

STELLA MARIS PARISH

SAINT MICHAEL'S FAITH FORMATION

PROGRAM FAQs

Q. I hear the Catechism program is changing? What's going on?

A. Yes, our mission for Family Faith Formation encompasses the family and not just the child attending classes. We have changed the way we teach the faith to the children. We have not changed the faith, just the way we teach it! At St Michaels we offer a family program up to grade 6 on Sunday mornings and a teen program for grades 7 and up on Wed evenings.

Q. So I have to attend as well?

Yes, our parents are asked to attend with their kids in the early years so they can gather info for extra home life -lived lessons. We recognize the Parents as the FIRST educators of the faith for their children and want to support that *"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues.* (CCC 2223)

Q. Do I sit in class with them?

A. No, you will join the other parents for thought provoking presentations and discussions while your kids gather in similar age groups to learn about the selected "theme" for the Sunday and meet up with them at the end.

Q. THEME? What does that mean.

A. Each Sunday we select a theme to learn and live out. Some of our upcoming themes are: Who is Jesus? What are the Beatitudes and how do I live this out? Favorite Bible stories; What are sacraments?; The Trinity; Saints, and much more. We pair up the theme with the Sunday Gospel readings and try to give the children a simple message of the Love of God and how it will help them in life along with a little teaching of how to follow Jesus and become one of his disciples. We also share a Saint of the Week so the kids get examples of how others follow Jesus.

Q. What about Sacraments? How does that happen?

A. We help you with a "Sacrament Program" which is also a part of the Family program for those who have not yet Celebrated the Sacraments. When the child is ready for sacraments the family attends the preparation lessons together. The Child's readiness is determined by the Church and the family together and not just by the grade they are in. We do not feel pushing children through without a good understanding and readiness is charitable to the family.

Q. How do I know they are ready?

A. Glad you asked...we have lots of info for you about this during our parent session and we promise you will know!

Q. How long is the Sacrament program?

A. It takes about 5 meetings. These meetings run alongside the family program so you will already be coming to the program and just head off to a different group for preparation when the time comes.

Q. When are the meetings?

A. The 2nd and 4th Sunday mornings of each month. 9:30-10:30 am. At Saint Michaels Hall. We start in October and finish in May.

Q. I heard about Children's Liturgy as well? What is that?

A. This is a great program run parents and teachers who take the children during Mass to their own Liturgy of the Word. They have the Children's Gospel readings, give them a short lesson or craft and then return at the Offertory time of the Mass. The children bring up the gifts each week and take part in other Liturgies that are focused on Children throughout the year. We do Children's Liturgy each Sunday from Oct to June, for continuity during off weeks of the Family Program.

Q. I have older children and younger children...can they come together on Sunday morning?

A. Our Sunday program is for kids up to grade 6, we have another program on Wednesday Evenings for teens grades 7 and up. Some of our families bring their older teens and they help out with the kids and some like to sit in on the parent sessions! During snack times you will often find the teens together helping in the kitchen.

Q. What is the teen program like?

A. Wednesday evenings 7-8:30pm teens gather for the Stella Maris Youth Group. This is a fun filled evening which comprises of music, games, prayer, a main talk for the evening, small group sharing, and a yummy snack! The main focus of Wednesday evening program is to give your teen an experience of the Love of Jesus and a better understanding of how to become a disciple of Jesus! We deal with lots of relevant topics for teens and challenge them to make a decision for Christ. We offer a NET retreat each year for everyone and highly encourage attendance at a Steubenville conference in July once they complete grade 8.

Q. What about Confirmation?

A. The way in which we approach preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation has gained a great deal of attention in recent years. It was the research of Matthew Kelly's [Dynamic Catholic](#)

[Institute](#) that brought to light what we already suspected: Confirmation prep isn't working. According to Dynamic Catholic, 85 percent of young people who get confirmed will leave the Church within seven years of their confirmation. We don't want this for our teens.

Confirmation is a big commitment on the teens part and we want to make sure they know what they are saying YES to. Some are not ready at grade 9, and some are ready before that. Pushing them through the Confirmation preparation just because they are in grade 9 despite many not actively living out their faith is not our hope for our youth. At Stella Maris we focus on preparing your teen for a life of discipleship with Christ, then when they are ready we celebrate Confirmation. Many families find this takes pressure off and gives them time to enjoy the journey and preparation rather than meeting a deadline.

Q. How do you know they are ready?

A. Again, when they go through our program they will be given lots of info about readiness and they will know if they want to take that step.

Q. What if I feel my children are not getting enough teaching in this program?

A. Please refer to question 2. But also check out some feedback from parents last year:

“5/5 excellent job by all, excellent program.” “5/5 I liked that parents are involved, it really helped,” “yes, I found it very helpful,” “the videos really helped explain the teachings to our kids”.

Q. How do I register?

A. stellamarishalifax.com is our website. Follow the Faith Formation links to sign up on line. [Our first Family Program is Oct 27 @ 9:30am and first Youth Group is Oct 16 @ 7:00 pm](#)

Q. Can I help out with the program?

A. Of course!!! Contact Carolyn stellamarisreled1@gmail.com and she will find a place for you to share your gifts.

Q. I heard about this “Catholic Netflix” ? How do parishioners register for an account?

A. That would be “FORMED” and it’s available now on ROKU as well. This is a great platform for family movie night, for Bible study, Catholic children’s programming, sacramental prep info etc. Registering for FORMED is now easier than ever:

1. Go to formed.org/signup
2. Select your parish
3. Register with your name and email address
4. Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED