



# St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

"Eternally We Build"

## Youth Ministry Parent Handbook

2009-2010

Grades 6-12



"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

**1 Timothy 4:12**

# St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church Youth Ministry

September 2009

Dear St. Francis YM Families:

Welcome to the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Ministry Faith Formation program for the 2009-2010 school year. Thank you for allowing us to support you, as you continue your important role as parents who are raising your Youth to follow Christ through teaching them about their Catholic faith. It is our hope that the families who participate in our program will see the Church as a joyful and inviting place and that we are all called, through our baptism, to be disciples of Christ.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community provides many opportunities for families to participate in our parish Youth Ministry program. Many of these opportunities can be found in the following areas:

**Faith Formation** - Weekly classes for our 6th-12th grade students

**Extra Programming**- Weekly meetings such as:

Bible Study (MS & HS) (Monday Nights in the youth room)

Youth Leader (HS) & Junior Youth Leader (MS) (Wednesday nights in the youth room)

**Outreach** - Putting our Catholic faith into action to benefit the broader community

Mission Possible (June) & High School Mission Trip (July)

**Community-Building Events** - Cultural Day, World Youth Day, Group Dynamix Lock-in (MS only), March for Life (HS only), Retreats, & Service Projects

The celebration of the Eucharist at Mass is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. The Eucharist is the spiritual food needed for us to continue to grow in our faith as well as a physical action of coming together as the united body of Christ. For these reasons, it is very important that your family attend Mass on a regular basis (meaning every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation).

Please keep this handbook in a convenient spot for ready reference throughout the school year. The handbook, as well as the Faith Formation calendar, can also be found on our web site at [www.stfoafrisco.org](http://www.stfoafrisco.org). If you have any questions, please write, e-mail or call the Youth Ministry Faith Formation staff at (972) 712-2645.

May God bless you and your family as we journey together learning, appreciating, and most importantly practicing the truths of our faith for the greater glory of God.

Yours in Christ,

Tammy Weber  
Youth Ministry Director  
(972) 712-2645, ext. 358  
tweber@stfoafrisco.org

# About Our Youth Ministry Program

## Our Mission

St. Francis Youth Ministry seeks to connect our youth with Jesus Christ through his Church and the sacraments within the context of a dynamic, faith-filled environment. We want to support parents in their endeavors to deepen the roots of faith in their youth and build solid foundations for continued spiritual growth. At St. Francis, young people will be challenged to use the tools of faith both in church among their peers and to bring Christ to the world. We aspire to help them see that Christ and his teachings are not outdated remnants of the past, but vital and empowering to their lives today, and the source of the strength they need to make sound moral decisions in an often confusing and difficult period of life. Finally, we hope to provide experiences and an environment in which they will feel the love of God in their lives and welcome in his house.

## The Major Forms of Communication from the Office to the Family:

- 1) The classes themselves, within your students classes they will receive fliers of upcoming events and activities.
- 2) Bulletin Announcements and E-news
- 3) Direct e-mails from Kathy & Tammy
- 4) Free Subscription to Flock Note

This new, and innovative communication tool will allow you to receive reminders and notifications either through e-mail, text message, Facebook notification or by visiting [www.flocknote.com](http://www.flocknote.com). Visit Flocknote on-line or click on their link on the Children's Ministry web page to sign up to get information through Flocknote.

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## About Faith Formation Teaching Resources

We recognize that the parents are the **primary educators** of their children and the Church takes seriously it's obligation to support parents in that role.

The **Faith First Legacy edition parish program** from RCL, are our basic texts for our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Youth Ministry Faith Formation Program. At St. Francis 7th grade is considered the first year of preparation for Confirmation and 8th grade is the second. Usually, prepared youth receive their Sacrament in 8th grade. The Confirmandi are prepared with RCL's Confirmation program (along with the St. Francis Confirmation Handbook and other requirements).

**Faith First** is based on a firm foundation made up of three essential elements:

1. The **beliefs** of a people as explained by the Catholic Church—the doctrines that have been passed down to us through the generations and are at this time gathered into the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Catechism* is not a book for children, but the contents of it can be made accessible to children.
2. The **story** of a people that has been passed down from generation to generation. This story is first and foremost contained in the Bible. The stories of saints and people of faith who have come before us are also told

3. The **celebration** of a people as lived out in our liturgical year. Each year, we as Catholic Christians relive the story of our salvation as we pass through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time. We celebrate the saints and the holy times that we share as a people.

Faith First also offers a wonderful internet resource, [www.faithfirst.com](http://www.faithfirst.com), which has activities for families, lectionary materials for families and catechists and enrichment activities for the youth. Please feel free to explore this resource with your kids.

For High School youth, our faith formation program has been written by our youth Director and Faith Formation Volunteers under the guidance of our pastor. This year's curriculum includes 4 elements that help deepen and develop their relationship with Christ through his Church and Sacraments. There will be one night a month that is focused on the life of a saint through a program known as DTS (Dead Theologian Society [www.deadtheologiansociety.com](http://www.deadtheologiansociety.com)). There will be one night a month that will focus on some contemporary topic picked by the youth such as relationships, school morality, the meaning of pro-life, etc... There will be one night a month that focuses on some aspect of Catholic Tradition or Teaching such as why only men are ordained as priests, purgatory, the mass etc... Last but not least there will be one night a month that will focus on building up the Church community through games and activities. Every night will be a night that focuses on challenging the youth to broaden and deepen their faith. It will be a time where they will be presented with the tools of the faith as well as some time to train them with these tools.

### **Parent Responsibility**

Youth reflect will reflect the faith of their parents please attend mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of obligation. Share your faith and prayer life with your youth.

Insure that your youth arrive on time for class. Classes are only an hour this year so we expect that youth will be no earlier than 15 mins before class and picked up no later than 15 mins after class.

Classes will be dismissed on time. If parents have not picked up their children by ten minutes after dismissal, the catechist will take the child to the front desk. The child will remain at the front desk until the parents are contacted and the child is picked up. If there is an emergency and/or you will be late, please call and inform the office, at 972-712-4616.

If you know ahead of time that your youth will be unable to attend class please let Tammy and Kathy know in either an e-mail or a phone message with their first/ last name, grade, and reason for missing class.

Finally, parents are responsible for keeping up with their youth's attendance requirements.

### **Student Responsibility and Conduct**

Student responsibilities for having a positive experience in religious education will include:

- Attending class regularly and arriving on time
- Bringing folders and class materials weekly
- Actively participating in activities, listening and sharing ideas in appropriate ways
- Be attentive and cooperative with classroom teachers and other adult volunteers
- Follow classroom rules established by catechists and conduct themselves in a manner that is caring, responsible and respectful.

### **Attendance**

The Dallas Diocese endorses an 80% attendance rule with respect to Faith Formation classes. All youth must attend 80% or more of the Faith Formation classes for the year. That is a minimum of 20 out of 24 classes (this excludes high school students that have already been confirmed). If your youth exceeds this number of unexcused absences without making up the work for the days that were missed, they will be dropped from the current year's roles. There are no exceptions. The make-up work will be ready for your child's return. The missed work must be completed and turned in the following class or the absence will be considered unexcused.

### **Sacraments**

The main sacrament focus for youth ministry youth is Confirmation. Confirmation will normally occur on March 20th for those 8th graders that have been properly prepared. The diocese requires that a youth must go through 2 years of preparation in order to receive a sacrament. 7th grade is our normative first year and 8th grade is their second. If your youth is in 8th grade and has not had their previous year of preparation you must contact Tammy to learn what they need to do to be prepped for Confirmation.

For those youth that are older than 8th grade there is a special High School section that focuses primarily on Confirmation preparation.

For those youth grades 6th-12th that have not received the sacraments of

Reconciliation and Communion and wish to do so there is a program called Special Sacraments. In the Special Sacraments program they will attend regular classes with their age group through Faith Formation and will attend 1 mandatory workshop per sacrament to prepare them for sacramental reception.

For any sacramental preparation questions please contact either Tammy or Kathy in the Faith Formation Office.

### **Inclement Weather**

Classes will be canceled when snow or ice make driving conditions hazardous. If able to do so, the staff will post notice of canceled classes on the doors of Faith Formation wing and in the circular drive in front of the church, as well as on the parish web site. If classes are cancelled, there will also be a message on the phone at the following number: (972) 712-4616. Faith Formation classes will not be held on days that FISD cancels school due to inclement weather. Please refer to local radio and television stations for this information.

If time permits, The Youth Ministry staff will ask catechists to contact parents to inform them of cancellations.

### **Pets**

Pets are *not* permitted in the Education Wing.

### **Faith Formation Fees**

St. Francis of Assisi is a Stewardship Parish. As such, the generous sharing of our gifts of time, talent and treasure support the many ministries of our parish. While all of our parishioners support the children in Faith Formation through their tithing, the families who benefit directly from this ministry are asked to share in the cost of educating their children in the faith by paying a nominal fee. This fee covers only the cost of books and supplies.

### **Call to Serve**

The involvement of parents and other parishioners over the years has been instrumental in the strength of the St. Francis of Assisi Faith Formation program. Active parental involvement is required. Parents are viewed as the primary educators of their children and numerous opportunities exist to become involved and take part in your child's religious instruction. Please consider in what manner you can share your time and talent with the children of our Faith Community.

## **Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy**

St. Francis of Assisi programs (including, but not limited to, Faith Formation and Kids Day Out) admit students of any race, color, handicapping conditions, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to participants in the programs. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin or handicapping conditions in the administration of its' educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other parish-administered programs.

## **Safe Environment Program**

St. Francis of Assisi established this program to provide a safe environment for the protection and well being of our children. All priests, staff, and lay ministry volunteers go through a criminal background check and Safe Environment training before serving the children. As part of the program we must have two cleared adults with children at all times. This means that each religious education class must have two cleared adults for the class to begin each week. We depend on the dedication and responsibility of the catechists and other support team members such as team leaders, nursery and substitutes to administer to this policy. If you are interested in serving as a Faith Formation volunteer, you may pick up a Screening Form from our office during office hours.

**St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Community**  
**8000 El Dorado Parkway**  
**Frisco, TX 75034**  
**Phone: 972-712-2645**  
**Fax: 972-712-1087**

During class times *only* you may call the Faith Formation desk to contact the Team Lead at 972-712-4616.

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Please sign this page, remove from handbook and return to the Youth Ministry office.

I acknowledge receipt of the 2009-2010 St. Francis of Assisi Youth Ministry Parent Handbook, distributed during Parent Orientation.

I understand that all parents are accountable for reading and understanding the information contained in this handbook. This handbook contains important information about parent responsibilities, student responsibilities and conduct, attendance, safe environment policies, inclement weather cancellations, stewardship, fees and the Faith Formation calendar.

I understand that this information can also be accessed on-line at: [www.stfoafrisco.org](http://www.stfoafrisco.org).

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_