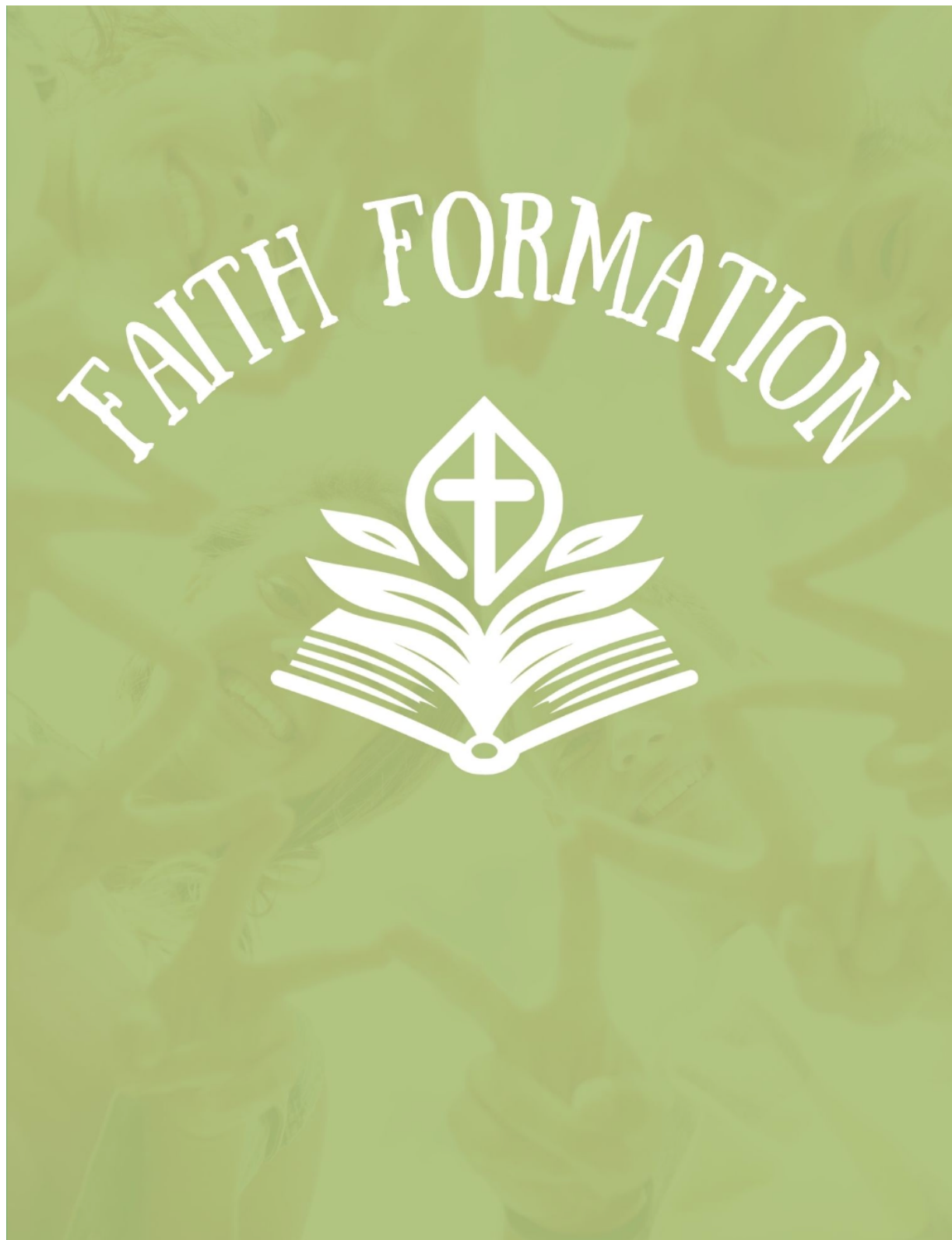


New Life Lutheran Church

Faith Formation 26-27

Old Testament Year



Welcome

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 the church. Dinner is served at 6:00 pm, followed by Large Group teaching at 6:30 pm and small group breakouts, finishing at 7:30 pm.
- Pastor Nate will be leading most of the Large Group teaching this year, walking alongside Pablo and Erik.
- Students will be invited to have a mentor walk this faith journey with them. Starting this year, parents and other adults are also invited into their own small group each week, paired with the same theme as the student teaching, in addition to four dedicated Mentor Nights and four dedicated Parent Nights throughout the year.
- If you have friends, classmates, or teammates who might be interested, please share Pablo's 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 2026–2027, we will be focusing on the Old Testament.
- Kids and students will kick things off on Wednesday, September 16th, with two more intro weeks before the full Wednesday night format, including dinner, launches on October 7th.

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 Old 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 (2026-2027) is our Old Testament year.

Yearly Calendar

- September 2026 — Getting Started: What is the Bible? What is Faith? What is the Church?
- October 2026 — Genesis: Abraham to Joseph
- November 2026 — Exodus: Slavery, the Call of Moses, and the Ten Commandments
- December 2026 — Wilderness to the Promised Land
- January 2027 — Judges, Ruth, and the Rise of David
- February 2027 — David, Solomon, and the Divided Kingdom
- March 2027 — The Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
- April 2027 — Exile and Return: Psalms, Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah
- May 2027 — Wisdom Literature and Service Project Presentations

Wednesday Night Schedule

Note: the first three weeks (Sept. 16, 23, 30) are intro nights for kids and students only, no dinner. The full schedule below, meal included, begins October 7th.

- 6:00 PM: Dinner
- 6:30 PM: Large Group Teaching
- Breakouts to follow: Student small groups, plus (starting Oct. 7) a paired Parent/Adult small group on the same weekly theme
- 7:30 PM: Finish

A huge thank you to our volunteer meal team for feeding these kids and families each week, and for the warm space they create at the table.

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 (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 early March and presentations on May 26.

Parents:

Parents are essential partners in faith formation:

- Engagement: Engage with children's faith journeys, and starting October 7th, join a weekly adult small group paired with the week's theme.
- Dedicated Nights: Attend the four Parent Nights held throughout the year (see schedule).
- Support: Assist with meal preparations and provide transportation to classes and youth group activities.
- Worship: Make weekly worship a priority and partner with Pablo and Pastor Nate 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.
- Dedicated Nights: Attend the four Mentor Nights held throughout the year (see schedule).

- 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 16, 2027
- Seventh Grade: May 21, 2028
- Sixth Grade: May 20, 2029.

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 2026 – Getting Started (Kids/Students only)

- **SEP 16 – INTRO NIGHT** – What is the Bible? What is faith? What is the church? What are we doing here?
- **SEP 23 – LARGE GROUP** – Creation: How the Story Begins
- **SEP 30 – LARGE GROUP** – Creation Continued / The Fall

OCTOBER 2026 – Genesis: Abraham to Joseph (Full format launches, adult small groups begin)

- **OCT 7 – LARGE GROUP** – Abraham's Call and Covenant
- **OCT 14 – SMALL GROUPS** – Jacob and the Twelve Tribes
- **OCT 21 – SMALL GROUPS** – Joseph
- **OCT 28 – MENTOR NIGHT #1** – Joseph and God's Providence

NOVEMBER 2026 – Exodus

- **NOV 4 – LARGE GROUP** – Slavery and the Call of Moses
- **NOV 11 – NO CLASS** – (Conferences / Early Out)
- **NOV 18 – PARENT NIGHT #1** – Passover and the Ten Commandments
- **NOV 25 – NO CLASS** – (Day before Thanksgiving Break)

DECEMBER 2026 – Wilderness to Promised Land

- **DEC 2 – LARGE GROUP** – Wilderness Wandering & the Tabernacle — *Tie-in: God dwelling with us (Advent)*
- **DEC 9 – SMALL GROUPS** – Entering the Promised Land (Joshua)
- **DEC 16 – CHRISTMAS PARTY** –

- DEC 23 – **NO CLASS** – (Winter Break)
- DEC 30 – **NO CLASS** – (Winter Break)

JANUARY 2027 – Judges to the Rise of David

- JAN 6 – **LARGE GROUP** – Judges: The Cycle of Sin and Rescue
- JAN 13 – **SMALL GROUPS** – Ruth
- JAN 20 – **MENTOR NIGHT #2** – Samuel and the Call of a King
- JAN 27 – **LARGE GROUP** – Saul and the Rise of David

FEBRUARY 2027 – David and the Divided Kingdom

- FEB 3 – **LARGE GROUP** – David as King
- FEB 10 – **SMALL GROUPS** – Solomon and the Temple
- FEB 17 – **SMALL GROUPS** – The Kingdom Divides
- FEB 24 – **PARENT NIGHT #2** – Elijah and Elisha: Faith in a Divided World

MARCH 2027 – The Prophets

- MAR 3 – **LARGE GROUP** – Isaiah, the Suffering Servant — *Tie-in: Lent*
- MAR 10 – **NO CLASS** – (Conferences / Early Out)
- MAR 17 – **NO CLASS** – (Spring Break)
- MAR 24 – **MENTOR NIGHT #3** – Jeremiah and Lament
- MAR 31 – **LARGE GROUP** – Ezekiel and Hope in Exile

APRIL 2027 – Exile and Return

- APR 7 – **SMALL GROUPS** – Exile and the Psalms of Lament
- APR 14 – **LARGE GROUP** – Daniel
- APR 21 – **PARENT NIGHT #3** – Return from Exile (Ezra/Nehemiah)
- APR 28 – **SMALL GROUPS** – Wisdom Literature Intro (Proverbs)

MAY 2027 – Wisdom and Wrap-Up

- MAY 5 – **LARGE GROUP** – Job: Wrestling with Suffering
- MAY 12 – **MENTOR NIGHT #4** – Ecclesiastes
- MAY 19 – **PARENT NIGHT #4** – Wrap-Up: What the Old Testament Points Forward To
- MAY 26 – **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)

