



Saint Clare of Assisi

CATHOLIC CHURCH

2021–2022 Youth Formation Handbook (Grades 6-12)



Our mission:
*To accompany our youth
as they grow
into dynamic and visible disciples
of Jesus Christ
in the Catholic Church.*



† EDGE - Grades 6 through 8

EDGE exists to create a place of community and faith for middle school students at Saint Clare of Assisi Parish. EDGE is:

- **Open to all middle school youth, no matter what school they attend.** Participants are welcome to invite friends who are not members of our parish.
- **Catechetical.** At our sessions, the youth will hear a teaching, then break into small groups for activities and discussions that further examine what they have heard. They will learn about the sacraments, scriptures, saints, virtues, grace, and more.
- **Relational.** We go beyond catechesis with the help of our Core Team (adult and teen volunteers) who help build relationships first and teach second. Our program is designed to deepen the spiritual life of each student through the time we spend together in prayer and worship.
- **Engaging and dynamic.** We feature games, skits, team-building exercises, and service projects that will fortify the formation program and put our faith into action.

2021-2022 Schedule and Location

EDGE students meet on the **2nd and 4th Sundays** of the month from **12:15 to 2:00 p.m.**

All EDGE meetings will be held in the Performing Arts Center ("PAC") of **Bishop England High School**.

Attendance

While attendance at EDGE is not mandatory, we strongly encourage consistent and regular participation so that our students may gain the most out of their experience. The more your student attends, the more fun they will have, and the more they will learn about our faith. We teach how to live, act, and serve as part of the body of Christ.

Sacramental Catch Up

Please contact Fernando Cartagena if your student is in Grades 6 through 8 and has not yet received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation and/or First Holy Communion.



† Confirmation Sacramental Preparation - Grades 7 and 8

Confirmation Preparation at Saint Clare of Assisi is designed to form disciples: a Church as the one body in Christ living as visible witnesses to the faith.

Please review the applicable sections below for participation requirements in order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Generally speaking, Year 1 preparation is for students in Grade 7 and Year 2 preparation is for students in Grade 8. Please contact Fernando Cartagena to arrange for preparation if your child is in a different grade.

Year 1 (Grade 7) Non-Catholic School Students

- Participate regularly in EDGE
- Attend at least 10 out of 12 Discipleship Group Sessions
- Attend all four Large Group Sessions with parents
- Attend a one-day retreat
- Complete a service project with the Discipleship Group

Year 1 (Grade 7) Catholic School Students

- Attend all four Large Group Sessions with parents
- Attend a one-day retreat
- Participate regularly in EDGE (optional, but strongly encouraged)

Year 2 (Grade 8) - all requirements above for your child's respective school grouping plus:

- Complete Sponsor Form and turn in to Fernando (not the school).
- Complete a written reflection on the saint whose name the child has chosen as his or her Confirmation name. Catholic School students may submit the Saint Project they have completed for school to satisfy this requirement.

Catholic School Students: Your Home Is Your Parish

Students receive the sacraments in their parish and not in the school they attend. Since much of the catechetical preparation is done in Catholic school, the requirements for Catholic School students have been limited to the mandatory items noted above. To enrich your child's faith formation experience, we strongly encourage all Catholic school students to participate in our EDGE program.

Confirmation Preparation Explained

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. The group will also complete a service project each of the two years. Candidates in a Discipleship Group must attend 10 out of the 12 sessions.

Large Group Sessions with Parents

All Candidates in both Catholic and non-Catholic schools attend four Large Group Sessions **with their parent(s)** each year. If a parent is not available, we ask that the sponsor attend. Each session will include a guest speaker to lead everyone to a deeper embrace of the faith and to inspire good conversation between the parent and child. Since there are only four of these sessions each year, the candidate must attend all four sessions.

Retreats

Our retreats are a big hit with our candidates. The retreats provide an opportunity for the candidates to break from routines and to focus on their relationship with God. They return home with stronger friendships, conviction, joy, and a deeper appreciation of how God is alive in their lives. The retreats are designed for each of the two years of preparation.

If a student cannot attend the scheduled confirmation retreat, please let Fernando know as soon as possible. The student may attend any of the following Diocesan or Parish programs to satisfy the retreat requirement if there is a scheduling conflict:

- The Diocesan Junior High Rally
- EDGE Middle School Retreat
- A three-week virtual retreat experience

Service Project & 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. Non-Catholic school students will complete service projects with their discipleship groups as noted above. Catholic school students will complete their service projects in their Religion classes at school.

Rehearsal (Year 2 Only)

A mandatory Confirmation rehearsal will be held for all Year Two candidates and sponsors at the end of the preparation year. After the rehearsal, we invite all family and friends to participate in a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration.



† Life Teen - Grades 9 through 12

Life Teen is about leading teens closer to Christ. Our Life Teen program at Saint Clare of Assisi offers many ways for teens to explore their faith and become active leaders in our parish community. Life Teen Programming Includes:

Life Nights - Second and Fourth Sundays

Our teens gather every second and fourth Sunday of the month. Our participants are welcome to invite friends from other churches too. Dinner is provided at each session. Each night includes community building activities, catechesis, small groups, and prayer.

XLT CHS! (Exalt, Charleston!) - Several times per year

We gather with youth groups from the Charleston area for a night of high energy worship featuring guest speakers who lead us into a evening of Eucharistic Adoration and Confession. Dinner is always included.

Households - First and Third Sundays

These small group communities, organized into male and female groups, meet every first and third Sunday of the month. 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 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 (Grades 3-5). Our Youth Core Team goes through intense training over the summer to prepare them for a year of service and leadership. To participate, one must apply and be accepted. Applications can be found online or by contacting Fernando Cartagena.

Sacramental Catch Up

Please contact Fernando Cartagena if your student is in high school and has not yet received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and/or Confirmation.

General Policies for Faith Formation Programs

† Registration

Registration forms are available 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.

† Tuition: 2021-2022

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>FEES</u>
EDGE	\$85 per student
Confirmation Year 1 Non-Catholic school students	\$85 per student*
Confirmation Year 1 Catholic school students	\$40 per student*
Confirmation Year 2 Non-Catholic school students	\$85 per student*
Confirmation Year 2 Catholic school students	\$40 per student*
Life Teen	\$85 per student
Confirmation Retreats	Vary in Price (pay later)

No child is ever turned away because of a family's financial situation. If you need help, please contact Father West in confidence.

*Registration in our Confirmation Sacramental Preparation program includes participation in EDGE for no additional cost.

† Attendance

Mass: Keep holy the Sabbath.

Participation in Sunday Mass and on Holy Days is a fundamental and necessary factor in deepening your child's faith and equipping him/her for discipleship. Parents who sign up their children in our Faith Formation programs commit to living this out as a family, just as they promised God at their child's baptism.

EDGE and Life Teen

While attendance at EDGE is not mandatory, we strongly encourage consistent and regular participation so that our students may gain the most out of their experience. The more your student attends, the more fun they will have, and the more they will learn about our faith. We teach how to live, act, and serve as part of the body of Christ.

Confirmation

Missed classes due to travel, vacation, sports, and/or extracurricular activities, even with advanced notice are not considered excused.

Arrival more than 5 minutes late is marked as tardy. Three tardies equal one absence. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you are considered absent.

In the event of a prolonged illness, please contact Fernando Cartagena.

Discipleship Groups - Non-Catholic School Students

Confirmation candidates must attend 10 of 12 Discipleship Group meetings. Candidates must also be present for their group's service project.

Large Group Sessions - All Candidates

Candidates and their parents must attend all four large group sessions.

† Class Arrival and Dismissal

Your children's safety is of the utmost concern to us.

- Parents or designated person must sign students in and out.
- Children will be released only to a parent/guardian or a designated person.
- Please be on time to pick up your children at the end of class. Do not pick your child up before the children are released at the end of class.
- The only open entrance for EDGE will be the metal gate behind the PAC (pathway between the PAC and BEHS Main Building)

† Communications and Emergency Closings

We use email to communicate important updates. Please check your email's spam folder if you are not receiving our parish bulletin or Faith Formation emails. If we need to cancel Faith Formation classes or Youth Ministry activities for any reason, we will send out an email. We will provide a number for you to call in the case of any emergency during class or large group session times.

† Cell Phones

Students in EDGE, Confirmation, and Life Teen are expected to use their cell phones responsibly and respectfully. If the phone becomes a distraction, it will be kept by an adult volunteer and returned at the end of the session.

Any use of social media that speaks negatively about another student, an adult leader, our programs, or our Church could result in disciplinary action. However, we highly encourage our students to use social media as a platform to share their faith and God's love with others.

† Empowering God’s Children: Teaching Safety

Every parish in the Diocese of Charleston is required to offer a class on “Empowering God’s Children: Teaching Safety” each year to all students. If parents would like to opt out their child from this class, they must complete the [opt-out form online](#) with their registration.

† Expectations of Behavior

In the spirit of love and charity toward one another, and growth in self-discipline, we expect the following from our students:

- Students will be respectful of themselves and others, especially adults. The use of “Yes, Ma’am,” “No, Ma’am,” “Yes, Sir/Father,” and “No, Sir/Father” is expected when speaking to all adults.
- Students will respect the rights of other students to learn and the catechist’s responsibility to teach.
- Students will engage and contribute in a positive manner to the learning environment.
- Students will follow the overall class procedures.

If a student displays conduct disruptive to Faith Formation volunteers or another student, the catechist will give the student the opportunity to change the unacceptable behavior. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the student will be asked to confer with the catechist and parents after class.

If the unacceptable behavior persists, the parents will be notified of the need for a conference with the Director of Youth Formation and/or the Pastor. Should the unacceptable behavior continue after the conference, the Director of Youth Formation and the Pastor may consider expulsion from the program.

† Attire

Students are to maintain a modest appearance. This appearance may be casual, but respectful. No one is to wear short shorts nor revealing shirts. Appropriateness of attire will be determined by an adult leader in consultation with the Director of Youth Formation.

† Special Child Custody Situations

It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide copies or documents to the parish office related to child custody and restraining orders, if applicable, and to personally make the Director of Youth Formation aware of any unique concerns.

† Special Needs & Learning Disabilities

Please share with us if your child has a learning disability or special need so we can best help your child learn while they are in our Faith Formation programs. Please feel free to arrange a meeting with Fernando Cartagena to discuss how we can help your child excel in their Faith Formation class.

† Role of the Parents in Youth Formation

We believe in a family-led, Christ-centered approach to catechesis.

Our faith teaches that parents are the primary catechists of their children. Parents teach not only with their words but often, more importantly, with their attitudes and actions. Children learn about the world, others, and themselves from the ways their parents approach each of these. Recently, a study conducted by the National Study on Youth and Religion found that **most teenagers named their parents as their number one spiritual influence.**

Saint John Paul II often referred to the family as “the domestic Church” because parents provide a child’s first and primary example of faith. Catholicism in the home should be a joyful way of life rather than an obligation. A family-centered approach deepens the role the domestic church plays in the faith formation of each child, providing opportunities for the entire family to learn, pray, and grow in relationship with Christ.

It is your moral obligation for you and your family to participate in Sunday Mass every weekend and in the Holy Days of Obligation, to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year (for those who are in full communion with the Church), and to engage in your child(ren)’s faith formation programs.

Parents should be good stewards of this parish. Recognizing that everything we have comes from God, parents model by their actions and attitudes a sense of joy and charity, and share their God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasure with the parish community and the community at large. Children will naturally learn to emulate the good example of stewardship put forth by their parents.

We want to partner with you and support you in this mission you have taken on in bringing up your children in the faith. All that we offer in Youth Formation is focused on this goal.

† Service Opportunities for Parents

Opportunities for volunteering, both in and out of the classroom, are offered each year. Opportunities are listed on the Registration Form. Please contact the Director of Youth Formation for more information on any of the opportunities and the time commitment involved.

All adults working with children in our Faith Formation programs MUST have Safe Environment screenings on file with the Parish Office.

Here we go!

We are excited to embark on this journey of deepening your child's faith and developing them into dynamic and visible disciples of Jesus Christ. Your Pastor and Parish Staff are here to support you and we pray for your children daily. **We are excited to see what the Lord will do this year in your child's life!**

“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” -Colossians 1:9-10