

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH

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Faith Formation

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Comprehensive Youth Ministry (CYM)

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POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Our Mission

To support each family member's growth on their faith journey with Christ through prayer, encounter and accompaniment.

General Policies and Guidelines

Our Faith Formation sessions, including CYM are for students aged 5-18 years of age and take place from January through December. Students will be placed in the corresponding grade level provided they have been continuously enrolled in Faith Formation sessions or at a Catholic school in previous years.

Family Formation: Designed for students aged 5-11. Children receive twice monthly sessions on the 1st & 3rd Sunday of the month, beginning with the 9:45 am Mass at St. Michael Church.

***Students in level 1 & 2** will be taken out of Mass after the homily for their own hour-long session.

***Students in levels 3-5** will stay in the church until the end of Mass then proceed into the hall for small group discussion.

[Comprehensive Youth Ministry \(CYM\)](#): **Elevate** is designed for middle school students in grades 6-8, and **Beyond** is designed for high school students in grade 9-12. CYM is a program to faithfully minister, guide, and journey alongside our youth as they enter Immediate Confirmation Preparation and especially after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

First Holy Eucharist Preparation

For the Sacrament of First Holy Eucharist, a consecutive two-year period of Faith Formation sessions or enrollment in a Catholic school is required. This policy is consistent with Diocesan directives. The Sacrament of First Reconciliation & First Eucharist will be received at the end of the year in November/December.

All children enrolled in the Faith Formation sessions including Catholic School students are required to participate in additional preparation in the parish to receive the sacrament.

- First Penance meeting
- First Reconciliation
- Retreat (student & parent)
- Meeting with a priest

If a child is prepared and ready to receive their First Holy Eucharist at an earlier date, this may be considered upon request as early as September.

[Immediate Confirmation Preparation](#)

For the Sacrament of Confirmation, a process of developing a deeper understanding of the faith is required before receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. We will use *Chosen*, by Ascension Press. This is a Confirmation program that is robust & exciting and provides a comprehensive exploration of the Catholic Faith, offering a complete system of catechesis and evangelization. **All students, including those in Catholic school, must participate in the Immediate Confirmation Preparation at St. Michael church.**

Additional requirements for students entering the Immediate Confirmation Preparation sessions at St. Michael are as follows:

- Regular attendance at Sunday Mass
- Regular attendance and participation in the Immediate Confirmation Preparation sessions
- Regular attendance at [CYM](#)

- 8-10 weeks bi-weekly instruction that will focus on the details of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Sessions will be held on the **2nd & 4th Sundays from September – January**, from **10:45-11:45am**, (same time as CYM) in the meeting rooms off the Parish Hall
- Research and completion of a Saint report
- In answering Jesus' call to serve others, we encourage students to put their faith into action by being involved in service opportunities provided by St. Michael Parish and other community outreach events.
- Completion of the sponsor certificate with a write up explaining why the sponsor has been chosen.
- Conversation with a priest
- Retreat (student, parent/sponsor)

Parents are the first witnesses of the faith. Our parish supports parents in working collaboratively to stem the tide of disaffiliation. As we work alongside parents, we seek to combine the latest research with practical resources and opportunities for parents and the congregation to build a culture of faithfulness and develop the knowledge & understanding needed to have further discussions at home as a family.

Our Family Formation sessions give parents twice monthly discussions on the 1st and 3rd Sunday with the priest while their children in levels 1-5 have their own session.

Parents with students in CYM and Immediate Confirmation Preparation will join their students for monthly witness talks.

These opportunities are to help parents grow in their own faith.

Our Faith Formation sessions have a spiral approach in which learning builds upon previous years of experience and knowledge. Therefore, if a child has missed one or more years of Faith Formation instruction, the child may be placed in a different level best suited for his/her understanding. All families in our Faith Formation sessions are expected to fulfill their Sunday and Holy Day Mass obligation and to support parish endeavors.

Enrollment

Enrollment takes place online through our website, using the Diocesan Platform LEAD. New families must register with the parish first then enroll their children online for the Faith Formation sessions.

Copies of sacramental certificates and, if applicable, a record of previous Faith Formation instruction are required at the time of enrollment.

Parents are asked to enroll their children in our Faith Formation sessions before January 1st.

Faith Formation Tuition: 1 child - \$400
2 children - \$500
3 or more children - \$600

Catholic School Students Immediate Confirmation Preparation - \$125
Catholic School Students First Eucharist (communion) - \$100
OCIA for children - \$125

CYM Beyond – Grades 9-12: No enrollment fee. Donations welcomed.
If an older teen (grade 9-12) needs preparation to receive any of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion), tuition will follow that of the Faith Formation tier stated above. Please contact the Parish Faith Formation Director

Full payment is due at the time of enrollment. If full payment is not possible, please contact the Faith Formation Office. Financial assistance is available upon request and is kept confidential.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in all sessions is mandatory. This requirement reflects the fact that our Catholic faith has both a personal and communal dimension. The children are enriched by the instruction on essential concepts of the faith as well as the participation in activities and discussions with peers. The sessions serve as a complement to the home as the first school where the faith is lived and learned.

For a student who is absent or needs to leave class early please notify the office by phone or email in advance. For an absence to be excused there must be a valid reason. Excessive absences may result in repeating a level and may result in the deferral of sacrament during sacramental preparation years.

***Family Formation:** Since sessions are held only twice a month, attendance is of the utmost importance and mandatory for both children and at least one parent. Families are asked to make every effort to plan around the calendar to avoid absences. If there are more than three unexcused absences or unfinished work, an interview will be scheduled with the Pastor. Children may not be promoted to the next level.

***Immediate Confirmation Preparation:** No absences are permitted due to this only being an 8–10-week preparation period. If a student misses multiple sessions, a call from the Faith Formation office will be scheduled and a possible interview with the Pastor will be scheduled for both parent and child if needed.

***Mass:** Regular attendance at Mass is required.

Conflicts

We realize that ongoing personal conflicts, illnesses or other conflicts due to sports and other extra-curricular activities may arise. Special accommodation may be arranged for each case. Parents must meet in person with the Faith Formation director to make arrangements. Consistent with Diocesan guidelines, proper documentation (i.e. games/practice schedules, letter from coach) may be required.

Behavior

Students enrolled in the Faith Formation & CYM sessions are expected to display the best and most respectful behavior that our Christian beliefs dictate. Our volunteer catechists generously give of their time and talent to assist parents in the faith journey of their children. That alone calls for children to make a special effort to behave appropriately, including showing respect for others' property in the church building. Behavior and discipline problems will be handled by the office at the request of the catechist. Parents will be notified if the problem is not corrected by conversations with the student.

“Homework” for students in level 1-5

Sunday set up is sent by email to parents every Thursday. The Sunday set up helps the readings come alive for you and your children in an animated video. These can be watched at home or if you are away on vacation. It's a great way to hear the Gospel ahead of Sunday's Mass and a great way to spend time together and learn.

Special Needs

Advise the office of any special needs your child might have so that we can make the necessary accommodations. The Diocese of Bridgeport offers curricula and support material for children with different learning styles and challenges. If your child is under a 504 plan or an IEP at school, consider sharing that information with the office to adapt lessons accordingly. Arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis. All information will be kept confidential.

Calendar and Cancellations

The yearly calendar and calendar changes will be posted on the website at www.stmichaelgreenwich.com and/or by email. Cancellations due to weather conditions or other unexpected circumstances will be announced on our website and/or by email.