

SAINT
MARGARET
MARY

**FAITH
FORMATION**

A GUIDE TO THE

SACRAMENTS



INTRODUCTION

The Sacraments are privileged encounters with Jesus Christ and a very visible sign of the presence of God in our lives. Every person involved in the sacrament preparation process has a strong desire to ensure that parents and students are offered the best opportunity to celebrate the fullness of each sacrament.

Parents are the primary educators charged with sharing with their children this gift of faith and our Catholic traditions. Parent participation in all areas of this faith journey is vital to help the students understand the reverence, the gift, and the privilege of celebrating a sacrament. It is very important to understand that the religious education (RE) classes do not replace participation in weekly mass. During the academic year, we plan retreats, parent meetings and other events where we will share information about the Rites. These meetings are also important components in the process and so students and parents are asked to be ready to make a commitment to the entire process.

“JESUS COMMANDS US TO BAPTIZE AND TO TEACH ‘ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.’”

SACRAMENT PREPARATION GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Parents and students should attend weekly mass.
- Family should nurture a spiritual prayer life.
- Parents must attend mandatory parent meetings. Parent participation is required in all Sacrament preparation programs.
- Family must be registered members of the parish.
- Parents must furnish a copy of the student’s Baptismal Certificate.
- Parents and students are encouraged to learn more about our Catholic faith and participate in church ministry together.

BAPTISM

Parents seeking baptism for their infants or children under the age of seven should visit the Church Office during office hours to obtain information and to register for Baptism Preparation classes. Please refer to Baptism Guidelines for Infants.

Children older than 7 years of age who have not celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism will be enrolled in the RE program. Parents will also need to complete a Baptism Preparation class. Please contact the Director of Religious Education for more information.

Ordinarily at least one godparent (sponsor) is required for Baptism (CIC 873). If two sponsors are chosen, one of each gender must be selected.

In the Diocese of Austin, moreover, Catholics who are to serve as baptismal sponsors are to sign the Sponsor Covenant form testifying that they are Catholics in good standing with the Church, fully initiated into the Church, and if applicable, in a marriage recognized by the Church.

“Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord’s will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.” (CCC no. 1277) In Baptism, Original Sin is forgiven along with all personal sins. By it, we become adoptive children of the Father, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit; it also incorporates us into the Church and makes us sharers in the priesthood of Christ. (CCC, nos. 1279-1280). Baptism imparts an indelible spiritual sign or character, and thus cannot be repeated.”

QUALIFICATIONS TO SERVE AS A SPONSOR

- Be appointed as such by the appropriate person or minister;
- As a rule, be not less than sixteen years of age;
- Be a Catholic who has received First Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation, and who lives a life of faith befitting the role of sponsor;
- Not labor under any canonical penalties;
- Not be the mother or father of the one to be baptized.

(CIC 874)

“JESUS ESTABLISHED HIS CHURCH TO HELP PEOPLE FIND TRUE HAPPINESS AND JOY.”

RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION

**“THIS IS THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE
WORLD, HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO HIS SUPPER.”**

Holy Eucharist is the sacrament which represents in the Mass the sacrificial Death of Christ and his Resurrection—making it possible for us to eat his Body and drink his Blood (CCC, no. 1323).

Penance (also known as Reconciliation or Confession) is the sacrament through which sins committed after Baptism can be forgiven, and reconciliation with God and community can be effected.

At St. Margaret Mary students typically celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in 2nd grade.

Students must complete the pre-Communion class or at least 1 year of Religious Education prior to beginning the First Communion program.

FORMATION TO CELEBRATE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

A two year program

- Parent must provide a copy of the child's Baptism Certificate whether baptized at St. Margaret Mary or elsewhere
- Student (and parents as indicated) must attend all classes, events and Rites
- Parents and student should faithfully participate in the Sunday Liturgy
- Parents can facilitate the formation process by helping the student understand the classroom material and completing any assignments

CONFIRMATION

The sacrament in which the gift of the Holy Spirit received at Baptism is confirmed, strengthened, and perfected for living the Christian life and spreading the faith to others; in this sacrament we receive a permanent sign or character so it cannot be repeated.

Students requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation will be required to prepare over a two-year period. This Sacrament of Initiation allows the student to accept and allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. In preparation, we will work together to guide our youth to become active participants in the Church's Mission of discipleship. This will be the beginning of an adult journey of spiritual growth. Candidates must be a sophomore in High School and have attended 2 years of Confirmation preparation. The student will need to select an appropriate sponsor who will walk the formation journey with them as a mentor in the Christian life.

Year One (typically freshmen year) and Year Two (typically sophomore year)

CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Candidate must be at least a sophomore in High School to be Confirmed.
- Candidate must have attended formal religious education in a parish or Catholic school program for two years. (Year One and Year Two)
- Candidate must select a sponsor in good standing with the Catholic Church.
- Candidate must attend Confirmation classes and complete assignments. No more than 2 absences per semester are permitted. It is the responsibility of the Confirmation Candidate, not the parents, to notify the Youth Director regarding any scheduling conflicts.
- Candidate will be required to attend a Confirmation retreat.
- Candidate will project an image of Christian consideration, sensitivity, and respect to everyone and to the property around them through language, dress, and behavior.
- Candidate is responsible for reading the Confirmation guide and complying with the community service hours, essay and interview requirements.
- Candidate, Sponsor, and/or Parent must attend a day retreat followed by the Confirmation Mass Rehearsal.

Confirmation students will attend class every Sunday evening from 6 — 8 p.m. in Benish Center unless otherwise specified.

The meetings include fellowship, a time for catching up with friends followed by active learning and worship experiences. Scripture, community

building, and small and large group discussions are incorporated into the night. Students are encouraged to learn their faith and support each other in this faith journey.

CONFIRMATION SPONSORS

As a Confirmation sponsor, your role is to encourage the faith of your candidate and be an example to your Confirmation candidate and to reflect with the candidate on the meaning of a life of Catholic discipleship.

The Diocese of Austin requires that sponsors complete a Sponsor Covenant form. This form is included in the Confirmation guide. This form replaces the need for copies of sacramental records for the sponsor. By signing this document, the sponsor affirms that they are qualified to serve in this role.

SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Sponsors must meet the qualifications for Baptismal godparents (see pg. 3) and:

- Pray for and with the candidate.
- Actively participate in this journey of faith, helping the candidate to fully understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit while sharing their faith with the candidate.
- Attend a day retreat, reconciliation, and the Mass rehearsal scheduled prior to the celebration of Confirmation.
- Be an active member within their local faith community and be a positive role model to the candidate.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process is available to adults and youth 16+ years of age, those unbaptized who are seeking to become Christians (through celebrating Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion) or baptized Christians desiring to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church through the celebration of Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Please see the Adult Formation information on this website.

Weekly sessions are held from late August through Easter on Tuesday evenings from 7—9 p.m. Adults wishing to become members of our faith as well as people who are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith are welcome to participate.

For more information about the formation process for adults in English, please contact:

Kevin Pasnik

PHONE: 512-585-0307

EMAIL: kevin.pasnik@gmail.com

Michelle Hill

PHONE: 512-944-6065

EMAIL: mehill@austin.rr.com

For information in Spanish, please contact:

Rev. Luis Cáceres

OFFICE: 259-3126 Ext. 100

EMAIL: frluis@stmargaretmary.com

**“THIS SACRAMENT OF INITIATION ALLOWS THE STUDENT TO ACCEPT
AND ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WORK IN THEIR LIVES.”**

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION: Please contact the office for more information about registration and the associated fees.

RETREATS: Retreats are a valuable component of Sacramental formation. They are usually held offsite and the costs are variable. Retreat fees typically cover the cost of food and lodging for the entire weekend.

For more information about the requirements for the Sacrament of First Communion, please contact:

Robin H. Yañez

Director of Religious Education

OFFICE: 259-3126 Ext. 112

EMAIL: Robin@stmargaretmary.com

If you have any questions about the Confirmation Program, please contact:

Melanie Owens

Director of Youth Ministry

OFFICE: 259-3126 Ext. 110

CELL: 830-203-0081

EMAIL: melanie@thesmmym.com

OR

Annie Gott

Assistant Director of

High School Youth Ministry

CELL: 512-784-4560

EMAIL: annieg@thesmmym.com

CATECHISTS

Our Religious Education program can always use catechists or aides. Please consider sharing your faith, time and talents with the youth of our parish.

The RE program complies with the Diocese of Austin's policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) for all employees and those volunteers who minister to youth or vulnerable adults in the diocese. Catechists and aides are required to be compliant with these policies which include attending an EIM workshop every 3 years. (The Application for Ministry does not have to be updated.)

The 3-hr Basic Workshop is required for all new applicants within 60 days of EIM application submission.

The Refresher Workshop is offered only for persons who have attended a previous EIM workshop and data is already recorded in the eApps application. To verify that you qualify to attend a 'refresher', please contact Donna Ruddy at (512) 259-0798

Please visit the Diocese of Austin website for a complete listing of workshops and then contact the site directly to reserve your spot at the workshop.

**“LIVING AS A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST,
MEANS WE LIVE AS DISCIPLES, PROCLAIMING THE LORD JESUS’
TEACHING TO OTHERS.”**