



Youth Discipleship Ministry Handbook 2026-2027

YDM General Information

St. Joseph YDM Office

Address: S89 W22650 Milwaukee Ave.
Big Bend, WI 53103

Website: www.stjoesbb.com (see 'Faith Formation' tab, children or youth)

Coordinator of Youth Discipleship

Erika Evans

Office phone: (262)662-3317

Email: eevans@stjoesbb.com

Parish Weekend Mass Schedule:

Saturdays at 4:00pm (Confession 3:00pm-3:30pm)

Sundays at 8:30am and 10:30am

Youth Discipleship Ministry Information

PLEASE ENTER mail@flocknote.com INTO YOUR PHONE AND EMAIL CONTACTS so that you will receive all YDM communications throughout the year.

NEW THIS YEAR - Ages 3-6 will participate in the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* formation during morning YDM!

Grades 3K-9th (note that there is also an 8th & 9th grade evening session available)

Time/Day: 9:00am-11:30am (includes 10:30 Mass) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

(Parent/Caregiver must drop off up student(s) in Parish Hall. Students are encouraged to check in at 8:50am)

Mass roles - We will extend our learning by participating in the Mass. Children will sit with their parents. On the **1st Sunday 10:30 Mass**, our grade school and high school children will fulfill many of the Mass roles!

Grades 8th-11th (including Confirmation for those who are ready and will be 16 year old by the Spring)

Time/Day: 6:00 pm-7:45pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

Mass roles - We will extend our learning by participating in the Mass. On the **1st Sunday 10:30 Mass**, our grade school and high school children will fulfill many of the Mass roles!

Introduction

Dear Families of St. Joseph Catholic Faith Community; Youth Discipleship Ministry (YDM) exists to assist you with religious education of the youth of our parish. While **parents are the primary educators of their children**, the entire community of St. Joseph shares the responsibility to foster faith development and a sense of belonging. YDM, in an effort to encourage walking with Jesus as true disciples, offers a portion of what youth need for healthy relationships with God and each other. As Catholics, the journey of walking with Jesus starts and is fulfilled in knowledge of scriptures and a complete prayer and sacramental life.

Sacraments are outward signs, given by Christ, to communicate grace. YDM prepares the youth of our parish for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. We offer classes for 3K through 11th. YDM also offers retreats, mission trips, and service projects. In addition, YDM partners with various ministries in our church to uphold and further the mission of our parish.

We encourage and challenge you to help with that mission by taking an active part in serving your family's needs, our community, and society. YDM only exists with the service of dedicated catechists, volunteers, and supportive parents and parish members. If you are interested in serving with YDM, we offer training and support for teaching and volunteering. We thank you for your "yes" to God's call to serve.

This handbook describes what YDM offers to fulfill its mission. It also outlines policies and expectations for your benefit. Please take time to read through the handbook and contact the YDM office with any questions. Thanks for your commitment to walk with Jesus!

Tuition and Fees

YDM Fee Information - Family Maximum of \$390 (does not include Confirmation retreat fees which will be collected later)

- All Youth Discipleship grades (3K-Confirmation) - \$130.00 per student (note that there will also be a retreat fee for Confirmation Candidates)
- Catechists' children - 50% off fees
- St. Joseph's day-school students - Fees waived
- Please contact the YDM office for financial assistance, if needed, or to create a payment plan.

*1 student- \$130, 2 students- \$260, 3 students- \$390 Maximum per family (does not include Confirmation retreat fees. Catechists' students pay 50% of the above fees).

Fees can be paid through the Flocknote registration for no additional fee. You may alternatively mail or drop-off your check to the parish office - Attn. YDM/Erika Evans.

Tuition fees cannot be refunded due to the purchase of materials and supplies.

Youth Discipleship

3K-9th Grade morning students

Students will focus on learning about their Catholic faith and learning to be guided by God, through interactions with adult catechists, using strong Catholic materials. All grades will participate in a service project and the 10:30 Mass throughout the year. 3rd-9th grade morning students will have the opportunity to encounter Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and/or Lent.

First Reconciliation and First Communion

The amazing sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion are generally completed during a child's second grade year of school, but can be completed later as needed. Completion of First Reconciliation is mandatory for reception of First Communion. This rite is celebrated at a special Reconciliation service. First Communicants and their parents must attend the 1st Communion Retreat and complete and turn in all preparation materials prior to receiving First Communion.

8th - 11th Grade evening students (including Confirmation)

8th - 11th graders will gather in community with the high schoolers for prayer, a game and a snack, and then they will split off for age-appropriate learning about the faith with their adult catechists. All grades will end with a time of Adoration.

Service, Enrichment, & Confirmation

Service and Enrichment Expectations

- **All grades** are invited to contribute to the Box of Joy project on the first Sunday of November by contributing items and assembling Christmas boxes, which will go to underprivileged children. We will also ask for a monetary donation to cover the cost of shipping.
- **As part of YDM, all grades** and their parents are invited to participate in Youth Discipleship Masses on the 1st 10:30 Sunday Mass of the month. As many students as possible will share in Mass roles.
- **Those entering 8th grade and up** are encouraged to participate in the summer Alive in You mission camp.
- **Confirmation candidates** - in addition to the above service opportunities, please see the Confirmation Service Experiences section below.

Confirmation

Confirmation, as a sacrament, is the strengthening and sealing of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given each person through Baptism. The Confirmation process uses a variety of sources, employing small group sessions, exploring the person's faith-life, and challenging them to fulfill their call to live the Christian life.

Confirmands will be required to complete a beginning of the year interview and an end of the year interview.

- **Confirmation Sponsors**
 - A Confirmation Sponsor must be a confirmed and practicing Catholic who is at least 17 years old, attends Sunday Mass, and actively practices their faith. The sponsor cannot be the parent of the candidate. It is important that the confirmation candidate feels comfortable talking about prayer, God, and faith with their sponsor. The Church encourages choosing a Godparent, as Baptism and Confirmation are closely related.
- **Confirmation Retreat**
 - Confirmation candidates will attend our Confirmation Retreat in the Fall. If you cannot attend our retreat, Erika will help you to find a different Confirmation retreat to attend, and this must be approved prior to attending. Contact Erika Evans to discuss this: eevans@stjoesbb.com or (262)662-3317.
- **Confirmation Service Experiences**
 - Confirmation candidates are expected to do an additional community service project with their Sponsor, as well as trying some in-house service such as volunteering for one of the roles in Mass, helping Building and Grounds, or helping with the morning Youth Discipleship Ministry. We may participate in other group service projects as determined. The purpose of these experiences is for candidates to explore their gifts and use their talents to help people in need. **Reflection and writing on these experiences is required**, and will be turned into catechists. These will then be used in the formulation of their required letter or questionnaire to the Bishop requesting Confirmation.

Vine and Branches (Special Needs)

Jesus calls us to live in Him to realize our full potential as members of the Christian Community. Vine and Branches Special Religious Education Program answers that call by providing a program of Faith development and religious education to persons with disabilities.

Children (ages 7 and up) and adults who have any type of Special Needs are invited to join us. Vine and Branches meet 16 times a year at St. Leonard Parish, Muskego. St. Joseph is a member parish of the Vine and Branches program and pays a stipend, therefore no individual tuition is charged.

Policies

Safe Environment

Pursuant to state law; YDM volunteers, catechists, and staff are required to report suspected child abuse. YDM will follow diocesan policy and procedures on such matters. All staff members and catechists are required to have a criminal background check. In addition, anyone over the age of 18 and out of high school that is working with children or youth must attend a Safe Environment training session and adhere to a code of ethics for minors' safety.

In addition YDM is held accountable through moral and legal duty to comply with the law to ensure the welfare of the youth.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Sunday morning Youth Disciples:
 - Parents/Caregivers must drop off/pick up student(s) in Parish Hall. Students are encouraged to check in at 8:50am
 - Morning YDM ends at the Mass dismissal. Parents should have their children sit with them. Sunday evening Youth Disciples are encouraged to check in at 6:20pm. We will end at 8:15pm.
- Sunday evening Youth Disciples should arrive by 5:55 being ready to participate by 6pm.

Athletics

Students through grade 8 who are currently enrolled in the YDM program are eligible to participate in St. Joseph Athletics.

- All players will be expected to sign an athletic contract. Students who choose to join athletic teams must be in good standing (both classroom participation and attendance at YDM and Mass are considerations, with no more than two absences per year). Home-schooling of YDM is not an option for those participating in St. Joseph Athletics. Disciplinary action may be taken (with respect to team participation) should students not remain in good standing.
- YDM will adhere to all parish and archdiocesan guidelines and policies for athletics. Please refer to those policies and the athletic director for details and interpretation of athletic policy. The spirit of the athletic policy is not to hinder students from participating, but to ensure that there is a healthy balance in all areas of the young person's life.

Dress Code

Appropriate dress is mandatory for all activities.

Attendance and Tardiness

There are relatively few Youth Discipleship classes due to the schedule of 1st and 3rd Sundays. Therefore, everyone is expected to participate in all sessions listed on the calendar. Attendance will be taken in the first 5 minutes of each session. We appreciate you being timely.

- If you are not feeling well, have one of the current CDC COVID symptoms, or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please request an at-home lesson and submit the required work.
- If you are unable to attend the in-person session due to any serious reason, **please notify the YDM Coordinator to request an at-home lesson and submit the required work.**

Emergency Class Cancellation

If classes are cancelled, you will receive an email or text message through Flocknote. Please enter mail@flocknote.com to your contacts so that you will receive all YDM communications.

Fire Safety and Disaster Preparation

YDM has a disaster and fire safety plan in the event of an emergency. All catechists are made aware of disaster plans and where maps are located in each classroom. In the event of an emergency, the YDM office will contact the local authorities with vital information and follow the procedures set in place by those agencies. The YDM office will make every effort through emergency contacts and local authorities to inform parents of the emergency, any important instructions, and well-being of their youth.

Registering for Off-Campus Activities

Flyers with permission slips will be made available for all off-campus youth activities.

All field trips, mission trips, service projects, retreats, youth rallies, and enrichments away from the parish grounds will need a permission slip completed in full with any payment and signed by a parent or legal guardian in a timely manner. Sometimes there are multiple forms that are needed by the host of the event.

Expectations

Student Expectations

- Each student is encouraged to fully participate in our parish sessions and to treat their catechists and classmates with kindness and respect.
- Fully, consciously, and actively participate in Mass every weekend and on holy days of obligation.
- Model Christian values.
- If a student is having difficulty in the classroom, the catechists will redirect the behavior. If it continues, the YDM Coordinator will help navigate the situation and contact the parents as needed.

Parents

- Fully, consciously, and actively participate in Mass every weekend and on holy days of obligation.
- Model Christian values for your child; you are the biggest influence in your child's faith journey.
- Be open and honest in sharing your own faith journey with them.
- Encourage your child's faith growth by modeling and joining them in prayer.
- Challenge your child to discuss their experiences at the in-person sessions.
- Attend all parent required sessions.
- Communicate needs and concerns with your YDM Coordinator.

Catechists, Coordinator, and Volunteers

- Fully, consciously, and actively participate in Mass every weekend and on holy days of obligation.
- Respect each student as a child of God and provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment, so that children will be able to grow in their faith.
- YDM Coordinator and catechists will put an emphasis on continually growing in relationship with God and learning about their faith.
- We encourage students to ask questions, and we are willing to seek out answers that we don't know. We will respond timely and appropriately to any parent questions and needs, and we hope parents will do the same.
- Actively getting to know our families better so we can build a parish community where families are striving for Heaven.

Health Guidelines

Health Concerns and Medications

Parents should make the YDM Coordinator aware of any health concerns and medications as a part of the registration form. All concerns are strictly confidential. Any special arrangements necessary to accommodate unique needs will be made in cooperation with parents in preparation of the coming events and classes. Please feel free to schedule a time to talk with your YDM Coordinator about your child's unique needs.

YDM staff, catechists and volunteers are not trained to administer or dispense any medications to young people. However, in cases of great need, special instruction can be given in accordance with professional educational standards. Medication may be administered with proper labeling by a certified instructor only in cases of great need.

The YDM Coordinator should be made aware of any medical condition that develops during the course of a year as well. YDM cannot be responsible for any person's well-being if not properly informed of a medical condition.

COVID-19 and other Illness Standards - Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause. These symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others.*

- Stay home and away from others if you have intestinal symptoms such as diarrhea or vomiting, with or without a fever.
- You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:
 - Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
 - You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

Please speak to the YDM Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

The YDM Ministry team looks forward to maintaining open lines of communication and mutual respect for all.

Erika Evans

Coordinator of Youth Discipleship

eevans@stjoesbb.com

(262)662-3317