



# Family Faith Formation Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures

## **Catholic Faith Formation Mission**

Children often lead parents closer to God in extraordinary ways. Catholic Faith Formation sees children as persons – guided by their parents – on a journey of conversion that leads to deeper relationship with our merciful and loving Lord Jesus. Together, families learn how the stories and symbols of faith and sacred scripture carry meaning yesterday, today, and always. Faith formation matures in the home on a daily basis, and is nourished by your ongoing participation in our parish community.

## **Full Family Catechesis**

Families participate in these ways, among others:

- Sunday Mass (or Saturday Vigil Mass); Holy Days of Obligation
- Necessary and regular participation in CFF discipleship sessions for parents
  - Option I: Parents’ group held at the time of their child’s session
  - Option II: Parents serving as catechists or assistants
- Regular attendance of CFF discipleship sessions for children
- Parish and CFF community events

### **Schedule for August 2018 through May 2019**

Saturday • Sábado	Sunday • Domingo		
<b>5:30 PM Vigil Mass English</b>	8:00 AM; 9:30 AM Mass <i>English</i>	12:15 PM-1:30 PM Sesión de Discipulado de CFF <i>Español</i>	3:30 PM Mass <i>Extraordinary Form, Latin</i>
	10:30 AM-11:45 AM CFF Discipleship Session <i>English</i>	1:45 PM Misa <i>Español</i>	5:15 PM-5:45 PM CFF Discipleship Session for Home School and Catholic School <i>English</i>
	12 Noon Mass <i>English</i>		5:30 PM Mass <i>English</i>

Grades PK-12 assemble in Donahue Center Gymnasium

Teens, 13 years and above may collect siblings to reunite with parents on church campus.



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## **Safety and Community**

As an open campus and for the safety of your children, children must be attended by their parent, or two EIM-certified adults while on campus. Parents and volunteers need to be registered parishioners with Saint Mary Cathedral.

Parents, godparents, sponsors, and volunteers are required to attend the Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) 2-hour class and complete an EIM application every 3 years. EIM is essential to raise awareness regarding predators that target children and vulnerable adults.

*Applications are available online in English only at this time.*

## **Attendance Policy**

Note: Children must be registered by the last Sunday in September to be considered for receiving sacraments the following spring. Applications are accepted – and families are invited to participate – throughout the year.

### **Parent Attendance**

Parent participation counts as a part of your child's attendance. Without parent involvement on the same day and time, your child's discipleship session will appear as an absence in their record.

### **Child Attendance**

Unless otherwise announced, weekly attendance is required from all students. Children must abide by the following to be considered for receiving sacraments:

- Regular attendance is expected. No more than three excused absences are allowed.
- Late arrival of 15 minutes or more is considered tardy.
  - Three tardies are recorded as one absence.
- Parent requests for dismissal from class for sports practices will be counted as an unexcused absence. *Please resolve schedule conflicts with coaches or instructors.*
- Excused absences for illness, medical needs or other valid emergencies must be reported to the office within three days of class date by phone or e-mail:

**(512) 476-6182 x142 or [ysaldana@smcaustin.org](mailto:ysaldana@smcaustin.org)**



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## **Registration, Fees, and Tuition** (due at time of registration)

Religious Education *and* parish registration is required in person 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.

- **Required Documents**

- New Families: completed registration application
- Returning Families: meeting with staff and signed Photography Agreement
- Baptized children: copy of certificate of Baptism
- Un-baptized children: copy of birth certificate
- Confirmation Students: copy of certificate of Baptism and First Holy Communion

- **Tuition**

- Family Fee: \$75 per family
- Student Fee: \$10 per child

- **Fees** (second year sacramental preparation only)

- First Holy Communion \$25
- Confirmation \$TBA (Off-campus retreat)

Requested tuition partially covers costs for utilities, materials, and supplies for each participant.  
*If your family is in need of financial assistance, please make a request through the CFF office.*

## **Sacramental Preparation (Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, or RCIA-A)**

- *Baptism for six years of age and younger*
  - A baptismal preparation course is required for all parents and godparents.
    - Inform the CFF office to begin this process.
- *First Holy Communion*
  - Minimum preparation of one year. The student must be baptized Catholic, and either six years or seven years of age in the month of August to receive First Eucharist the following spring at Saint Mary Cathedral.
- *RCIA-A or Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – Adapted for youth*
  - A minimum of two years preparation. This is a spiritual journey of conversion in which children become full members of the Catholic Church – including the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Eucharist. Intended for children with an understanding and maturity level of age 7 or older who:
    - have not been baptized, OR
    - were baptized Catholic as infants but never catechized, OR
    - were validly baptized, but into a non-Catholic faith community.
  - The child must have a sponsor at the beginning of their second year in RCIA-A.



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## **Sacramental Preparation** (continued)

- *Confirmation*
  - Ages 14 through 17 - Minimum preparation of one year. In the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized person is "sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ.
  - The candidate must have a local sponsor by the last week of September.
- *Adult Confirmation* is offered for Catholic adults who have been baptized and have received the sacraments of First Communion and First Reconciliation.
  - Inform the CFF office to begin this process.

## **Catholic School and Home School Students**

Children from Catholic School or Home School environments must fulfill CFF requirements as listed here in order to receive sacraments at Saint Mary Cathedral. These requirements include:

- Registration, fees, and tuition
- Documentation, as listed above
- Regular class attendance for a minimum of one year, plus family participation on Saint Mary Cathedral campus.

## **Description of a Catechist**

The Church emphasizes that parents are the Primary Catechists of their children. Catholic Faith Formation (CFF) affirms that parents, as the primary educators of faith, strengthen and lead the family as the *domestic church*. All children learn directly from their parents when faith is made a priority in the home and their family life reflects virtue and the love of Christ.

Together parents, volunteer catechists, community, and clergy illuminate the spirituality of our families in open communication to cultivate faith, hope, and love within the life of God's Church. Catechist volunteers facilitate childrens' discipleship sessions to help children better understand the Catholic faith, symbols, and traditions in community. As approved by His Holiness Pope Saint John Paul II, we recall:

*257. The parish is, without doubt, the most important locus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed. This is called to be a fraternal and welcoming family where Christians become aware of being the people of God. In the parish, all human differences melt away and are absorbed into the universality of the Church.*

*"General Directory for Catechesis". Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 11 August 1997.*



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## Class Reminders

Parents: Look for notes, newsletters and handouts from the Catechists.

Children will bring weekly, as requested by Catechist:

- Issued text book, folder and/or binder
- Bible and rosary
- Pencil/pen, crayons, markers, a pair scissors of your choice

## Dress Code & Code of Conduct on Campus and Parish-sponsored Events

To create a Christ-centered environment, dress and behavior must reflect the attitude of Christ. Violating the following will result in removal from that day's session and recorded as an absence.

- No youth should be wearing clothing that contains a violent, offensive, or anti-Christian message. No skulls, references to illegal substances, or gang affiliation.
- 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 acceptable.
- For Boys: Saggy pants, cropped t-shirts, and shorts more than two inches above the knee are not acceptable.
- Cell phones and electronic entertainment items must be turned off in classrooms, retreats, and during speaker presentations.

