



St. Sebastian/St. Catherine
Youth Ministry Handbook
2017-2018

Welcome

Welcome to St. Sebastian/St. Catherine Youth Ministry! Youth Ministry is our parishes' response to young people. **All 7/8th grade middle school and high school youth are part of youth ministry – even if you don't know it!** Whether we meet as a community in Intergenerational/Family catechesis sessions, small Faith Formation classroom sessions, or in Catholic schools, we're here to make students' faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction. Our goal is to meet students' spiritual needs and give them an opportunity to share their talents and gifts.

Youth Ministry at St. Sebastian/St. Catherine is designed to build upon the instruction students learned in Catholic school or in previous Faith Formation sessions – but if they haven't been in either, now is the time to start! The goal is to prepare youth as they continue their journey towards the Sacrament of Confirmation in the eleventh grade, and even more important – it seeks to instill a commitment to lifelong faith formation, prayer and service. Our team of staff and volunteers look forward to accompanying you on that journey.

Youth Ministry Goals

As stated in [Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry](#) (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997) the goals of Youth Ministry are to:

- **Empower young people** to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- **Draw young people to responsible participation** in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- **Foster the total personal and spiritual** growth of each young person.

Along with those goals, Youth Ministry strives to:

- **Empower parents** as the primary religious educators of their children to be more involved in the Youth Ministry program directly and indirectly. With this, we will also define what being involved means, what time commitments can be expected, and how to best communicate with catechists and staff.
- **Inspire a lifelong desire in our young people** to continue in their faith formation.
- **Engage students in the Scriptures** – learn how to read the Bible, look up passages and discuss its relevance in their lives.
- **Incorporate service** directly into the program.
- **Make young people feel more welcome** in the St. Sebastian/St. Catherine faith communities.

What do we want for our youth?

- To know what it means to have faith and hope
- To be loving and courageous
- To seek wisdom and temperance
- To work for justice
- To believe in the virtues and other truths of Catholicism

Catholic Faith Formation for Youth

What does this mean in practical terms?

It means we take to heart the words of St. Theresa who reminds us that "Christ has no body now, but yours." We are to be the arms and feet of Christ. We become his body in our modern world by doing what Christ did and manifesting Christ's love and care of others. Youth Ministry is about knowing, loving and serving Christ so that students encounter Christ in others and become Christ for others.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

We therefore embrace the preferential option for the poor and choose to focus our service efforts on the same situations of injustice, poverty, and oppression that Jesus addressed during his ministry. During the year, we'll show youth how to use their **heads, hearts and hands** to fulfill this mission.

What nourishes and sustains us to do this?

The Eucharist is central to our ministry. It is the "source and summit of the Christian life," according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is the holy sacrament that binds us together as one in Christ, thus strengthening us to live out our baptismal priesthood throughout the week. Strengthened by Eucharist, we take and share our gifts and talents with others. Youth Ministry invites and encourages greater participation in communal prayer and worship, especially parish Mass.

The St. Sebastian/St. Catherine Faith Formation Program

The sessions for Grades 7 through 10 lay the foundation for the immediate Confirmation preparation process in 11th Grade. Therefore, it is expected that all four years be completed in accordance with Archdiocesan Policy. Students will be admitted to the Confirmation Preparation Program after satisfactory completion of religious education in Grades 7 through 10 either through the Catholic school system or faith formation.

This policy is in place to ensure that all children in both St. Sebastian and St. Catherine parishes receives a solid foundation in the instruction of the faith before they are asked to decide to continue their faith journey through Confirmation. The program is designed to recognize that many students come from different religious education backgrounds. The students also have different questions about their faith life and different interests.

Keeping this in mind, we aim to reinforce the four pillars of our faith in keeping with the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Christian prayer, morality, liturgy and sacraments and the creed.

2017-2018
Faith Formation Calendar
7-10th Grade

Sunday Morning Classes (9:00 – 10:15 a.m.)

September 10	January 7
October 1	February 4
November 5	March 4
December 10	April 8
	May 20

Grades 7-8 – School Room 206

Grades 9-10 – Adult Formation Room

Sunday Night Program (5:45 – 8:30 p.m.)

September 24	February 18
October 22	March 18
November 19	April 22
January 21	

Grades 7-8 – Multi-Purpose Room

Grades 9-10 – Adult Formation Room

Sunday night program-all students are expected to participate:

- 5:45 – Arrive for 6:00 Liturgy. Participate as greeters, ushers, readers or cantors
- 6:00 – Students sit with family or with group.
- 7:00 – Dinner, with families providing food
- 7:15 – Faith Formation class, which finishes at 8:30

Service Activity – Advent Fun Day Childcare Project

December 17, Noon - 5:00 p.m. School Cafeteria

Afternoon of Reflection – Sunday March 25 – Time & Location TBA

Intergenerational/Family Catechesis Sessions

- Sunday October 8, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- Monday November 27, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- *Ash Wednesday* February 14, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Sunday March 11, 4:30-6:00p.m.
- Sunday May 20, 9:00-10:30 a.m.
- Sunday June 3, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Retreats

All students are expected to participate in retreats during middle school (7th and 8th grade) and high school (9th and 10th grade), in addition to a Confirmation retreat in 11th grade. Check for mailings, in the bulletin and/or the website.

Student Expectations

- **Behavior** – All classes are interactive. Students are expected to be vocal participants and exchange information in a respectful manner with other students, teachers and guests.
- **Attendance** – Students are expected to attend all Faith Formation sessions. *If the student is not able to attend, Sandra, Cindy or Barb must be notified via email.* High school students are expected to take on this responsibility and when possible, copy their parents on the email.
- **Technology** - The use of cell phones to make or receive phone calls and/or text messages is strictly forbidden during class. Students are often asked, however, to bring a tablet, phone or laptop to class to accomplish the session activities.
- **Service** – All youth are expected to participate in service to the parish and the community, then report their progress to Youth Ministry using the attached form before June 3, 2018.
 - Students in grades 7-8 should perform at least 10 hours of service
 - Students in grades 9-10 should perform at least 20 hours of service and be involved in a holiday light recycling collection during the fall.

At least five of the hours should be in service to the parish, such as serving or reading at mass, participating in a Parish Council committee, or being involved in a parish-sponsored activity such as the Fish Fry, Women of St. Sebastian Boutique or CSA Farmers Market. The other hours can be in any other community service area, such as volunteering with children or the elderly, participating in environmental cleanups, or working with the poor.

Parent Expectations

- **Help Students Be Responsible** – Make faith formation a priority for your adolescent. While we encourage the students to take responsibility for their own schedules, it helps to look at your family calendar at the beginning of the year and try to clear out the time for classes. If students are involved in activities that can't be changed, catechists should be made aware so they can help the student make up missing work. As noted above, catechists must be contacted if a student will miss class.
- **Serve as Role Models** – We recognize that parents are the primary religious educator of their children. We strive to support parents in any way we can in this endeavor. The best ways to educate your children is through example, by attending the family sessions and liturgies on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation, adhering to Church teachings, and modeling Christian values in everyday life.

- **Volunteer** – The program is always in need of catechists, substitute catechists and people who can help behind the scenes. Catechists need not have experience, just a willingness to pass on their faith, and we offer training. We also periodically need parent/parish volunteers to help during retreats, chaperone youth ministry activities and other events as they arise. For more information or to volunteer, contact the Youth Ministry Office or check the Stewardship Portal - <http://bit.ly/StewardshipPortal>
- **Provide Food on Sunday Evenings** – Families are expected to provide food for the Sunday evenings sessions and help with set up and clean up. A link to sign up will be emailed to you if you did not sign up at orientation.

Safeguarding All of God's Family

As stated in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and guidelines from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, we are participating in the *Safeguarding All of God's Children* program. This program contains several components that pertain to Youth Ministry. All personnel and volunteers who work with children and youth, including catechists, are subject to criminal background checks and required to attend an abuse awareness training session. In addition, schools and faith formation programs are called on to provide age-appropriate abuse prevention education in all classrooms to teach children to recognize, resist and report abuse. We will have a presentation aimed at helping students acquire and enhance skills to prevent abuse.

It's important to know that catechists and other volunteers are considered Mandatory Reporters per the Archdiocese. This means that they are to exercise reporting responsibilities for any suspected physical or sexual abuse of minors. For more information on *Safeguarding All of God's Family* contact the Director or check the Archdiocesan website at <https://www.archmil.org/archmil/Offices/Safe-Environment.htm>

As members of this faith community, we hope to partner with parents in helping our children develop positive, loving relationships, while giving them information they might need to help recognize abusive relationships. Together we can work toward minimizing the risk of all child abuse, especially child sexual abuse. Please call if you have any questions or concerns regarding this program or its content.

Activities

The Parish provides many community-building activities for all youth and families. Middle school students are welcome to be part of the school play, join Scouts, become altar servers, and volunteer as "Fry kids." Middle and high School youth are invited to participate on the parish basketball and volleyball teams. For more information, go to <http://saintsebastianonline.net/community-life/sports/>

Communication

Communication between the Youth Ministry office, parents and youth is a critical component of the program. Parish staff will send email newsletters and post information in the Parish bulletin, website and Facebook. Catechists will almost always send an email prior to and following each class. This year the email following each class will include a summary of what was done and a "Taking it Home" activity. This activity is designed help families continue and expand upon the discussion we had in class.

We use the software REMIND to text information that **alerts you to read emails**. SO both students and parents are asked to create an account on *Remind*. Students and parents are encouraged to check the Youth Ministry website for updates, registrations and other information. <http://saintsebastianonline.net/faith-formation/youth-ministry/>

Finally, we encourage parents and students to communicate directly with catechists and staff. Your feedback on classes is vital to the ongoing faith formation of youth.

Contact Information

Please feel free to contact any of the team members at any time with questions or feedback.

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*"Whatever we can do to
enable young people to
find and utilize their potential
is a form of sacred activity."*

"Reclaim the Fire" by Rev. Martin Pable

Needed— Men and Women of Character

The world needs men and women ...
who cannot be bought;
whose word is their bond;
who put character above wealth;
who possess opinions and a strong will;
who are larger than their vocations;
who do not hesitate to take risks;
who will not lose their individuality in a crowd;
who will be as honest in small affairs as in greater;
who will make no compromise with wrong;
whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish
desires;
who will not say they do it "because everybody else does it;"
who are true to their friends through good and bad,
in adversity as well as in prosperity;
who do not believe that shrewdness, cunning,
and hardheadedness are the best qualities for winning
success;
who are not ashamed or afraid to stand for the truth when it
is unpopular;
who can say "no" with emphasis, although all the rest of the
world says "yes."
And who can say "yes" to answering the call of Christ.

Anonymous