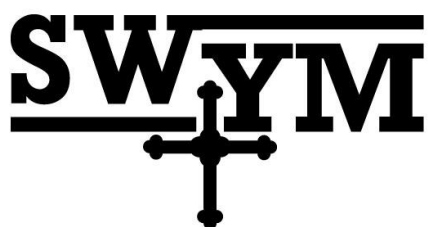


S.W.Y.M.
Saint William Youth Ministry
2026-2027

*Fear not,
for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name.
You are mine.*
Isaiah 43:1



Greeting Parents of Saint William Catholic Church,

In St. John's Gospel, Jesus asks Andrew and John: "What are you looking for?" He asks that same questions to teens of every generation because He knows that the youth are always looking to feel loved and are always looking for meaning in their lives. That is why after asking that question, Jesus invites them to come and get to know Him better because He knows that everything that they are looking for can be found with Him. It is that **ENCOUNTER** that fills the heart of the teens with the love and hope they very much need to put to rest the voices of despair, loneliness and hopelessness that they encounter in the world. The Catholic Church is the surest place where one can fully encounter Jesus Christ on a personal level, through the Sacraments and the vast spiritual richness it has.

The vision is simply this, to lead teenagers closer to Jesus Christ and to empower them to be life-long disciples in His Church. In order to facilitate this **ENCOUNTER**, SWYM uses a variety of approaches including Prayer, Talks, Retreats, Bible Study, Fellowship, Ice Breakers, Small Group Discussions and more.

Parents, as you might know, have the primary responsibility to educate their children in the faith. Therefore, the preparation process for Confirmation begins at home, our Confirmation program only compliments the spiritual formation that takes place fundamentally inside the Domestic Church.

Remember, **YOU** are the primary teachers of the faith. Your witness in the love of neighbor, in a constant life of prayer, participating in Sunday liturgy, is the first school of Christian life for your children. Listen to what Saint Augustine had to say about this: "the educational task of parents in igniting and maintaining the faith in the heart of their children, is a true ecclesial ministry like that of the Bishop (Ep 188, 3 y Serm 94)." In other words, Saint Augustine compares the spiritual task that you have with your children with that of a Bishop!!!

The **Sacrament of Confirmation** is an important part of every Catholic's spiritual development. That is why Confirmation candidates are given a vast array of opportunities to live, learn, and appreciate the Catholic faith. This Sacrament has two primary effects. First, the bond with the Church, which first began in baptism, is strengthened. And second, the person is enriched with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and receives the spiritual gifts of the Spirit. Both effects perfect the grace that is first received in Baptism and helps us continue to live our baptismal call as disciples of Christ to the world.

Finally, I invite you, to pray with me, so that your son or daughter keep an open heart and mind, so that they can experience the Sacrament of Confirmation as a holy and profound sign of God's unconditional love for them.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Peace and Goodness,

Francisco Soriano
Director of Youth Ministry
fsoriano@st-william.org
512-600-8174

S.W.Y.M. Confirmation program

(If your teen is seeking not only the Sacrament of Confirmation, but also, First Holy Communion or even Baptism, please first read the part concerning the O.C.I.A. program at the end of this Handbook)

It is a TWO-YEAR formation process. It is divided into Year 1 & Year 2. **Classes are every other Sunday from 6:00 to 8:00pm.** In other words, we use a **ROTATING FORMAT**, so YEAR 1 goes one week and YEAR 2 goes the next week, and so on and so on. Classes are held in the PEC Banquet Hall.

To know the exact dates when each group- either Year One or Year Two- has classes, take a look at the calendar, which you could find in our webpage <https://www.st-william.org/confirmation-resources>

Are you Eligible for our Confirmation Program?

- ✓ Must be in High School ages 14-19 years old.
- ✓ Must have been Baptized Catholic.

Are your teens in a Catholic School or Homeschooled?

- ✓ Please email Francisco for more information: fsoriano@st-william.org

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

1) ATTENDANCE:

- Teens must participate in at least 80% of all Nights each of the two years; if not, you will be asked to repeat the year. If a teen arrives after 6:45 p.m., they are still welcome, but will receive no attendance point.
- Absences are only excused for pastoral reason in extraordinary cases such as death in the family or, surgery.
- Absences such as common sicknesses (cold, flu, Covid, stomach bug), or for family/sports events, or schoolwork are NOT EXCUSED ABSENCES.
- **HOWEVER**, teens can earn additional attendance points by attending our optional retreats in order to make up for those absences that are not excused and that way, assure the 80% attendance requirement: Attend Ignite Retreat, DCYC or Steubenville Conferences to receive TWO ATTENDANCE POINTS.

2) SUNDAY MASS & HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION must be part of the teen's regular faith life.

3) CONFIRMATION RETREAT: This is a **MANDATORY** retreat **ONLY FOR THOSE IN YEAR 2.**

4) REQUIRED PAPERWORK: ONLY YEAR 2 TEENS must turn in Required Paperwork **no later than February 7, 2027**, except the Baptismal Certificate that must be turned in **no later than December 1, 2026.**

REQUIRED PAPERWORK:
ONLY FOR TEENS IN SECOND YEAR OF CONFIRMATION
DUE BY FEB. 7, 2027 EXCEPT FOR BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

- ☐ Copy of Baptismal Certificate. **Due by Dec. 1st, 2026**
- ☐ Candidate General Information Sheet
- ☐ Service Project
- ☐ Saint Essay
- ☐ Diocese of Austin Sponsor Covenant Form. This form replaces the need for copies of their Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage Certificates. When signing this document, they are affirming the information to be true.

**All Candidates and Sponsors are asked to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. **

***Someone may proxy for the sponsor if they are unable to attend the Confirmation ceremony. Please note that the proxy must meet the qualifications of the sponsor. ***

**** All documents and guidelines can be found in our website: <https://www.saintwilliams.org/swym-1>*

Retreats 2026-2027

EXCLUSIVE FOR YEAR 2 TEENS AND IT IS MANDATORY.

- 1) Confirmation Retreat. **Nov. 14, 2026 from 8:30am to 7pm** in the PEC Hall.

OPTIONAL FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

- 1) Ignite Retreat: **Sept. 12-13** led by Father Francisco at Eagle's Wing's Center. Cost. \$100.
- 2) Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference (DCYC): **Jan. 29 - Jan. 31, 2027** at Waco Convention Center, Waco, TX. Cost: \$250
- 2) Steubenville Lonestar Conferences: **June 18 – 20, 2027** in Irving, Texas. Cost: \$350

Additional Programs:

1) J-Squad: Is our Youth Ministry leadership program especially designed for teens who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation and desire to go deeper into their faith life. J-Squad members are formed first in a rich prayer life and then as living witnesses. They help lead elements of our Confirmation program. J-Squad meets every Monday night starting **September 14th** in room 209 of the PEC from 7:00-8:45 p.m. For more information, please click the following link: <https://st-william.org/j-squad>

2) S.W.Y.M Post-Confirmation: Even though we highly encourage teens who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, to go to J-Squad; if for whatever reason they cannot commit to J-Squad, we offer our S.W.Y.M., Post Confirmation program which meets on the days that Year 1 of our Confirmation Program take place, but it's content will vary and they have their own Small Group Leader.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Respect is vital to creating an environment where one can grow in their faith. It is expected that teens respect the adult volunteers and their peers, this includes but is not limited to: **Please take time to go over the Code of Conduct with your teens.**

- 1) Follow instructions of adult volunteers.
- 2) Regarding the dress code, everything we wear must reflect Christian modesty. No youth should wear clothing that contains a violent, offensive, or anti-Christian message.
For Girls: Short shorts, strapless shirts, low cut tops, skintight garments and shirts exposing midriff, stomach or underwear are not to be worn.
For Boys: Saggy pants and short shorts are not to be worn.
- 3) Bullying and/or aggressive, threatening or violent acts will not be tolerated.
- 4) Drugs, alcohol, weapons or other illegal items will not be tolerated. If a teen is found possessing these items, the police will be called first and then the parent.
- 5) Cell Phones and ear buds are not allowed once we begin the night with the Opening Prayer. Teens who do not follow this policy may have their phones collected and returned at the end of the night. In regards to the ear bud, we will simply ask your teen to put it away.
- 6) Parents who are dropping off/ picking up teens, please do so outside the PEC Hall. Teens that bring their own car please park in front of the PEC Hall. All this is for safety reasons.
- 7) If a teen needs to leave early for a family reason, the parent should come and check them out through one of the adult core team members or inform me of the situation by any means. Teens will not be permitted to leave without parental notification and consent prior to 8:00 p.m. All this is for the safety of the teens.

If a teen is misbehaving and not following our Code of Conduct, we will talk directly to him or her, to talk about the problem at hand and see what must be done to correct the situation. However, if the situation continues, parents will be notified, and a special meeting will take place with all the parties involved to discuss what must be done to resolve the situation.

Please take time to go over the Code of Conduct with your teens.



O.C.I.A.
ADAPTED FOR TEENS
PROGRAM

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The O.C.I.A. program will take part alongside the Confirmation Program. Therefore, everything that was stated about the Confirmation Program also applies to the O.C.I.A. program, but please take note of the following differences.

Who belongs in O.C.I.A Program adapted for teens?

- 1) **CATECHUMENS** are those **unbaptized teens** who are preparing to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion), and thus enter into the Catholic Church. The reception of the Sacraments is during the Easter Vigil, if ready.
- 2) **CATHOLICS WHO HAVE ONLY BEEN BAPTIZED** are those teens that have been baptized Catholic but have not received First Holy Communion and are also seeking to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The reception of the Sacrament is during a Spring Mass with the Bishop, if ready
- 3) **CANDIDATES** are those teens who have been baptized in the Trinitarian Formula in another Christian denomination and who would like to enter into Full Communion with the Catholic Church. The reception of the Sacraments is during Spring, if ready.

CATECHUMENS

The requirements for teens in the O.C.I.A. Program are the same as the ones in the Confirmation program, but they do have to complete certain rites in Year 2, as well as some extra classes. For more information regarding the dates of the rites and what they entail, please contact Francisco Soriano at 512-600-8174 or email at fsoriano@st-william.org

The required paperwork and due dates are the same as the one pointed out for the Confirmation Program, **BUT INSTEAD** of a Copy of the Baptismal Certificate, we need a copy of the Birth Certificate. **DUE BEFORE DEC. 1, 2026.**

ALSO, the Catechumen only need ONE sponsor for the Sacrament of Baptism, and that same person will be the sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation, demonstrating the intimate connection between both Sacraments.

CATHOLICS WHO HAVE ONLY BEEN BAPTIZED CATHOLICS

The requirements, paperwork, and due dates for teens in the O.C.I.A. program are the same as the ones in the Confirmation program, but they do have to complete certain rites in Year 2, as well as some extra classes. For more information regarding the dates of the rites and what they entail, please contact Francisco Soriano at 512-600-8174 or email at fsoriano@st-william.org

CANDIDATES (Profession of Faith)

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