

**St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Religious Education and Youth Ministry
Handbook**

2021-2022



**St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church**

**6701 Muncaster Mill Road
Derwood, MD 20855-1543
Phone: 301-840-1407**

**Website: www.sfadw.org
Facebook page: “St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church”**

Parish Information**Phone: 301-840-1407****Fax: 301-258-5080****Pastor:**

Rev. John J. Dillon

jdillon@sfadw.org

Permanent Deacons:

Dcn. James Datovech

Jdatovech@aol.com

Dcn. Wilberto Garcia

Dcn. James McCann

Mccannj1948@gmail.com

Religious Education Office: 301-258-9193

Director of Religious Education:

Susan Anderson

sanderson@sfadw.org

Administrative Assistants:

Marie Purdy & Marie Yeast

sfareligioused@sfadw.org

Adult Faith Formation: 301-840-1407

Adult Faith Formation & RCIA:

Anthony Bosnick

abosnick@sfadw.org

Social Concerns:**301-840-1407**

Social Concerns Minister:

Anthony Bosnick

abosnick@sfadw.org

St. Francis Parish Office: 301-840-1407

Parish Secretary:

Donna Zezzo

dzezzo@sfadw.org

Administrative Assistant:

Marie Yeast

SFAparishoffice@sfadw.org

Mass Schedule:

Saturday

5:00 pm

Sunday

8:00 am

9:30 am

11:15 am

5:00 pm

Daily Mass:

9:00 am Monday through Friday

7:30 pm Wednesday, followed by Novena

Reconciliation:Saturday: 3:30 to 4:30 pm, or by
appointment

Parish Vision: Growing a community that preaches the Gospel at all times through our worship, our words, and our actions

Parish Mission: Enlivened by God's grace, we live the good news

- joyfully sharing God's love with all,
- being instruments of peace for the poor and vulnerable, and
- continually building up our diverse church community.

Fall 2021



Dear St. Francis of Assisi Families:

It is a privilege to serve you and your family through the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Religious Education Program, and especially so as our parish prepares to celebrate our 50th Anniversary. As always, we thank you for allowing us to assist you in your important role in raising your children to know and follow Christ.

Along with your family's participation in our parish faith formation offerings, we hope that you will share in our 50th Anniversary festivities, starting with our parish feast day picnic on Sunday, October 3. There will be many special events offered throughout the year as we gather around our anniversary theme, **"Made in God's Image -- All Are Welcome!"** We hope that you will join us for these events, and plan to share in our 50th Anniversary Mass with Cardinal Gregory on Sunday, May 29. Look for information and updates on our parish website: <https://sfadw.org/50thanniversarycelebration>.

Whether you choose in-person classes or the homeschool option for your children's religious education, please know the real strength and foundation of their faith will come from you, their parents. How you celebrate and live out your faith will be the standard for them. We hope to enhance that experience for them, as well as for you.

This handbook provides an overview of the faith formation opportunities offered at St. Francis of Assisi Parish. It describes the mission, curriculum, policies, guidelines, and schedules. It also directs you to resources for Catholic parents. We hope that you will find this a helpful resource and refer to it often.

As a parish, we are blessed with many wonderful people who have answered the call to serve as volunteers in our faith formation efforts. Catechists and adult leaders are people of faith who respond to a call to teach the faith and lead others to a deeper relationship with Christ. They give witness to the faith by their word and by the example of their lives. We hope you will prayerfully consider serving as a catechist, adult leader, or aide. We know your time is precious and scarce, but we also know how important it is for children to see their parents active in their parish, serving and sharing their faith with others.

We look forward to working together with you to teach and share the faith with our children and youth. Please call at any time if you have questions, or if we can assist you in any way.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. John Dillon
Pastor

Susan Anderson
Director of Religious Education

Table of Contents

1. Faith Formation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish	Page 4
a. Adult Faith Formation Opportunities	
b. Young Adult Faith Formation	
c. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults	
d. Confirmation Preparation for Adults	
e. Marriage and Baptism Preparation	
f. Religious Education for Children and Youth	
i. Catechesis for Children and Youth with Special Needs	
ii. Sacramental Preparation for Children and Youth	
a. <i>Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist</i>	
b. <i>Confirmation Preparation</i>	
c. <i>Christian Initiation for Children and Teens (CIC/CIT)</i>	
iii. Parent/Family Resources	
iv. Registration, Authorization for Medical Treatment, Pick-Up and Publicity Release	
v. Snow/Emergency Cancellation Policy	
2. Religious Education Program: Kindergarten through Grade 8	Page 9
a. Mission Statement	
b. Curriculum	
c. Roles & Responsibilities	
i. Parents	
ii. Director of Religious Education	
iii. Catechists	
iv. Aides	
v. Art Catechists	
vi. Other Ways to Volunteer	
d. Attendance Policy	
e. Arrival and Dismissal Procedures	
f. Student Behavior Expectations	
3. Youth Ministry: Grades 6 through 12	Page 12
a. Youth Ministry	
i. Junior High/ Middle School Ministry - Juniors	
ii. High School Ministry	
iii. Service Opportunities for Youth	
iv. Youth Mass	
b. Roles & Responsibilities	
i. Parents & Family	
ii. Youth	
iii. Adult Leaders	

Religious Education calendars will be available in September

Faith Formation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish

The goal of our parish faith formation programs is to teach Jesus:

"At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever." To catechize is "to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and the signs worked by him." Catechesis aims at putting "people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #426-- quoting Catechesi Tradendae, no. 5)

Catechesis is a life-long endeavor and our parish seeks to provide opportunities for faith formation for all parishioners.

Information about all of our parish faith formation opportunities can be obtained from the bulletin, parish website (www.sfadw.org) and from the contact people listed below.

Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

St. Francis of Assisi has a vibrant adult faith community for parishioners to deepen their understanding of their faith. Faith formation opportunities are offered throughout the year and include Bible study, prayer groups, lecture series, parish missions, small groups, and speakers on a variety of topics.

For information on these opportunities contact the Director of Adult Faith Formation, Tony Bosnick (301-840-1407).

Young Adult Faith Formation

The Young Adults of St. Francis are invited to participate in the regional ministry called 270 Catholic (<http://270catholic.org>) which provides young adult ministry for Catholics in the Rockville area which provides opportunities for adoration with Praise & Worship, Theology on Tap, and service opportunities. See our parish website for more information: <https://sfadw.org/young-adults-18-35>.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (Becoming Catholic)

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process by which adults who are interested in becoming Catholics are received into the Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. RCIA is also the process by which baptized adults may complete their Sacraments of Initiation. Every year adults are welcomed into the Catholic Community through RCIA. It is a learning and loving process in which conversion of the heart brings you to Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Savior.

RCIA is the place for you if you can answer, "Yes," to any of these questions:

- Are you interested in learning more about the Catholic Church?
- Are you unbaptized but recognize a need for spirituality in your life?
- Were you baptized Catholic or baptized into another denomination but never received any formal religious education?

- Are you married to a Catholic and attend Mass, but just don't know what the next step is to become one of the Catholic faithful?

The first stage of RCIA is the period of Inquiry, a time for interested persons to ask questions about the Catholic faith. Inquiry classes meet on Wednesday nights, beginning in September.

For more information, call the Coordinator for RCIA, Tony Bosnick (301-840-1407). There is no obligation, just information.

Confirmation Preparation for Adults

Practicing Catholic adults who have received the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, but who are not yet confirmed, are encouraged to affirm their faith and be united fully with the Church through the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation classes for adults are offered in the spring. Adults throughout the Archdiocese of Washington are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation at a special liturgy with the Cardinal on the Feast of Pentecost.

For more information, contact our pastor, Father John Dillon, at 301-840-1407.

Marriage and Baptism Preparation

Couples seeking the Sacrament of Marriage are asked to make arrangements with a parish priest at least 6 months in advance. Parents requesting Baptism for their child (age 6 and younger) are asked to call the Parish Office to set up an appointment with the Pastor.

For more information, please see the bulletin or call the Parish Office (301-840-1407).

Religious Education for Children and Youth

Our parish religious education program and our youth ministry efforts support parents who are the first to give witness to the Christian way of life to their children. Children can begin Religious Education in Kindergarten, and are encouraged to participate each year. Our program offers families a choice of two options for Kindergarten-Grade 8 religious education:

Option 1: “Homeschool model” with parents teaching their children at home with textbook resources and support provided by the parish, including 7 online parent meetings and additional events (in-person and online) for students and families.

OR

Option 2: “Classroom model” with children attending in-person classes with modifications in place to comply with covid safety protocols (including keeping 3 ft. distance in classrooms, required use of face masks, and frequent hand washing/sanitizing). In-person classes for Kindergarten through Grade 8 will be offered as follows:

- **Elementary (Kindergarten-Grade 5) classes** with students attending class in person on alternating weeks and completing a lesson at-home between each in-person class. Two Elementary session times will be offered: Sunday morning, 9:20-10:35 am and Monday afternoon, 4:45-6:00 pm. Classes will start Sept. 19/20 for Group A and Sept. 26/27 for Group B. Families will be assigned to groups when class assignments are arranged.

- **Middle School (Grade 6, 7 & 8) classes** with students attending weekly. Two Middle School session times will be offered: Monday and Tuesday evenings, 6:45-8:00 pm. Classes will start Sept. 20/21.

In addition, our parish offers:

- Catechetical sessions specifically designed for children and youth with special needs, and their families. These classes are held on Sunday afternoons from 3:30-4:30 pm.
- Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, and Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) for Children and Teens (CIC/CIT).
- Vacation Bible Camp (week-long summer program for children; led by adult and teen volunteers)
- Youth Ministry programming for Grades 6-12 including opportunities for:
 - Community Building Events: Lock-ins, Lockouts, Movie nights, concerts, etc.
 - Retreats
 - Adoration and prayer services
 - Service projects
 - Summer mission trips
 - Bible Study
 - Youth leadership activities
 - Theology of the Body for Teens
 - World Youth Day

Religious Education classes meet September through May in the Parish Center (lower level of the church). If additional classrooms are needed, classes may also be held in the Assisi Room and Youth Room in the lower level of the Rectory. Youth Ministry events are scheduled year-round.

<p>Calendars for Religious Education Programs will be available in September</p>

Catechesis for Children and Youth with Special Needs

We welcome the opportunity to work together with families to provide religious education to children with special needs and will arrange accommodations as needed in consultation with parents. In many instances, children with special needs participate in weekly, grade-level classes with the support of an aide as appropriate. St. Francis also offers catechetical sessions specifically designed for children and youth with special needs, and their families. These classes are held twice a month on Sunday afternoons from 3:30-4:30 pm, from September - June.

To learn more about these opportunities, or if you are interested in serving as a catechist or aide for children with special needs, please call the Director of Religious Education, Susan Anderson, at 301-258-9193.

Sacramental Preparation for Children and Youth

Gathering with the parish community for Sunday Mass and participating regularly in religious education classes are essential to a child's preparation for the sacraments. Formation for sacraments includes "... the whole period following the child's baptism. Thus, parents are to help their children develop a life of prayer, a knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and his teachings, and

a practical relationship with the local church, especially through regular attendance at Mass” (5.10.3, *Archdiocese of Washington, “Liturgical Norms and Policies,” February 22, 2010*).

Registration for sacramental preparation is in addition to Religious Education classes and parents may request sacramental preparation for their child at the ages indicated below. However, while there may be “typical” ages at which children prepare for each sacrament, reception of sacraments is determined by a child’s readiness, not age. The Pastor and Director of Religious Education will consult with parents to determine the type of preparation required for children who have not participated consistently in the parish religious education program, and for children beyond the usual age established by the Archdiocese for the sacrament.

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist

Children who have been baptized and are gathering with the parish community for Sunday Mass and regularly attending religious education classes may prepare for First Holy Communion when they reach the age of reason (typically in the 2nd Grade or older). Children are expected to participate in Religious Education classes for one full year prior to preparing for the Sacraments. Preparation for Reconciliation must be completed before preparing for First Holy Communion. For each sacrament, parents are invited to attend two parent meetings and are given preparation materials to provide catechesis at home. In addition, prior to the celebration of the sacrament, children attend the Prep Day, and, for First Eucharist, a rehearsal. There is a materials fee (in addition to the RE registration fee), which covers the costs of book and additional materials for Reconciliation and Eucharist preparation.

Older children who were baptized as infants but who have not received their First Holy Communion typically participate in their grade-level class for at least one year prior to preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. In such cases, arrangements can be discussed with the Director of Religious Education.

For more information, contact the Religious Education Office (301-258-9193).

Confirmation Preparation

Young people who have been baptized and are partaking of the Eucharist and have regularly attended religious education classes typically prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation in the 8th Grade. It is expected that all young people will participate in Religious Education classes in the year prior to preparing for the Sacrament. The Confirmation Program begins with an orientation meeting for parents and candidates, and includes monthly Confirmation sessions (in addition to grade-level Religious Education classes), a Confirmation retreat, and service opportunities. There is a materials fee (in addition to the Religious Education registration fee), which covers the cost of the retreat and additional materials.

For more information, contact the Religious Education Office (301-258-9193).

Christian Initiation for Children and Teens (CIC/CIT)

Children of catechetical age (ages 7 and older) who have not been baptized prepare for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) in a process modeled on the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Children participate in Religious Education classes for at least one full year prior to preparing for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

For more information, contact the Religious Education Office (301-258-9193).

Parent/Family Resources

Our parish faith formation efforts serve to support parents in their role as primary witnesses to the faith. We also want to provide ways that you can reach out to your children and build your relationship with them. The staff keeps you in our prayers, that God will help you in every effort to teach your children about the faith. We are always glad to meet with you about your child's faith formation. If we can be of assistance to you in any way, please contact us.

Registration, Authorization for Medical Treatment, Pick-Up & Publicity Release

Families register each year for religious education. Registration forms, including Authorization Form and Publicity Release, are given to families as classes end each school year, and are also available in the Gathering Space of the Church, the Parish Office, and on the parish website. Please keep us informed of any changes to the emergency contact information provided on your child's registration form. Registration fees are evaluated and announced annually, and discounts are offered for early registration. Please contact the Director of Religious Education to make alternate arrangements if payment of fees poses a financial hardship.

Our parish religious education programs are dedicated to serving the needs of all children and youth in our parish community. Please help us to spread the word that children and youth with special needs are welcome to participate in our weekly religious education classes. Parents are asked to communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect their child within the religious education classroom on the registration form. You may also contact the Director of Religious Education to discuss any concerns or to provide additional information.

Registration for Sacramental Preparation (Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, and Baptism for children ages 7 and older) is in addition to Religious Education classes. Families with children preparing for sacraments are asked to indicate this on their registration form so that additional information can be provided.

Snow/Emergency Cancellation Policy

If Montgomery County Public Schools are closed, and if schools are dismissed early, in-person Religious Education classes are also canceled. This applies to Sunday classes as well if Montgomery County Public Schools announces cancellation of weekend school activities.

Cancellation announcements will be posted:

- On the parish website: www.sfadw.org
- On the St. Francis Parish Facebook page: "St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church"
- On the Religious Education Office phone voicemail: 301-258-9193.

Whenever in doubt, please use your own judgment about local weather and driving conditions, and err on the side of safety when making decisions about bringing your child to class.

Religious Education Program: Kindergarten through Grade 8

Religious Education Program Mission Statement

Our parish Religious Education program supports parents who are the first to give witness to the Christian way of life to their children. Together, we share the faith in hopes that children:

- experience a personal relationship with Jesus and know that they are God's special and unique creation
- realize that they are immensely and unconditionally loved by God and that the Trinity dwells in them
- understand that they are made to live in community, and have a responsibility to live moral lives, and to also continue Jesus' mission by communicating God's love to others.

Curriculum

Our parish presents a comprehensive program of faith formation following the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Washington, *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization*. Parent guides for this curriculum can be found at: <https://adw.org/learning-the-faith/faith-formation/parish-faith-formation/>. The Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington also outlines expectations regarding educational curriculum that must be presented on an annual basis to children and youth in our religious education programs. This content is incorporated into the curriculum of our Religious Education programs and taught each year.

A Faith Knowledge Assessment, based on the Archdiocesan curriculum, will be given to all children in grades 3-8 each year on the dates established annually by the Archdiocese. The results of this assessment will help to guide and strengthen our Religious Education program. If your child normally receives testing accommodation in their school, please let us know at the time of registration so we can offer similar accommodation for this assessment.

The Religious Education Program curriculum is designed to be taught in sequence and each year builds on the content presented in previous years. Therefore, children are expected to participate in Religious Education each year and attend classes regularly. Our parish uses the *Finding God* textbook series (Loyola Press) for Kindergarten through Grade 8. All textbook materials are available for review upon request. Additional information can also be found on the publisher's website: www.loyolapress.org.

Roles & Responsibilities

Parents

In the Rite of Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of training their child in the practice of the faith. At the same time, we pray for parents that as the first teachers of their children, they will also be “. . . the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do . . .” (Final Blessing in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*). Parish catechetical programs serve and support the parent's primary role in their child's faith formation. Indeed, parenting offers many opportunities to teach by word and example in and through the circumstances of daily life. Parents exercise their responsibility for their child's faith formation by their efforts at home and with the parish community as they bring their children to Sunday Mass, provide for their religious education, and present their children for sacraments at the appropriate times.

Director of Religious Education

The Director of Religious Education (DRE) is appointed by the pastor to administer the parish religious education program, working with the parish community to serve the catechetical mission of the Church, ensuring that quality catechetical programs are offered, and calling forth individuals to serve as catechists and aides in the religious education program. The DRE provides training and ongoing formation for catechists, and supports parents as they teach and share the faith with their children.

Catechists

The success of the Religious Education Program depends on the dedicated ministry of volunteer catechists and aides. Catechists are people of faith who respond to a call to teach the faith and lead others to a deeper relationship with Christ. Catechists give witness to the faith by their word and by the example of their lives. Their faith is expressed in a commitment to prayer and Sunday worship, and a willingness to continue their own formation in the faith. Catechists are expected to participate in the catechist certification classes offered through the Archdiocese of Washington. All parish volunteers who work with children are expected to comply with the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Please contact the Director of Religious Education, Susan Anderson (301-258-9193), to learn more about this important ministry.

Aides

Classroom aides are adults or teens who work cooperatively with catechists to plan and lead sessions. Aides are encouraged to participate in the catechist certification classes offered through the Archdiocese of Washington. All parish volunteers who work with children are expected to comply with the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Adults or teens interested in serving as a classroom aide are asked to contact the Director of Religious Education, Susan Anderson (301-258-9193).

Art Catechists

Art Catechists are adults or teens who work with the Director of Religious Education and catechists to plan and lead art projects for Kindergarten through Grade 5 religious education classes by following the schedule prepared at the beginning of the year. All parish volunteers who work with children are expected to comply with the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington.

If you have an interest in serving as an art catechist, please contact the Director of Religious Education, Susan Anderson (301-258-9193).

Other Ways to Volunteer

Each year there are new opportunities to volunteer in the Religious Education Program, such as the following:

- ❖ ***Religious Education Service Team*** . . . work with the DRE to plan and implement Service Projects for RE program
- ❖ ***Confirmation Team Catechists*** . . . lead monthly Confirmation preparation sessions

- ❖ *Special Needs Catechesis* . . . assist with catechetical sessions for children and youth with special needs
- ❖ *Children's Initiation (CIC/CIT)* . . . help lead family sessions to prepare children and youth for Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) in an adapted Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)
- ❖ *Vacation Bible Camp* . . . serve as an adult or teen leader for this week-long program offered in late June
- ❖ *As needed* . . . help with receptions for sacramental celebrations and other special events . . . serve as a volunteer for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Prep Days (two Saturday mornings, January/April) . . . provide administrative support for special projects

Note to Teen Volunteers: Volunteering in the Religious Education Program is a great way for middle school and high school students to deepen their own faith while teaching others. Teens are encouraged to volunteer as classroom aides, as art catechists and music leaders, and with special programs and projects. However, in most cases, service in the Religious Education program is not eligible for MCPS SSL hours.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend 85% or more of the regularly scheduled Religious Education classes, except in special circumstances which are to be discussed with the Director of Religious Education. Attendance records are maintained by the Religious Education Office. We ask that you call the Religious Education Office in advance if your child is unable to attend class. Catechists can provide information and resources for making up lessons that your child has missed.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Parents are asked to complete an authorization form at the beginning of the year, designating those adults authorized to pick up their child from class at dismissal time. Any changes to the usual routine should be arranged in advance and communicated to the catechist in writing.

- For Kindergarten through Grade 5, parents accompany their children to their classroom at the start of class time. Children will be dismissed from their classrooms only to adults who have been designated in advance.
- For Grades 6-8, students may be dropped off at the Gathering Space at Church and will be dismissed from the Gathering Space to adults who have been designated in advance.

*****Please be attentive in the parking lot and help us to maintain safe conditions at all times*****

Student Behavior Expectations

Courteous, respectful, and cooperative behavior is expected at all times in interactions with staff, volunteer catechists, and other children. Concerns will be brought to the attention of the Director of Religious Education and, when necessary, parents will be called to help address disruptive behavior.

Youth Ministry: Grades 6 Through 12

Youth Ministry

The St Francis Youth Ministry activities are offered for all Middle and High School teens. Some program activities combine Middle and High School, but for the most part, the program is split into 2 age groups:

- Juniors (Jr. High/Middle School - grades 6-8).
- Youth Group (High School - grades 9-12)

Youth Ministry Program activities are publicized in the Youth Group section of the weekly parish bulletin, on the youth pages of the St. Francis website (www.sfadw.org/youth-grades-9-12), and on flyers distributed in the bulletin.

Jr. High/Middle School Ministry

The Juniors Youth Ministry events are designed to supplement the grade-specific religious education classes attended by the middle-school youth. Events for Juniors include social events, service events, and retreats that continue to build safe relationships and encourage participation in their Catholic faith community.

High School Ministry

High School Youth Ministry includes a wide variety of events and activities. Check the bulletin and parish website for up-to-date information. Activities include:

Spring & Fall retreats	Chastity events	Rebuilding Together
Adoration Praise & Worship	Sports events	Concerts
Prayer services	Christmas Caroling	Movie Nights
Service projects	March for Life	Multi-Parish Activities
Summer mission trips	Souperbowl of Caring	World Youth Day
Summer game nights	Food Fast for CRS	Hoops for Haiti
Seasonal events	Live Stations of the Cross	Family Events
	Lock-ins & Lock-outs	

Service Opportunities for Youth

Jesus called us to love one another as He loved us and told us that we will be known as His disciples by our love. He even modeled this love for us throughout His life. Service to others is an important component of our faith and of St. Francis Youth Ministry. There are many ways for youth to serve others at St Francis. Recurring parish service opportunities for youth are publicized in the Service Opportunities for Teens flyer every September. Many youth group service activities are eligible for MCPS SSL credit.

Youth Mass

St Francis has a weekly 5pm Youth Mass on Sundays so that youth can enter into authentic and full worship of God with a faith community of peers, families, and adult ministers. All experience Christ's power and love through praise, prayer and breaking open the Word of God in scripture. Many young people are also actively involved in ministries at the liturgy:

Ushers: The purpose of the Usher Ministry is to make parishioners feel welcome and to provide the logistical services that allow the Masses to run smoothly. Usher tasks include:

- Greet and welcome everyone who attends Mass
- Handout music sheets
- Escort parishioners to a pew as needed
- Collect the offering
- Bring forth the gifts (collection basket, bread, and wine) for the celebration of the Eucharist.
- Facilitate an orderly means for all parishioners to receive Holy Communion
- Handle any kind of emergencies during the service
- Distribute the bulletins or assist with other handouts when it is necessary
- Clean up the Church after each Mass

Lectors: Share the good news and proclaim the Word of God. Join our talented group of Lectors who participate at each Youth Mass -- to proclaim the first reading, the second reading, and the petitions.

Altar Servers: Serve the Lord by serving at Mass. Join our group of servers who participate at each Mass. Three servers are needed to assist the priest presider.

Music Ministry: Share your gift of music and help us lead the congregation in praising the Lord through song. Join this upbeat, contemporary ensemble and help provide the wonderful music that makes our Youth Mass so unique. Our group consists of piano, acoustic and electric guitars, bass guitar, drums, and voices.

If your teens are interested in joining any of the Youth Mass ministries, contact the Parish Office (301-840-1407).

Roles & Responsibilities

Youth Ministry happens comprehensively – it is more than programs and events. At the heart of ministry with young people is the presence of caring, supportive relationships where youth experience the Good News in the flesh.

Parents & Family

<p>“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all the virtues. They have the duty to provide as far as possible for the physical and spiritual needs of their children.” CCC 2252</p>

St Francis Youth Ministry serves and supports your primary role in your teen’s faith formation. Many studies reveal that parents are the biggest influence on the decisions made by their children (yes, even your teenage children). What you say and do teaches your children and influences their decisions and choices. Raising your children in the faith is a privilege. It is a grace and a gift from God. *Parent involvement is critical to the success of Youth Ministry at St. Francis.* Please make participation in Mass, the sacraments, and parish community activities, a family priority. In addition, be sure to inform us of any special needs your teen may have including learning, allergies, or other medical needs that we may need to know.

Youth

“Children in turn contribute to the growth in holiness of their parents. Each and everyone should be generous and tireless in forgiving one another for offenses, quarrels, injustices, and neglect. Mutual affection suggests this. The charity of Christ demands it.” CCC 2227

Youth are expected to behave in a Christian manner: respecting self, others, leaders and the parish facilities.

Adult Leaders

“... the future of humanity lies in the hands of those strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping.” —*Gaudium et Spes* 31

The success of parish youth ministry efforts depends on the dedicated ministry of volunteer leaders. Adult youth ministry leaders are people of faith who respond to a call to teach the faith and lead others to a deeper relationship with Christ. They give witness to the faith by their word and by the example of their lives. Their faith is expressed in a commitment to prayer and Sunday worship and a willingness to continue their own formation in the faith. All youth ministry leaders are expected to complete certification through the Archdiocese of Washington and to comply with the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Our parish Youth Ministry is staffed primarily by volunteers. Parents are encouraged to become involved and volunteer in as many ways as they can. Adult volunteers are needed to:

- Chaperone community life events -social activities, recreation, sports, etc.
- Plan, participate and chaperone service projects (e.g. food bank, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, holiday baskets)
- Help with hospitality - coordinate food/snacks – bake/cook
- Chaperone and participate in service work camps – trips to serve the poor and marginalized
- Coordinate, supervise, participate in fundraising activities
- Lead/coordinate/participate in bible study
- Plan, lead groups, chaperone, cook, and more at retreats
- Plan, coordinate, lead, participate in family programs and activities
- Pray for our Teens and parish Youth Ministry efforts

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for youth ministry, contact the Parish Office (301-840-1407).

Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity - 1Timothy 4:12
