

St. Matthias Faith Formation & Youth Ministry Handbook

Comprehensive Catechetical Plan for 2021-2022



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Welcome

Welcome to St. Matthias' Faith Formation and Youth Ministry programs!

Last year was challenging for so many reasons driven by the coronavirus pandemic. Working from home, live streaming Mass, virtual school, Zoom meetings, and even virtual faith formation. Although not ideal, we adapted and made it work. This year, we are pleased to announce that we are planning to resume IN PERSON meetings for faith formation and youth ministry.

St. Matthias is celebrating a momentous year in 2021! Our parish, founded by Fr. Thomas Lacey in 1961, is celebrating its 60th Anniversary this fall over the weekend of September 17-19th! We are also entering into our 10th year of offering a family-based faith formation program called GIFT (Generations in Faith Together). This approach is designed to support all members of the family in their faith journey -- to meet each individual where they are in their faith development. Because we are a small parish, we are able to customize our content and offer topics that are important to you. We are the only parish in the Archdiocese of San Francisco that is offering this family-focused approach to faith formation and believe this model best promotes the domestic church. These gatherings provide the foundation for sacramental preparation, youth ministry and children's liturgy of the word.

Our pastoral plan, *Shaping our Future*, affirms our commitment to edifying the family as the domestic church, and our programs are designed to support that vision. Families with children or youth preparing for sacraments are guided through the preparation process together.

We offer a small, but vibrant youth ministry program for both middle school and high school youth that features gatherings twice per month. For adults, there are many learning opportunities including RCIA, Bible Study and periodic topical discussion groups, which you can read more about within these pages.

Our programming for Liturgy of the Word; SALT: Sharing and Learning Together, for our preschoolers and FISH: Friends in Service to Him, for our kindergarten through fourth graders remains suspended until more families are comfortable returning to in-person Masses.

The enclosed schedule provides the dates for all the programs offered. I hope that you will find your spiritual home here at St. Matthias.

In Christ's Peace, *Sabrina Harper*, Pastoral Associate
sabrina@stmatthiasparish.org

***Intergenerational Faith Formation is holistic,
comprehensive, and for the whole parish.***

Family-based Faith Formation

The GIFT Program: Generations in Faith Together

GIFT: Generations in Faith Together is our intergenerational, family-based faith formation program. Our sessions will be IN PERSON this year, but families will also have the option of completing sessions OnDEMAND using FlipGrid to access content and complete activities and assignments at home.

GIFT is scheduled on Sundays twice per month and will be held from 12:00 to 1:00 pm.

We are excited to announce that for the next three years, our GIFT curriculum will focus on the Bible. We'll be using a series called, *Faith Stories* to guide our sessions. Year one (2021-2022) is called God Calls and introduces the Creator God and Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament). Year two (2022-2023) is called Jesus Lives and presents the gospel story - the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Year three (2023-2024) is called Spirit With Us and illustrates the work of the Spirit with stories from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the lives of the saints and modern believers.

The schedule for GIFT is located on page 10.

With GIFT at the center of our faith formation programming, other opportunities are available as well. Descriptions of these programs, processes and events will follow:

- Breaking Open the Word for Adults
- Bible Study for Adults
- RCIA: Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
- High School Youth Ministry
- Middle School Youth Ministry
- Reconciliation and First Communion Preparation for 2nd to 9th Graders
- Confirmation Preparation for 9th to 12th Graders

Parents are the most effective catechists of prayer for their young children...

Parents are catechists precisely because they are parents.

(National Directory for Catechesis 203.)

Adult Faith Formation

Our faith journey is lifelong. We find comfort and support in the community of believers who challenge our beliefs and reinforce the love and mercy shown to us by our teacher, Jesus Christ.

With regular study and reflection throughout our lives, we can align our lives more closely to Jesus' teachings. We believe that parents need enrichment and support. Raising children in this ever-secularized world, where faith often takes a back seat, is difficult. How do we pass our faith on to our kids and why is it important to do so? How do we create and promote the domestic Church in our homes? How can adults nurture their own faith and become intentional disciples? These are some of the many questions we seek to answer in our inquiry based, family faith formation programs.

Here are a few examples of ongoing opportunities for adults to come together to learn more about their faith:

Bible Study

Studying the word of God is an important part of on-going adult faith formation. Scripture and tradition are the foundations of our faith. St. Matthias Bible Study continues to study books of the Old Testament. Beginning in September, Deacon Rich will host part 2 of a series on the Old Testament Prophets. The sessions will be offered on Mondays at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Participants can select to attend the time which is most convenient.

Breaking Open the Word

Each Thursday morning at 10:30 am Sabrina hosts a virtual meeting to read and discuss the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday. This small group Breaking Open the Word session is designed to help us reflect upon the meaning of God's Word in our lives.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Do you know someone who has thought about becoming Catholic or, for whatever reason, has been baptized but has not been confirmed or received Holy Communion? What does it mean to become fully initiated into the Roman Catholic Church? Do you or someone you know have questions about the sacraments and what it means to be a Catholic? Please consider RCIA. The Catholic Church has a process for adults to discern whether God is inviting them to learn more about our faith and, perhaps, to become Catholic. This process is also a pathway to complete the Sacraments of Initiation for those already Baptized (Confirmation, Eucharist).

This process is called RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). The RCIA process provides guided weekly sessions on the fundamental beliefs of our faith including an understanding of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist (Mass). In addition, the process emphasizes prayer, discernment and spiritual formation as each candidate responds to their call to become followers of Jesus through the Catholic Church.

Participants include candidates from St. Matthias and St. Charles parishes along with their sponsors and team members. RCIA sessions will be held on Sunday mornings from 11 a.m. to noon. At this time, we are planning on hosting sessions in the St. Matthias Rectory (subject to change). The first RCIA gathering will be held on Sunday, September 12th. Parishioners, who would like to participate as an RCIA team member and support our candidates, are welcome.

Deacon Rich and Deacon David will lead and facilitate RCIA sessions. If you have any questions, know of someone who would like to discuss joining RCIA, are considering being a team member, or would just like to experience the RCIA process please contact Deacon Rich at rich@stmatthiasparish.org or call him at St. Matthias Church (366-9544).

Please pray that the Holy Spirit calls individuals to seek a deeper relationship with Almighty God through His Church.

“The single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents” (Soul Searching)

Youth Ministry

High School Youth Ministry

St. Matthias' High School Youth Ministry program is designed for high school students as a forum for exploration and discovery about how God has revealed himself in the world and how youth can become more aware of God's presence in their lives. An emphasis is placed on how youth can make meaningful connections with each other, the parish community and community at large. Over the scheduled sessions, youth will learn about God, Revelation and Faith, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit and the Church, Liturgy and Sacraments, Christian Morality and Justice and Prayer. Lives of the Saints will be explored and all faith topics will be connected to lived experiences.

We will be using a St. Mary's Press publication called, *Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*. Copies will be made available for youth.

Meetings will combine prayer, structured learning, service projects, fun and games and relevant issues through a lens which explores Church teaching. Meetings will be conducted IN PERSON on Sundays at 5:00 pm. See the calendar on page 15 for the full schedule.

Middle School Youth Ministry

St. Matthias' Middle School Youth Group is designed for fifth through eighth graders as a forum for exploration and discovery about how God has revealed himself in the world and how youth can become more aware of God's presence in their lives. Over the scheduled sessions, youth will learn about God, Revelation and Faith, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit and the Church, Liturgy and Sacraments, Christian Morality and Justice and Prayer. Lives of the Saints will be explored and all faith topics will be connected to lived experiences.

We will be using a St. Mary's Press publication called, *Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers*. Copies will be made available for youth.

Meetings will combine prayer, structured learning, fun and games, and service projects and will be conducted IN PERSON on Wednesdays at 5:00 pm. See the calendar on page 12 for the full schedule.

***“We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people.
That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual.”
(On the Call to Holiness in Today's World - Pope Francis)***

Sacramental Preparation

Baptism Preparation

Parents seeking Baptism for their child is a graced moment in the life of the Universal Church and of St. Matthias Church in particular. *“Parents are called”, as St. Augustine said, “not only to bring children into the world but also to bring them to God, so that through Baptism they can be reborn as children of God and receive the gift of faith.”*

Baptism Preparation is designed to provide parents with an overview of the sacrament including the symbols and meanings of each part of the liturgy, answer questions and schedule the Baptism. Deacon Rich will guide parents and godparents through the preparation process. To

schedule Baptism Preparation and a Baptism, please contact Deacon Rich at rich@stmatthiasparish.org.

First Reconciliation / First Communion Preparation

Once a child reaches the age of reason (age seven), they are eligible to begin preparing for two important sacraments; Reconciliation, a sacrament of healing and Communion, a sacrament of initiation. Most often this preparation takes place during a child's 2nd grade year and follows the completion of one full year of faith formation. All families seeking first Communion for their sons or daughters must be enrolled in and regularly attending GIFT.

The preparation for the two sacraments is done both at home and with the other families in the group.

For families who have older children (4th grade and older) who are seeking the sacraments of Reconciliation and/or Communion, one full year of faith formation (here or at another parish) is required prior to sacramental preparation. Each family situation is different, so please consult with Sabrina to receive more information about the process for preparation.

Letters of invitation with important dates about sacramental preparation are sent in October to all families with children interested in these sacraments of initiation.

These meetings will be held on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm.

If you have any questions about these sacraments or your child's readiness to receive them, please contact Sabrina for assistance or advice. See the calendar on page 16 for the full schedule.

“As parents, we are concerned with our children’s academic and athletic lives, but not so much with their spiritual lives. My attendance at GIFT has taught me that my daughter’s spiritual life is just as important.”
(A parent’s comment at June 2013 GIFT gathering)

Confirmation Preparation

High School youth (who have already been baptized, received first Communion and are actively living their faith) are invited to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Level I is called a *Period of Discernment*—a time to connect with the parish, become more involved in ministry and

service, choose and connect with a sponsor, attend Youth Ministry and GIFT gatherings with parents and/or sponsors and complete service hours.

Once participants have discerned that they are ready to confirm their faith and have completed the requirements for Level I, they move on to Level II—*Discipleship*.

The sacrament of Confirmation deepens our baptismal commitment which calls us to bring Jesus to the world, in our homes, schools, neighborhoods and community. During the preparation, we focus on strengthening our personal relationship with Jesus through prayer, both individual and communal. Parents, sponsors and the parish community offer help and guidance.

The program is led by Sabrina Harper and a team of adults and older youth. More details about the sacrament of Confirmation are available on our parish website: www.stmatthiasparish.org

Orientation meetings will be held for parents and youth on Wednesday, September 15th at 7:00 pm for Discernment (Level I) and on Thursday, September 23rd at 7:00 pm for Discipleship (Level II). See the calendar on page 16 for the full schedule.

*Sacraments are visible signs of God's love in our lives.
The Church uses rich symbols;
water, oil, bread, wine, laying on of hands to make this love real.*

Safe Environment Requirements

Each year, we act in accordance with national mandates implemented in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* for fingerprinting and/or background checks of all catechists and volunteers who have regular contact with young people. Also, all catechists and volunteers are required to complete an online course called, "Protecting God's Children" before they begin their ministry and is renewed every three years.

Also, each year children will be guided through the "Empowering God's Children Program" designed for specific age groups which provide a theme that introduces and builds on the basic concepts of the Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide. The material is developmentally appropriate for each age group and includes content and activities that reinforce the message.

More information about these programs and materials will be made available to families in the fall.

Registration Instructions

- 1) Complete the **Faith Formation Registration Form** (Google Form)
 - a) Tell Us About Your Family.

- b) Register for GIFT - All families are encouraged to register for and participate in GIFT as this is our foundational form of faith formation.
 - c) Register for Sacramental Preparation - indicate if Baptism, Penance, Eucharist or Confirmation is desired for any member of the family.
 - d) Register for Youth Ministry programs.
 - e) Complete the Legal Requirements section.
- 2) If your family is **NEW** to our programs **OR registering for Sacramental Preparation** -- send a copy of the **Baptismal Certificate** to sabrina@stmatthiasparish.org
- 3) **Statements will be mailed to families following registration.**
- a) GIFT fee is \$200 per family annually.
 - i) Add \$60 for Penance/Eucharist per child (if applicable).
 - ii) Add \$80 for Confirmation per child, this fee is charged annually.
 - b) If financial assistance is needed, please email sabrina@stmatthiasparish.org No one is denied participation for an inability to contribute financially.
- 4) **Review the calendar and highlight or mark the dates which apply to your family.**

Program Schedules

GIFT Schedule

We are excited to announce that for the next three years, our GIFT curriculum will focus on the Bible. We'll be using a series called, *Faith Stories* to guide our sessions. Year one (2021-2022) is called *God Calls* and introduces the Creator God and Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament). Year two (2022-2023) is called *Jesus Lives* and presents the gospel story - the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Year three (2023-2024) is called *Spirit With Us* and illustrates the work of the Spirit with stories from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the lives of the saints and modern believers.

Our GIFT gatherings are scheduled for Sunday afternoon at 12:00 pm and will be approximately one hour.

DATE	THEME
SEPTEMBER 12th	ONE GOD <i>God calls each of us, inviting us into an ever-deepening relationship of love.</i>
SEPTEMBER 26th	IN THE BEGINNING <i>God is our Creator and we are each made special and unique.</i>
OCTOBER 10th	A CHOSEN PEOPLE <i>God invites us into a special relationship. It is up to us to say "yes."</i>
OCTOBER 24TH	GOD CALLS ABRAHAM AND SARAH <i>We are precious to God.</i>
NOVEMBER 7th	GOD CALLS JOSEPH <i>God will always take care of us.</i>
NOVEMBER 21st	THE PROMISED LAND <i>We all need a place where we feel we belong.</i>
DECEMBER 5th	GOD CALLS MOSES <i>God has given each of us special gifts.</i>
JANUARY 9th	GOD CALLS RUTH <i>We are gift to each other. It is important to honor that gift with faithfulness.</i>

JANUARY 23rd	KINGS AND QUEENS <i>Greatness has to do with who we are and not just what we do.</i>
FEBRUARY 13th	GOD CALLS DAVID <i>God sees all our goodness even if others do not.</i>
FEBRUARY 27th	GOD CALLS ESTHER <i>We need God's help to be the person God calls us to be.</i>
MARCH 13th	PROPHETS AND HEROES <i>God needs people to keep the world on the right track.</i>
MARCH 27th	GOD CALLS ELIJAH <i>We need to answer God's call and wait with patience and hope.</i>
APRIL 10th	GOD CALLS DANIEL <i>We need to stay connected to God. Prayer is our way of staying connected.</i>
APRIL 24th	THE PROMISED MESSIAH <i>The world needed someone really special to remind it of God's call to live in peace and harmony.</i>

Adult Faith Formation Schedule

Bible Study: Old Testament Prophets, Part 2 starts Monday, Sept 13th at 10:00 am or 7:00 pm. Contact Deacon Rich rich@stmatthiasparish.org

Breaking Open the Word - meets Thursdays at 10:30 am via Google Meet. If interested, contact Sabrina sabrina@stmatthiasparish.org

RCIA - starts Sunday, Sept 12th at 11:00 am. Contact Deacon Rich rich@stmatthiasparish.org

Middle School Youth Ministry (MSYM) Schedule

We are excited to announce that our St. Matthias and St. Charles middle school youth will be meeting together. Meetings will be held on Wednesdays from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm. We will be using a publication by St. Mary's Press, "The Catholic Connections Handbook" to guide our sessions.

DATE	THEME
SEPTEMBER 8th	GOD THE FATHER Catholic Connections Handbook (CCH), Ch. 2
SEPTEMBER 22nd	FAITH: RESPONDING TO GOD , CCH Ch. 7
OCTOBER 6th	JESUS CHRIST, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN , CCH Ch. 9
OCTOBER 20th	CREATION CCH Ch. 4
NOVEMBER 3rd	THE HOLY SPIRIT CCH Ch. 15
NOVEMBER 17th	GRACE AND THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CCH Ch. 16
DECEMBER 1st	THE BIRTH OF JESUS , CCH Ch. 10
JANUARY 5th	INTRODUCTION TO LITURGY , CCH Ch. 22
Monday, JANUARY 17th	PENINSULA MULTIFAITH COALITION MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE - details TBA
JANUARY 19th	LIVING THE MORAL LIFE , CCH Ch. 32
FEBRUARY 2nd	HONORING FAMILY , CCH Ch. 35

FEBRUARY 16th	WORKING FOR JUSTICE, CCH Ch. 39
MARCH 9th	THE EUCHARIST: THE HEART OF ALL LITURGY, CCH Ch. 24
MARCH 23rd	THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION, CCH Ch. 29
APRIL 6th	THE DEATH OF JESUS, CCH Ch. 13
APRIL 20th	THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH, CCH Ch. 18
MAY 4th	PRAYER: CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD, CCH Ch. 40

High School Youth Ministry (HSYM) Schedule

Our high school youth will be meeting on Sunday evenings from 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm at St. Matthias. We will be using a publication by St. Mary's Press, "The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth" to guide our sessions.

DATE	THEME
AUGUST 29th	KICK-OFF PICNIC - Stafford Park, Redwood City from 1:00 - 3:00 pm
SEPTEMBER 19th	ST. MATTHIAS' 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
OCTOBER 3rd	KNOWING GOD: REASON AND REVELATION , Catholic Faith Handbook (CFH), Ch. 2
OCTOBER 17th	THE PROMISE OF A MESSIAH , CFH Ch. 7
NOVEMBER 14th	THE HOLY SPIRIT , CFH Ch. 12
DECEMBER 11th	BREAKFAST WITH SANTA SERVICE OPPORTUNITY - details TBD
DECEMBER 12th	JESUS CHRIST: TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN , CFH Ch. 8
JANUARY 2nd	ORGANIZATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH , CFH Ch. 14
JANUARY 17th	PENINSULA MULTIFAITH COALITION MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE - details TBA
JANUARY 30th	BEING CATHOLIC: THE "CLIFF NOTES VIEW," CFH Ch. 1
FEBRUARY 20th	INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN MORALITY , CFH Ch. 23
MARCH 6th	BAPTISM , CFH Ch. 18

MARCH 20th	THE EUCHARIST, CFH Ch. 20
APRIL 3rd	THE FORMS OF PRAYER, CFH Ch. 34
APRIL 17th	EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE PROJECT - details TBD
MAY 1st	THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ABOUT SERVICE

First Reconciliation / First Communion Preparation Schedule

Children, typically in their 2nd grade year, prepare for and receive two sacraments; First Reconciliation and First Communion.

<p>First Reconciliation Preparation Tuesdays at 6:00 pm October 19, 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23 Retreat on November 30th at 6:00 pm Celebration - TBA</p>	<p>First Communion Preparation Tuesdays at 6:00 pm March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 1st Retreat/Rehearsal on Monday, April 25th at 6:00 pm Celebration on Sunday, May 1st at 9:45 am Mass</p>
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Confirmation Preparation Schedule

Young people, typically in their 9th grade year, begin the preparation process for the sacrament of Confirmation. Preparation occurs over the 9th grade year and first semester of 10th grade with Confirmation celebrated in January of the second year.

<p>Discernment - Level I Confirmation</p> <p>Orientation for parents and young people Wednesday, Sept 15th at 7:00 pm</p> <p>Fall Mini-Retreat Saturday, Oct 16th from 10:00-12:00 pm</p> <p>Candidate, Sponsor, Parent Meeting Saturday, Jan 15th from 10:00-12:00 pm</p> <p>Spring Mini-Retreat Saturday, March 19th from 10:00-12:00 pm</p>	<p>Discipleship - Level II Confirmation</p> <p>Orientation for parents and young people Thursday, Sept 23rd at 7:00 pm</p> <p>Meeting 1 Wednesday, Oct 13th from 6:00-8:00 pm</p> <p>Meeting 2 Wednesday, Nov 10th from 6:00-8:00 pm</p> <p>Meeting 3 Wednesday, Dec 15th from 6:00-8:00 pm</p> <p>Meeting 4 Wednesday, Jan 12th from 6:00-8:00 pm</p> <p>Retreat Saturday, Jan 8th - TBD</p> <p>Confirmation Celebration - Jan 2021 - TBD</p>
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