



Parent Role

Catholic Faith Formation (CFF) at Saint Mary Cathedral is supplemental to faith formation that is taking place in your home. No one is more important than parents in passing on to their children the priceless gift of faith. Parents are the primary educators of faith as the family is the *domestic church*. This means that the parents' role is to witness, live, and share the faith with their children. This is done directly and indirectly. All children learn from their parents indirectly when faith is made a priority in the home and their parenting/family life reflects virtue and the love of Christ. Parents should also seek out direct ways to form their children in the faith. This includes: Family prayer, participation in Sunday Mass, and intentional conversations about your faith and morality. Essentially, Jesus Christ should be a member of your family, not merely a conversation piece who is mentioned every so often.

While the Church is clear that parents are the Primary Catechists of their children, CFF offers weekly parent encounter sessions held at the same time that your children (grades Pre-K through 12) are in discipleship sessions. Adults who are unlikely to attend parent encounters may choose to volunteer as chaperones or campus monitors to create a safer downtown environment for our young people. We urge you to see yourself as a meaningful part of the Saint Mary Cathedral community and be actively involved whenever your child is on campus.

Description of Catholic Faith Formation

Catholic Faith Formation envisions children as persons who are capable of a journey of conversion that leads to deeper relationship with the living God. Children are encouraged to develop a relationship with God, learn how the stories and symbols carry meaning and how family is central for them to grow spiritually. Often our children lead us parents closer to God in extraordinary ways.

Catholic Faith Formation Class-to-Mass Initiative

- Families attend weekly Sunday Mass. Preferably after CFF discipleship sessions.
- Mass is a weekly obligation of thanksgiving and fundamental to our Catholic Faith.
- Please arrive at least 10 minutes before Mass to properly calm and prepare yourselves.
- For those eligible to receive Our Lord in the Eucharist: Observe at least one hour of fasting prior to receiving Holy Communion.

Saint Mary Cathedral Mass Times

- Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:30 p.m.
- Sunday: 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. (English)
- 1:45 p.m. (Español)
- 3:30 p.m. (Extraordinary Form)



Sunday Session I – English-language Schedule, unless otherwise announced

10:30 a.m. - Grades 1-12 assemble in Donahue Center Gymnasium.

10:40 a.m.-10:45 a.m. - Catechists chaperone youth to their classrooms.

10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. - Young people seek discipleship in group settings with catechists.

10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. - Parent encounters are in the School Library.

11:45 a.m. - Parents collect their children from classrooms.

- Teens, ages 13 and above may collect siblings to reunite with parents on the Cathedral campus.

Sunday Session II – Spanish-language Schedule, unless otherwise announced

12:15 p.m. - Grades 1-12 assemble in Donahue Center Gymnasium.

12:25 p.m.-12:30 p.m. - Catechists chaperone youth to their classrooms.

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. - Young people seek discipleship in group settings with catechists.

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. - Parent encounter convenes in Donahue Center Cafeteria.

1:30 p.m. - Parents collect their children from classrooms.

- Teens, ages 13 and above may collect siblings to reunite with parents on the Cathedral campus.

Class Reminders

- All elementary aged children should be brought to the Donahue Center Gymnasium and picked up at their classroom by a parent or family member age 13 or older. This is to ensure safety on the church campus. They should not be walking alone.
- Absent/Tardy Policy: Please note the Attendance & Tardy Policy in the Attendance Policy Section below.
- CFF will provide materials for each student as needed. Students should bring books, folders, binders, bags to class each Sunday as needed.
- Parents: Look for notes, newsletters and handouts from the teachers to further discuss the Catholic faith.
- Ask your children to teach YOU what they have learned. They will remember more this way.

Registration and Tuition

- Religious Education registration is required for all children to participate in discipleship sessions. This allows your family to grow in community with Saint Mary Cathedral and provides us with vital information about your child, family, and sacramental needs. The tuition requested helps to cover some of the costs of our utilities, materials, and supplies for each participant.



Registration and Tuition continued

- If your family is in need of financial assistance, please make a request from the CFF office.

Certificates – Please turn in certificates by October 1st, 2017.

A baptismal certificate is required for all baptized children enrolled in sacramental preparation.

CFF Attendance Policy

Parents

A parent encounter session or activity is provided for parents every week that our young people are in class. Sessions include ways to discover our faith as Catholic parents and methods to share our faith with our children. Let's face it – lots of times our children ask us questions and sometimes we don't know where to turn. This makes the parent session a safe and invaluable place to ask questions and grow in community with other Catholic parents navigating the parenting world.

Children

- Faithful attendance is vital and required for individuals preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, or RCIA-A).
- Sacraments of Initiation require at least two years of sacramental preparation, and preferably two years of prior Religious Education as indicated in the current *Diocese of Austin Pastoral Manual*.
- More than 3 absences in a year – other than those involving extraordinary circumstances – can result in postponing a particular sacrament to the next calendar year.
- Youth attend discipleship sessions one time per week. CFF seeks collaboration with parents to expose the faith to their children not just on Mass or class days, but every day.
- CFF has weekly Sunday discipleship sessions. If a child misses a session, they not only miss the topics and discussion for that day, but also a community dynamic that resides in each group of participants. They are missed when they are not there. If a child misses a class, the parents are asked to share the lesson with their child. Lesson information can be obtained from the CFF office.
- Tardy Policy: Please arrive in the Donahue Center Gymnasium at the above mentioned times so that catechists can chaperone youth to their discipleship sessions. Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.

CFF Attendance Policy – Children continued

When a person arrives late it can be a distraction and difficult for them to engage and be engaged by the class/session in progress. We recognize this happens from time to time. Please be courteous to the catechist and class participants' time by coming to class prepared and on time.

- **All absences must be communicated with the CFF Office within 36 hours of the absence via phone or voicemail at 512-476-6182, ext. 142, or email (ysaldana@smcaustin.org).**
- If you would like an update on your child's participation level, please ask your child's catechist (time permitting) in person at the end of a session.
- As directed by the current *Diocese of Austin Pastoral Manual*, children who are home schooled by their parents in academic subjects should participate in their local parish catechetical programs for preparation of and reception of the sacraments and to participate fully in the life of their parish. "The parish is the most important locus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed."

Dress Code & Code of Conduct

In efforts to create a Christ-Centered environment, dress and behavior must reflect the attitude of Christ.

- No youth should be wearing clothing that contains a violent, offensive, or anti-Christian message.
- For Girls: Shorts must be no shorter than two inches above the knee. Strapless or low-cut tops, skin-tight garments, or tops exposing midriff or undergarments are not to be worn.
- For Boys: Saggy pants, cropped t-shirts, and shorts more than two inches above the knee are not to be worn.