

ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

FAITH FORMATION POLICY AND INFORMATION

We strongly encourage parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in Faith Formation and Youth Ministry to be registered members of St. Mary Catholic Church and to attend Holy Mass regularly.

Parents and legal guardians are the **primary educators** of their children in the Catholic faith. Faith formation begins in the home, within the **Domestic Church**, where children first learn to know, love, and serve God through the example, prayer, worship, and daily witness of their families. Our parish Faith Formation and Youth Ministry programs do not replace this sacred responsibility; rather, they support and complement the spiritual formation that takes place in the home. **YOU are the primary teachers of the faith.** Our catechists and ministry leaders are privileged to partner with you as together we help your children grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and prepare them for the Sacraments and a lifelong relationship with God and His Church. Parents and families are **truly irreplaceable** in this mission.

FAITH FORMATION & YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM

- **Faith Formation – Pre-K through 5th Grade & First Holy Communion**
- Our Faith Formation Team is comprised of Brenda Rodriguez, Adriana Bowell, and Jessica Mendoza. Together, they oversee Faith Formation for students in Pre-K through 5th Grade, including preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.
- Each member of the team has specific responsibilities within the program; however, they work collaboratively as one Faith Formation Team to support our students, families, catechists, and sacramental preparation programs. Parents may contact any member of the Faith Formation Team with questions or concerns regarding Pre-K through 5th Grade or First Holy Communion.
- **Youth Ministry – 6th through 12th Grade & Confirmation**
- Youth Ministry serves students in 6th through 12th Grade and is divided into Junior High and High School groups. Youth Ministry, including Confirmation preparation, is overseen by Jessica Mendoza. Questions regarding Junior High or High School Youth Ministry, Confirmation, retreats, service requirements, or other Youth Ministry activities should be directed to Jessica.

Attendance/Tardiness:

- Faith Formation is a very important aspect of religious education for your children. We take attendance and tardiness seriously and will call you if your child misses or is late for 3 classes.

Student Expectations:

- Only three absences are permitted for necessary circumstances. A parent or guardian must sign the attendance sheet for each child to confirm drop-off and pick-up. The sign-in/out sheet will be available before and after class in each classroom.
- Please arrive on time. Classes begin promptly at the scheduled session time.
- Appropriate behavior and common courtesy, at every grade level, are expected.
- No electronics are allowed before or during class.

Family Expectations:

- Families are expected to attend **Holy Mass** every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.
- Registration at the parish is encouraged.
- Attendance at parental meetings is required.
- Pray together at home as a family and make the practice of the Catholic faith a regular part of family life within the **Domestic Church**.

Safety and Security of the building and of your child/children:

- All students and parents must enter the main entrance. Please drop off and pick up your child at the door of his/her classroom inside the building.
- Students are not allowed in a classroom without a teacher being present.
- Please be on time. The class will promptly start as stated in the session.
- Students who are in Grades Pre-K – 5th must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the classroom upon arrival. We ask that you pick up your child in the same manner. If someone other than a parent picks up the child, we ask that you let the Faith Formation Coordinators and child's teacher know at the beginning of the school year and he/she must be 16 years of age or older.

Catechists and Classroom Volunteers:

- Our classes are taught by volunteers who generously offer their time to pass on the faith. There will be 1-2 adults per classroom. All volunteers must be up to date on the Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) training.

For Sacramental Class:

- Sacramental classes (First Communion, Confirmation) require two consecutive years enrollment in Faith Formation. Therefore, a child must have one previous year of formal Catholic education (Yr1) to be eligible to receive his/her sacrament. He/she must also attend Mass regularly. Students enrolled in a Sacramental class (Yr1 & Yr2) are only allowed up to 3 absences for the year. You will receive a call on the second missed class. The only reasons for an excused absence are as follows:
 - Student illness
 - Death in the family
 - Hazardous road conditions
 - Extraordinary circumstances approved by Faith Formation Coordinators/Pastor
- First Communion age is 7 or older. Confirmation age is High School age (Grade 10 or older)
- Parents, especially parents of sacramental students, are required to attend parent meeting(s) as listed on the Faith Formation/Youth Ministry calendar and any additional meetings requested by Fr. Paul or the appropriate Faith Formation/Youth Ministry coordinator.
- OCIA for children: unbaptized; 7 years or older requires two consecutive years enrollment in Faith Formation.
- Parents of sacramental students (includes yr 1 and yr 2 for both First Communion and Confirmation) must attend weekly parent classes. Classes are held on Wednesdays in the PAC.

General Guideline:

- The Bible teaches that our identities as male and female are part of God's good design in Creation, our bodies and sexual identities are gifts from God. All ministries, including all Faith Formation Catechists will use the gender pronouns that were written on the Baptismal record.

Behavior & Electronic Devices:

In order to foster a focused learning experience for the students, appropriate behavior and common courtesy, at every grade level, are expected. NO ELECTRONICS ARE ALLOWED BEFORE OR DURING FAITH FORMATION CLASSES. If your child brings such items and uses them during class time, the teacher may hold the item and return it to the student at the end of the class.

- First Incident: Warning
- Second Incident: Student will stay after class to talk to the teacher.
- Third Incident: Student will be sent to talk with Faith Formation Coordinators and parent will be called.
- Fourth Incident: Parent will be called to set up a meeting where the student, parent and Faith Formation Coordinators will discuss alternatives.

COMMUNICATION

Clear and timely communication between families and our Faith Formation and Youth Ministry teams is important. We encourage parents and guardians to contact us whenever questions or concerns arise or when you need to notify us regarding your child's attendance, participation, sacramental preparation, or other program needs.

Parish Office: 512-847-9181

Faith Formation | Pre-K–5th Grade & First Holy Communion

Brenda Rodriguez • Adriana Bowell • Jessica Mendoza

office@smwimberley.org

Office of Youth Ministry: 512-722-3696

Youth Ministry | 6th–12th Grade & Confirmation

Jessica Mendoza

ym@smwimberley.org

We are here to support your family and to work in partnership with you as you fulfill your important role as the primary educators of your children in the Catholic faith.

ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

FAITH FORMATION DRESS CODE

CATHOLIC MODESTY STANDARD FOR MALE AND FEMALE

As Catholics, we are called to respect the dignity of ourselves and others. Clothing worn to Mass, Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, retreats, and parish activities should be modest, appropriate, and respectful of the church environment.

Please keep the following in mind:

- Clothing should provide appropriate coverage of the chest, back, midriff, and undergarments.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses should be an appropriate length for a church and ministry setting.
- Clothing should not be excessively tight, revealing, or see-through.
- Undergarments should remain covered at all times.
- Clothing should not display inappropriate, offensive, or disrespectful words, images, or messages.
- Clothing should allow students to sit, stand, bend, and participate comfortably while remaining appropriately covered.

These guidelines apply to all students and participants during Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, Mass, retreats, service projects, and other parish-sponsored activities.

When in doubt, choose clothing that reflects respect for yourself, others, and the sacred environment of our parish.