



Saint Clare of Assisi
CATHOLIC CHURCH

2020-2021
Youth Ministry Handbook

Our mission:

To walk alongside our youth as they learn, grow, and share their witness of faith and live as dynamic disciples of Jesus Christ.

WELCOME

You and your family have made the decision to educate and form your teens in the ways of loving, knowing and following our Savior Jesus Christ. You do so through the fullness of the Christian faith, that is, the Catholic Church. As your parish family, we stand with you and by you to encourage, support and love you. We all want to be pleasing to the Lord and accepting of his holy will. Let us all strive to become saints!

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures for our Youth Ministry program for grades 6 through 12. If you have questions or concerns, please let us know.

God's many blessings to you and your loved ones!

Father Gregory West, Pastor

Our Hopes and Dreams

Pope Francis prayed that our church “may be full of joyous, courageous and committed young people who can offer the world new testimonies of holiness.” (Christus Vivit)



We believe that our teens have so much to offer the church and the world around us. As a parish community, we are committed to being present to our youth and walking with them in order to mentor, guide, and teach them. USCCB document, *Renewing the Vision*, says “The entire Church... must empower young people... We must ensure that young people are well equipped for their special mission in the world.” We will offer many opportunities for Worship, Socialization, Leadership, Catechesis, Service, and more. We want our young people to be well rounded as they strive for their fullest potential; as they pursue sainthood. This is something that demands the work of the entire church, and we must always have our eyes open to encounter Christ in the faces of our youth.

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Ministry Programs & details

MIDDLE SCHOOL

EDGE (Grades 6-8)

Middle School Youth Ministry is part of our CLAREity Night on Wednesdays, where we have something for all ages.



- The first Wednesday of each month we have Mass, and all ages are invited.
- We strive to provide an environment that is engaging and dynamic enough for a middle school student to be interested and stay interested. At our sessions, we will do various games, skits, team-building exercises, and service projects that will fortify the teachings and put our faith into action. Every other week is loaded with opportunities to grow in friendships and faith.
- All middle school youth are welcome to participate, no matter what school you attend. Participants can even invite friends who are not registered in our parish.
- Our program is catechetical, and at many of our weekly sessions, the youth will hear a teaching, then break into small groups for activities and discussions that break open the teaching. They will learn about sacraments, scripture, saints, virtues, grace, and much more.
- Our program is also designed to go beyond catechesis. It is to be relational. All the teachings presented to our teens will be done by our Core Team (adult and teen volunteers), who are there to build relationships first and teach second. Our program is also meant to deepen the spiritual life of each student through the time we spend in prayer and worship.
- While attendance at EDGE is not mandatory and we don't have a maximum number of absences, the more your student attends, the more fun they will have and the more they will learn about our faith and what it means for the way they live, act, and serve as part of the body of Christ.

CLAREity Night (All Ages)

With our nursery open, the ministry starts as young as 0 and goes up from there. Clare's Kids integrates fun and formation with worship and service for grades one through five. This prepares them for the next step, which is to join our EDGE program. But it doesn't stop there. Our High School students play an important role on Wednesdays as Core Team Leaders and serving in all our programs. Finally, we have Café Clare for all adults who want a relaxed and social place to keep learning more about our faith. All these programs are designed to grow disciples and preparing everyone to take their place as active members of the body of Christ.



Confirmation (Grades 7-8)

When a middle school student reaches 7th grade they are invited to begin their journey towards Confirmation. While continuing with EDGE and/or Catholic School, they also participate in our Confirmation program through Discipleship Groups and/or Large Group Sessions with Parents. Our Confirmation program is designed, as all our other programs, to form disciples; that is, a church living as one body in Christ and being witnesses of faith to the world around them.



Year 1 - Non-Catholic School students

- Continue on-going religious education by participating regularly with EDGE.
- Attend at least 10 out of 12 Discipleship Group Sessions
- Attend all 4 large group sessions w/ parents
- Attend one day retreat
- Complete a service project with your Discipleship Group

Year 1 - Catholic School students

- Attend all 4 large group sessions w/ parents
- Attend one day retreat

Year 2 - Everything repeats, with the addition of...

- All candidates must turn in a sponsor form and complete a written reflection on their service project, saint name, and retreat experience. Guidelines and forms can be found on the website.
- For those students in Catholic School, all projects on saints and service projects that are completed for class will also be accepted at the parish.
- All candidates must also complete an interview at the end of their preparation.

Discipleship Groups

All non-Catholic school students will be assigned to a small group where they will learn about their call to discipleship. Each group will have about 10 candidates and two adult leaders. Within their group, they will spend time learning about the Sacrament of Confirmation, talk about living their faith in everyday life, spend time in prayer, and grow in friendship and accountability. Each group will also complete a serve project each year. Each candidate in a Discipleship Group must attend 10 out of their 12 sessions.

Large Group Sessions with Parents

All Candidates in both Catholic and non-Catholic school, we attend 4 Large group sessions each year. At least one parent should be in attendance. If a parent is not available, we recommend their sponsor. Each session will include a guest speaker to lead everyone deeper in faith and inspire good conversation between the parent and child. Since there are only four of these sessions each year, it is expected for everyone to attend each one.

Retreats

Our retreats are a favorite part for most candidates. The retreats provide an opportunity for the youth to take a break from their daily routine and focus all their attention on their relationship with God. They come back with stronger friendships, conviction, joy, and a deeper relationship with God. We have a retreat especially designed for each year of Confirmation Preparation. However, we understand that some calendar dates don't always work out, or some might prefer a different type of experience. We do have a couple other retreat options to choose from. Please contact the youth ministry office for more information.

*For any students who cannot make the scheduled confirmation retreat, we have several other options such as

- Diocesan Jr. High Rally
- EDGE Middle School Retreat

Service Hours

At Saint Clare of Assisi, we do not count service hours. We believe there should never be a limit to what we give. Instead of counting the hours, we ask our youth to come up with a meaningful project or act of service they can do together, and in their second year also submit a written reflection about it.

A mandatory Confirmation rehearsal will be held for all year two students at the end of the year. Sponsors and Candidates must be in attendance. After the rehearsal, we invite all family and friends to be part of a Holy Hour to pray for all our Candidates.

Attendance Policy

- **Mass** - Weekly participation in Mass is a fundamental and necessary factor in deepening your child's faith and equipping him/her for discipleship.
- **EDGE** - There are no penalties for missing a Life Night or EDGE Night. However, we strongly encourage consistent and regular participation so that our students may gain the most out of their experience.
- **Confirmation**
 - **Discipleship Groups** - Non-Catholic school students are required to attend at least 10 out of their 12 Confirmation Sessions. They must also be present for their Discipleship Group's service project.
 - **Large Group Parent Sessions** - All Candidates and at least one parent are required to attend each Large Group Session. These sessions provide focused instruction, engaging activities, and an opportunity to share in good conversation with your son/daughter.
 - **Applicable to both, Discipleship Groups and Large Group Sessions:**
 - Missed classes for sports or other extracurricular activities, even with advance notice, is not considered excused.
 - In the event of a prolonged illness that results in several absences, please contact the parish office.

HIGH SCHOOL

Life Teen

High School Youth Ministry has a focus on several components: Formation, Worship, Fellowship, Leadership, and Service.



Life Nights

Our high school teens gather every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. Life Nights are open to all students in high school. Our participants are always welcome to invite friends along as well. Dinner is provided each session, and every night includes some community building activities, catechesis, small groups, and prayer

Also, be sure not to miss our four XLTs. We gather with youth groups all around the Charleston area for a night of worship. We bring in inspiring guest speakers that will lead us into a night of Eucharistic Adoration and Confession. Dinner is always included.

Households

They meet every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Any student who would like to take things a bit deeper is invited to join one of our gender-based small group communities. Each Household has unique charisms and devotions that lead our teens closer to Christ through stronger friendship and accountability.

Youth Core Team

Our High School students also have a unique opportunity to be active leaders in our parish community. We look to our high schoolers to help with Confirmation Retreats, EDGE nights, and Clare's Kids. Our Youth Core Team goes through intense training over the summer to prepare them for a year of service and leadership. In order to participate, one must apply and be accepted. Application can be found online.

RCIT

Any High School student seeking to receive Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation, please contact the parish office.

S.O.S.

If you are interested in more information about our monthly service projects, please contact the youth ministry office to be placed on our email list. These projects are open for the entire family to participate and will vary each month.

What happened to Pizza and Praise?

Pizza and Praise is now being combined with our CLAREity Nights. Every first and 3rd Wednesday of the month, there will be opportunities for worship.

Registration

Registration is available online at clare.church. Payment is due at the time of registration and can be paid online. Baptismal certificates must be on file in the parish office for every child enrolled in Faith Formation. If you have not yet submitted a copy of the certificate, there is a place to upload on the registration form.

Online Orientation

With registration, an online orientation with video and other orientation materials is provided and mandatory. You will be directed to where you can access the orientation videos and complete a small form confirming that you have received the orientation information.

Tuition schedule for the 2020-2021 school year

EDGE Nights	\$75 per student
Confirmation Year 1 non-Catholic school students	\$75 per student
Confirmation Year 1 Catholic school students	\$30 per student
Confirmation Year 2 non-Catholic school students	\$75 per student
Confirmation Year 2 Catholic school students	\$30 per student
Life Nights	\$75 per student
Households	\$50 per student
Confirmation Retreats	Vary in Price

Parent Information

Communication

We use the Mailchimp email platform for important updates. Please check your email's spam folder if you are not receiving our parish bulletin or Faith Formation emails.



Emergency closing

If we need to cancel an event for any reason, we will send out an email.

Our Ministry Team

We have a big team of volunteers that make our ministry work.

EDGE Night Core Team

Discipleship Group Leaders

Life Night Core Team

Household Leaders

Diocesan Missionary Team

Retreat Teams

Your Role

Join our Team?

If you love Jesus, your church, and teenagers, we invite you to join our team. Our teens need adults who will mentor them, walk with them, and support them through these important years of their life.

We know things can be tricky as a parent. While a healthy balance of independence and guidance is crucial for adolescent development, studies do show that parent involvement is a key component for a teen to stick with their faith.

Life Night Dinners

We know one thing; teens love to eat. We ask that each family use our sign-up sheet to provide a meal for one of our Life Nights.

Support

You are the primary catechist in your child's life. Saint John Paul II often referred to the family as the "domestic church". Your children will first and foremost learn their faith by what they see and hear at home. We ask that you continue to support your adolescent child as they seek, challenge, and grow with their faith. This means living out your baptismal promises of training your children in the faith, attending Mass regularly, and using your gifts and talents to serve the body of Christ.

Lastly, we ask for your enthusiastic support. Encourage your son/daughter to participate in youth ministry. Parents are still and always will be the #1 influence in a teenagers life.

Safe Environment

Screening Volunteers

Any adult involved in our ministry completes training and a full background check. Even if a volunteer completed training in another diocese, they must still complete our diocesan training and a background check before volunteering with our youth. All volunteers are required to renew their training and background check every five years.

Reporting Dangerous Situations

Every staff member and volunteer is mandated to report any suspicious or dangerous situation, such as: 1) If a student is being harmed, neglected, or abused. 2) If a student is harming someone else. 3) If a student is at risk of harming themselves.

Drop-Off & Pick Up

Your children's safety is important to us.

EDGE – During all EDGE nights, students must be dropped off and picked up on the PAC side of the school. The only entrance that will be open is the gate behind the PAC (between the PAC and nursery).

- A parent or designated adult must come in to sign-in and sign-out.

Confirmation Discipleship Groups – Since most of these meetings are with a small group of students in a volunteer’s home or at the parish office, we do not require a parent to come in. However, parents are always welcome to stop in and say hello.

Life Nights and Households – We do not require a parent to come in. However, parents are always welcome to stop in and say hello. Many of our high school students drive themselves; if a teen is going to be driving another teen, we ask that a parent let us know.

Expectations of Behavior

Students must show respect to the adults, their peers, and themselves. They will contribute in a positive manner to a learning and growing environment. There will be no negative judgement on others, and no inappropriate language or attire. Students must always follow overall procedures. If a student continues to display disruptive behavior, the adult leader will first give the student an opportunity to change their behavior. If it continues, parents may be asked to meet with the Director of Youth Ministry.

Cell phones

Students may not have their phones out during any of our programs, unless directed otherwise. If they become a distraction, they will be confiscated until the end of the night.

Empowering God’s Children

Previously known as “Teaching Touching Safety”. Every parish in the Diocese of Charleston is required to offer this class to all students each year that teaches appropriate boundaries and how to protect oneself from dangerous situations. If parents would like to opt out of this class, they must complete the form online. Any student that does not opt-out, must be in attendance.

Contact Us

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