

2025-26 Parent Handbook



ST. LAURENCE
Faith Formation

***Please review the parent handbook and
complete the acknowledgment form at the
end of the handbook.***

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Faith Formation Mission Statement

Faith Formation at St. Laurence Catholic Church seeks to meet children, youth, adults, and families amid their lives to deepen their relationship with Christ and the Church, strengthen their foundations of faith, and empower them to be disciples in the world. We look to form a partnership with parents and families to live their faith throughout their lives. The following six tasks are at the heart of faith formation that we strive to develop in our parish: Knowledge of the Faith, Liturgical Life, Moral Formation, Prayer, Communal Life, and Missionary Spirit. This requires a balance of the head, heart, and hands in each of our offerings to encourage parishioners to live out the mission of St. Laurence Catholic Church.

St. Laurence Mission Statement

We the people of St. Laurence Catholic Church are centered in the love of Christ and glorify God in all that we do.

Faith Formation Team

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OVERVIEW OF FAITH FORMATION OFFERINGS

<i>Annual Programs</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Program Dates</i>
OCIA/OCIC	Sundays, 10:15 am – 12:15 pm	Sept-April/Weekly
Adult Confirmation Preparation	Thursdays, 7 – 9 pm	March-May/Weekly
Infant Baptism Preparation	Saturday, 9 am – 1 pm	Aug-June/Monthly
First Sacraments Preparation	Parent-led/various dates	Aug-May
Teen Confirmation Preparation	Sunday, 6:15 – 8:15 pm	Aug-May/Weekly
Clubhouse 10:14	3 rd Sunday, 10:14 – 11:30 am	Sept-May/Monthly
Elementary Faith Formation (CCE)	Tuesday, 6 – 7:15 pm Wednesday, 5:15 – 6:30 pm	Sept-May/Weekly
Edge (Middle School)	Wednesday, 7 – 8:15 pm	Sept-May/Weekly
Life Teen (High School)	Sunday, 6:15 – 8:15 pm	Sept-May/Weekly
Family Faith	1 st Sunday, 9:15 am – 12 pm	Aug-May/Monthly
Home Study	At home/quarterly parent mtgs	Sept-April
Family Gather Nights	Friday, 6:30-8 pm/various dates	Sept-June/ Quarterly

<i>Special Programs</i>	<i>Age-Level</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Event Dates</i>
Covecrest	High School	Overnight in Tiger, GA	July 14-19
Edge Lock-In	Middle School	Overnight at Ave Maria Center	July 25-26
Bros & Briskets	Adult Men	Evening at Ave Maria Center	July 31
Adult Faith Seminar	Adults	Fri. Evening/Sat. morning	Oct. 3-4
Inspiration/Six Flags	High School	Full day in San Antonio, TX	Nov. 8
Confirmation Retreat	High School	Overnight near Houston, TX	Dec. 5-7
WKND Retreat	High School	Overnight near Houston, TX	Feb. 13-15
Steubenville	High School	Overnight in Alexandria, LA	June 19-21
Jr. High Youth Rally	Middle School	Full day in Houston, TX	Feb. TBD
Women's Day of Reflection	Adult Women	Morning at Ave Maria Center	April 18

FAITH FORMATION

Clubhouse 10:14/Preschool Faith Formation: an 8-month course for 3- and 4-year-olds and their parents that meets every third Sunday of the month to establish the foundations of faith for children, strengthen the parents' leadership in faith, and enjoy the process of spiritual development in creative, hands-on ways. <https://stlaurence.org/preschool-cce>

Elementary Faith Formation (Grades K-5): an 8-month series of classes geared toward the appropriate grade level in a structured environment led by catechists. CCE meets weekly with parents bringing their children into the Ave Maria Center and picking them up from individual classrooms. <https://stlaurence.org/elementary-cce>

Edge/Middle School Faith Formation (Grades 6-8): an 8-month series of formation and social nights that combines large group teachings and small group discussions and activities. Edge meets weekly, led by a Core team in their small groups, with parents dropping off and picking up their middle schoolers either in person or in a carpool line. Summer activities and special events are also offered. <https://stlaurence.org/edge>

Life Teen/High School Faith Formation (Grades 9-12): an 8-month series of formation and social nights that combines large group teachings and small group discussions. Life Teen meets weekly, led by a Core team in small groups, following the 5 pm Mass. Summer activities and special events are also offered. <https://stlaurence.org/lifeteen>

Home Study (PreK-12th grades): an 8-month series of formation led by parents in the home with quarterly parent check-in to review progress and deepen parents' leadership in faith. <https://stlaurence.org/home-study>

Family Faith (all grades): an 8-month series for families with children from birth to 12th grade that meets monthly in large group sessions led by a family Core team and grade-appropriate classroom time. <https://stlaurence.org/family-faith>

Emerging Young Adults (18-22 years old): a series of social and faith-filled events for emerging young adults in college and/or entering the work world. <https://stlaurence.org/ya>

Young Adults (18-39 years old): a semester and summer series for young professionals that meets weekly to deepen a person's knowledge and practice of their faith. Social activities are offered as well as opportunities to reunite with fellow parishioners during and after college. <https://stlaurence.org/ya>

Adult Faith Formation (18+): a variety of lecture series, bible studies, prayer groups, and so much more for all adults seeking to deepen their faith and transform their lives. Many adult faith formation groups meet weekly through an 8-month period and break for the summer. <https://stlaurence.org/aff>

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults): A process of instruction with a series of rites that leads to full initiation into the Catholic Church and open to those who have never received Baptism, those baptized in another Christian faith, or those who have yet to receive the Eucharist and Confirmation. The process includes children and youth 7 to 18 years of age who have not received Baptism or who were baptized in another Christian denomination. This is a two-year process, with the first year in an age-appropriate faith formation program, and the second year in OCIA. An adult companion, preferably the parent who is the sponsor or godparent, must attend with the child/youth during the second year of OCIA. <https://stlaurence.org/ocia>

Infant Baptism: A preparatory course for parents (godparents not required at St. Laurence) of children from birth – 6 years of age to prepare for the Sacrament of Baptism, held once a month. For an infant or young child to receive Baptism, parents must: take (or have taken) Baptism Preparation course in the last 5 years, complete a Baptism registration form, submit a copy of the baby/young child's official state issued birth certificate. <https://stlaurence.org/baptism>

First Sacraments (First Reconciliation & First Eucharist): A preparatory process of parent-led instruction and designated large group sessions that prepare children and youth from 2nd through 12th grade to receive their First Reconciliation (Fall) and First Eucharist (Spring). **A prior year of faith formation (CCE, Home Study, Family Faith, Edge, Life Teen, Catholic School) must be successfully completed to register for First Sacraments.** A baptismal certificate must be submitted with registration. <https://stlaurence.org/first-sacraments>

Teen Confirmation: A preparatory process for youth in 10th through 12th grades that, with a sponsor, prepares them to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Preparation is held in eight sessions with additional special events such as a retreat and service opportunities. **A prior year of faith formation (Life Teen, Home Study, Catholic School) must be successfully completed to register for Confirmation.** A baptismal certificate must be submitted with registration. <https://stlaurence.org/confirmation>

Adult Confirmation: A nine-class preparatory process with retreat and service opportunity, for adults 18+ (out of high school) to prepare them to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. A baptismal certificate reissued within 6 months of the rite must be submitted with registration. <https://stlaurence.org/adultconfirmation>

REGISTRATION

Registration for 2026-27 Faith Formation and Sacrament Preparation occurs April 1, 2026 through June 1, 2026. Registration is online at stlaurence.org/registration. Anyone seeking First Sacraments, Teen Confirmation, or Initiation should successfully complete a prior year of Catholic school or parish formation. During the year of sacrament prep, the child/teen also should attend Catholic school or parish formation (except if in OCIA). To register for sacrament preparation, you will need the child/teen's baptismal certificate. The child/teen's family must be a registered parishioner to attend First Sacraments and Teen Confirmation. **Note, registration does not guarantee placement, which is contingent upon space availability and securing volunteers.** <https://stlaurence.org/registration>

SERVING IN FAITH FORMATION

Parents and families are at the center of faith formation. Through family relationships of warmth, love, and listening that model and live out the faith daily, faith becomes a lifelong endeavor and rooted in people's lives. Parents are expected to engage in their family's faith

development both at home and in formation. We encourage all parishioners, and especially parents, to discern serving in Faith Formation as a catechists, assistant catechist, small group leader, hall monitor, or hospitality. With over 1500 children and youth seeking out formation at St. Laurence, your stewardship of time and talent is invaluable to fulfilling our parish mission.

<https://stlaurence.org/serve>

GENERAL POLICIES

BEHAVIOR

St. Laurence Catholic Church seeks to serve our community in ways that are safe, respectful, and Christ-centered with attention focused on the human person, the community, and their dignity. Any special needs or circumstances of a child/teen that impacts behavior should be addressed before programming begins or when first known.

Behavior that disrupts the formation process in consistent ways should be handled accordingly:

Immediate Steps of Action

- The catechist or small group leader will stop the disruptive or harmful behavior the time it first occurs
- If the behavior reoccurs, the catechist or small group leaders will report to the Coordinator, who will contact the parent and file an incident report as needed

Continued Occurrence & Follow Up Action

- The Coordinator will report to the Associate Director of Faith Formation and they will meet with child/teen and additionally with the parents
- If no improvement is made or alternative methods are not fruitful, the child/teen may need to move to Home Study
- *Harmful or violent behavior is never acceptable and may result in dismissal*
- Any issues of self-harm, violence, or abuse will be reported to church administration, parents, and as needed to the proper authorities

NOTE: Faith Formation participants will take part in various devotional activities such as Mass, Adoration, Reconciliation, May Crowning, etc. Reverence for God and His Church and

growth in reverent behavior fosters deeper respect for faith and community and is an expectation in our community.

COMMUNICATION

St. Laurence Catholic Church seeks to serve our community in ways that are safe, respectful, and Christ-centered with attention focused on the human person, the community, and their dignity. Any forms of communication between volunteers and minors as well as those among staff, volunteers, and parents should uphold these ideals and respect the following policies:

- Communication in its variety of forms should be transparent, inclusive, balanced, and seek good intent that is ministry-focused and supportive of our parish community
- Communication about Faith Formation programming will be made from Flocknote email and text messaging (Flocknote is our parish messaging system)
- Other forms of communication may include website, bulletin, program calendar, or social media and a messaging board for special events (for parents and teens)
- For individual questions and concerns, parents may email or call the program Coordinator
- Volunteers and staff should not text message minors (under 18 years old). Electronic communication with participants who are minors should take place through Flocknote, email, or an approved messaging app like GroupMe, and include responsible staff

Cell Phones & Personal Electronic Devices

- *Elementary Faith Formation (K – 5th grade):* no cell phones or personal electronic devices should accompany a child to faith formation; reverence is expected in any devotional activities
- *Middle School Faith Formation (6th – 8th grades):* upon arrival cell phones should be put away during the entirety of faith formation; cell phones may be used if contact with parents or caregivers is determined necessary by the small group leader or Coordinator; reverence is expected in any devotional activities
- *High School Faith Formation (9th – 12th grade):* cell phones should be put away for the duration of large and small group sessions or other formation specific activities; reverence is expected in any devotional activities

NOTE: Staff and catechists or small group leaders of minors may collect cell phones in a general space to prevent disruption to formation unless the device is needed for immediate and necessary communication with parents or caregivers

SPECIAL NEEDS & CIRCUMSTANCES

Any special needs or circumstances that help our staff to better form and prepare your child in their faith should be communicated at the start of the programming year or as soon as known. St. Laurence Catholic Church holds the dignity of every person close to its heart and will accommodate special needs and circumstances to the best of its ability. Special needs and circumstances may include neurodivergence, social-emotional well-being, chronic illness, or familial hardship. If any circumstances require medication, this should be administered by the parent or caregiver unless emergency personnel are needed.

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance at faith formation and sacrament preparation ensures a deepening of relationship with fellow Catholics, a growth in knowledge of the Catholic faith, and greater awareness of the transformative nature of its practice. Participants should be mindful of the expectations below and with any absence, contact the coordinator in advance.

- If an absence is unavoidable due to illness or emergency circumstances, contact the Coordinator as soon as possible
- If a participant is found to be ill during faith formation, assistance will be given and a parent of a child/teen contacted
- When needed (prerequisite/prior year and concurrent year of sacrament prep), makeup work will be communicated to the participant and parent to be completed in a timely manner
- Catechists, small group leaders, or the Coordinator will follow up on any reoccurring absences to assure wellness and reiterate program-specific expectations
- Strive to be on time and avoid early pickups due to their disruption of formation and concern for safety; excessive tardiness will be followed up with an email or phone call as needed
- Sacrament preparation of minors (or any person in elementary, middle, or high school), in accord with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, requires a foundational or prerequisite year of faith formation to ensure the participant is formed well

- The foundational or prerequisite year may include Catholic school or parish formation (CCE, Edge, Life Teen, Home Study, Family Faith)
- Sacrament preparation also requires faith formation (Catholic school or parish formation) in the same year sacrament preparation occurs (except OCIA)
- **Successful completion** of the foundational or prerequisite year as well as the concurrent year of faith formation and sacrament prep is 100% attendance; absences due to illness or extenuating circumstances requires the completion of makeup work; anything lower will result in ineligibility and delay sacrament preparation

NOTE: Cancellations due to weather, power outage, or other campus concerns will be sent to parents via Flocknote or added to our phone line and webpage upon the discretion of parish administration.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

The safety of all participants, especially our children and teens, is central to St. Laurence Catholic Church and we value your awareness and cooperation in arrival and dismissal procedures to ensure that safety and to respect the well-being of one another.

- *Preschool Faith Formation & Family Faith: any children should be accompanied by an adult*
- *Elementary Faith Formation (K – 5th grades):*
 - Arrival: a parent/legal guardian walks their child into the Ave Maria Center to catechists in the Marian Hall (parents must remain with child until the catechist is present); parents enter with their vehicle through the Austin Parkway entrance, park, and walk their child inside
 - Dismissal: a parent/legal guardian proceeds to their child's classroom and signs them out; parents exit with their vehicle from the Sweetwater Boulevard exit
 - *Any special circumstances for arrival and dismissal should be communicated in writing well in advance of the session*
- *Middle School Faith Formation (6th – 8th grades):*
 - Arrival: a parent/legal guardian drops off their child to the Ave Maria Center by entering through the Austin Parkway entrance, proceeding to drop off under the porte-cochere entrance, and exiting through the Sweetwater Boulevard exit
 - Dismissal: a parent/legal guardian enters with their vehicle through the Austin Parkway entrance, parks, and walks into the Ave Maria Center to pick up their youth from Marian Hall

- *Any special circumstances for arrival and dismissal should be communicated in writing well in advance of the session*
- **High School Faith Formation (9th – 12th grades):**
 - **Arrival:**
 - teens walk over to the Ave Maria Center, accompanied by small group leaders and staff, at the crosswalk, immediately following the 5 pm Mass
 - a parent/legal guardian enters with their vehicle through the Austin Parkway entrance, proceeds to the drop off under the porte-cochere entrance, and exits via Sweetwater Blvd.
 - a driving teen enters with their vehicle through the Austin Parkway entrance, parks, and walks into the Ave Maria Center main entrance
 - **Dismissal:**
 - A parent/legal guardian enters through the Austin Parkway entrance, proceeds the porte-cochere entrance, stops to picks up their teen, and exits via Sweetwater Boulevard
 - A driving teen proceeds to their parked vehicle and exits via Sweetwater Boulevard; teens may socialize in Kelly's Cafe for a short period but should not loiter in the parking lot

HEALTH, SAFETY, & ENVIRONMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All staff, catechists, small group leaders, and volunteers are given a copy of St. Laurence Health, Safety, and Environment Policies and Procedures and are expected to be familiar with its content to assure the health and safety of individuals and groups while in session. If you would like to review this document, please access a copy on our website at <https://stlaurence.org/education>

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

[25-26 St. Laurence Faith Formation Handbook Acknowledgment](#)