



St. Sebastian & St. Catherine Youth Ministry Handbook 2019-2020

Welcome

Welcome to St. Sebastian/St. Catherine Youth Ministry! The faith formation of our youth is vital to our parishes' continued growth and vitality. We are excited to meet with your families, within a variety of settings, as a community in Intergenerational/Family programs, grade specific faith formation sessions, or participating in service and social activities, we're here to help make faith become living, conscious, and active. Our team of staff and volunteers look forward to partnering with you to foster growth and faith in your child(ren).

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.
- To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- To 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 and why to read the Bible, look up passages and discuss its relevance in their lives.
- Incorporate service directly into the program.

- Give them experiences of prayer that enhance and speak to their spirituality.
- Provide opportunities for social development and connectedness with one another.
- Make young people feel included within 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

Youth Ministry at St. Sebastian & St. Catherine is designed to build Faith Formation programs that give the youth a foundation of knowledge and experiences to grow constantly and measurably on their journeys of faith. Ideally the program serves to begin their preparation towards the Sacrament of Confirmation and even more important – it seeks to instill a commitment to lifelong faith formation, create good prayer practices and merge the call service into their lifestyle.

Making disciples

"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)

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 you encounter Christ in others and become Christ for others.

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.

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, meaning it is the holy sacrament that literally binds us together as one in Christ, thus strengthening us to live out our baptismal priesthood throughout the week. We all share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ. 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.

As the Christian Formation Committee Policy states: Youth Ministry faith formation is for Grades 6 through 10. These sessions lay the foundation for the immediate Confirmation preparation process in 11th grade. Therefore, it is expected that all five 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 6 through 10, which can either be through the Catholic school system or the parishes' faith formation program.

This policy is in place to ensure that every child within the parishes receive a solid foundation in the instruction of the faith, before they are invited to have the opportunity decide to continue on their faith journey through Confirmation. The program has been designed to recognize that many of the students have come from different religious education backgrounds. The students also have different questions about their faith life and different interests. Keeping this in mind, we also 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.

In addition to providing catechesis, our ministry will strive to make the Catholic faith relevant to your child's life as a whole. Helping them to see God, know God and bring God to the communities in which they participate. We hope to serve as models and mentors that reinforce all of the spiritual truth they are learning from you. Youth ministry should result in your child not only knowing the faith but initiate young people to owning their faith. In that way this will be a safe for them to question, share their doubts and struggles, so to help them process the knowledge. We seek to be of service to the entire family, by supporting the spiritual growth and maturity of your child.

**2019-2020
Faith Formation Calendar
6-10th Grade**

**September 15
September 22
September 29
October 13
October 20
November 10
November 17**

**January 5
January 26
February 9
February 23
March 1
March 29
April 5
May 3**

Breakfast with Santa Service! December 8th 9a.m.-12p.m.

Advent Fun Day Service! December 15th 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Intergenerational/Family Catechesis Sessions

- Saturday, September 28- 9:30-11:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 30- 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Monday, November 25- 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Ash Wednesday, February 26- 6:00-7:00 p.m.
- Sunday, May 17- 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Retreats

Retreat dates for 2019-2020 are being scheduled. We are in need of parental involvement to help plan and implement those efforts. Please contact Margaret if you are willing to share your time, talents and/or treasures for this important aspect of youth ministry.

All students are expected to participate in retreats during middle school (6th through 8th grade) and high school (9th and 10th

grade). This is in addition to the Confirmation retreat requirement in 11th grade. By the end of the fifth year in Youth Ministry, each student should attend at least three retreats. 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 to other students, teachers and guests. Students are expected to perform service (see below), do outside reading, and bring in stories or examples.
- Attendance – Students are expected to attend all Faith Formation sessions. *If the student is not able to attend, Margaret or Barb must be notified via email/text.* High school students are expected to take on this responsibility.
- Technology - Students are often asked to bring a tablet or phone to class to accomplish the session activities. The use of cell phones to make or receive phone calls and/or text messages is strictly forbidden during class.

Parent Expectations

- Help Students Be Responsible – Make faith formation a priority for your adolescent. While we are encouraging the students to take responsibility for their own schedule, 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 by 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 – We need parent and parish volunteers in order to make this program a success. We are always in need of catechists, substitute catechists and people who do things behind the scenes. Catechists need not have experience, just a willingness to pass on their faith. They may be parents, grandparents, siblings, other interested parishioner; anyone who wants to share their faith with young people. We will train catechists. We also periodically need parent/parish volunteers to help out on retreats, chaperone youth ministry activities and other events as they arise. For more information or to volunteer, contact the Margaret or check the web site.
- Families are expected to provide food for the Sunday evenings sessions and help with set up and clean up. A link for sign up will be emailed 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. It is expected that in each classroom, every year, there will be at least one presentation documented to assist children in acquiring and enhancing 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 re-ported 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 web site at www.archmil.org.

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 in order to assist in their own self-protection. 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.

Service

All youth are expected to participate in service to the parish and the community. Students in grades 6-8 should perform at least 10 hours of service and students in grades 9-10 should perform at least 20 hours of service before May 3, 2020. At least five of the hours should be in service to the Parish, such as serving or lecturing at Mass, participating in a Parish Council committee, or being involved in a parish-sponsored activity such as the Fish Fry, Christian Women Boutique or the 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. In addition, high school students will be involved in a holiday light recycling collection during the fall. We are in the process of planning service activities the youth can do together and some opportunities that can be done within families. These will always be communicated through emails and newsletters.

Social Activities

The Parish would like to provide an increased number of community-building social activities for our youth. Parish youth are welcome to be part of the YAC. High School youth are invited to participate on the parish CYM teams for both basketball and volleyball. There will be social activities planned for all youth to attend. It is important that the young people have opportunities to have fun with one another, fostering friendships that stem from your faith community is beneficial and the parish is committed to this type of ministry. We will need assistance from parents in the form of time, talents and treasure. 😊

Communication

Communication between the Youth Ministry office, parents and youth is a critical component of the program. We will periodically send out newsletters, post information in the Parish bulletin and on the website, and distribute mailings and e-mails to families. We will be using the software REMIND that sends information via text **to alert you that there is an email to read.** Both students and parents are asked to sign into the REMIND request you will receive.

In addition, high school students will be invited to join a specific Parish Facebook site. In accordance with Archdiocesan guidelines (www.archmil.org/ArchMil/Resources/SAFE/SocialNetworkPolicy.pdf), parents also will be invited to join, although they can decline.

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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Fruits of the Spirit

**But when the Holy Spirit
controls our lives,
he will produce
this kind of fruit in us:
love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness,
gentleness, and self-control.**

(Galatians 5:22-23)