

# The Basilica of Saint Mary

## Faith Formation Handbook

### 2023-2024

#### PARISH CLERGY

Very. Rev. Edward Hathaway, Rector

Rev. Joseph Townsend, Parochial Vicar

Rev. Peter Clem, Parochial Vicar

#### PARISH OFFICE

313 Duke Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

[admin@stmaryoldtown.org](mailto:admin@stmaryoldtown.org)

(703)836-4100

[www.stmaryoldtown.org](http://www.stmaryoldtown.org)

#### Parish Office Hours:

Monday- Friday 9:00am-5:00pm





## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (children's faith formation, RCIA, adult education)

(HOURS: variable, email preferred)

Mrs. Susan Gray, Director of Religious Education

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Mrs. Yunchong Boyle, Assistant Director of Religious Education

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## YOUTH MINISTRY

(HOURS: variable, email preferred)

Mrs. Mariane Staron, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

[mstaron@stmaryoldtown.org](mailto:mstaron@stmaryoldtown.org) (703) 836-4100 x3030

Miss Mariama Roldan, Program Assistant for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

At The Basilica of Saint Mary we aim to complement and supplement your responsibility as Catholic parents to teach and raise your children in the faith. Because parents are the primary educators of your children, we offer to provide support and encouragement as you seek to fulfill this responsibility. One way we do that is enrolling children in our children's faith formation/Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) sessions led by volunteer catechists. Classes are designed to provide children (and parents) opportunities to know the Lord, develop a personal relationship with Him, read scripture, encounter Him in the sacraments, foster holiness, learn about the saints, bring the Good News to others, and strengthen your domestic church as you grow in the faith together and be lifelong Catholics.

To view additional catechetical resources, please visit the [Diocese of Arlington's website](#).

## THE OBJECTIVE OF CATECHESIS

We prefer to use the terminology Catechism or children's faith formation in lieu of CCD. The purpose of our sessions has one clear objective: **To know and love Jesus in a personal way.**

We are not communicating and teaching these truths apart from other areas of one's life. We strive, through catechesis, to help students desire to encounter Jesus in a life-changing way, and to build a relationship with Him through the Mass, prayer, the sacraments, and the life of the church. We then aim to teach and show that this encounter and relationship with Jesus can and should inform and guide every aspect of our life.

**Classes for the 2023-2024 school year will meet on Sundays, September 10, 2023 – May 5, 2024.**

## **ACADEMIC SCOPE OF CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION (Kindergarten – Year 8)**

### **Kindergarten (age 5 and up)**

A Catholic religion curriculum for children founded on two unifying key truths: God and creation, and stresses the dignity of each child made in God's image.

### **Years 1-8 (*Faith and Life Series*)**

#### **Year One: *Our Heavenly Father***

Introduction to the Trinity, with emphasis on the life of Jesus, the plan of salvation, and the child's part in the plan. Acquaints child with Mary, angels, and saints. Child learns basic prayers.

#### **Year Two: *Jesus Our Life***

Preparation for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. These lessons emphasize God's mercy and love. Covers Commandments, Creation, and Redemption.

#### **Year Three: *Our Life with Jesus***

God's plan of salvation, from creation to the Incarnation and Redemption to the birth of the Church at Pentecost and our life in the Church. Special emphasis on the importance of Confession, Communion, and the Mass.

#### **Year Four: *Jesus Our Guide***

God's plan to save His people from sin (Salvation History), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us in our pilgrimage on earth to Heaven through His word, His law, and His Church.

#### **Year Five: *Credo: I Believe***

A thorough study of the articles of the Creed as the basic beliefs of our Catholic faith, with a special emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, and the prophets, and the prayers of the Church.

#### **Year Six: *Following Christ***

The blueprint for a life of love: the law of God, especially in The Commandments, and the presence of Jesus in the Holy Mass. The interaction of the challenges of God's law and His gifts of grace that help us fulfill His law.

#### **Year Seven: *The Life of Grace***

Grace as our link with God, his gift to us to bring us to Himself and his eternal life, with an emphasis on transmission of grace through the seven sacraments and the role of grace in developing the virtues.

#### **Year Eight: *Our Life in the Church***

The history of the Church--its founding by Christ, its birth in the Holy Spirit, the marks of the one, true Church, the saints, and the role of the religious and laity up to the present. The structure of the Church Jesus planned and the role of the Magisterium.

## Student Prayer List

Prayer is how we communicate with God. It is the lifting of our hearts and minds to God, to speak with Him and to listen to Him. We strongly encourage families to pray together. Please pray with and for your children, and Mass is the greatest prayer.

Students are expected to master the prayers at his/her grade level in addition to knowing the prayers taught in previous years. Mastering prayers can only be done through repetition, thus praying regularly together as a family will help children say, read, and write prayers. The Standards of Learning from the Diocese of Arlington offer this rubric:

Year	Prayers to Master (Cumulative)
Kindergarten	Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Guardian Angel
1	Our Father/Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals
2	Act of Contrition, mini-prayers/aspirations (for example: Lord, help me, Blessed be God)
3	St. Michael Prayer, Mass responses
4	Act of Faith, Act of Hope, Act of Charity, Rosary Prayers
5	Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, Fatima Prayer, Hail Holy Queen, Rosary Mysteries
6	Divine Mercy Chaplet
7	The Angelus, Memorare, Stations of the Cross
8	Come Holy Spirit Prayer, Divine Praises/Exposition/Benediction, patron saint devotion
High School	All the above prayers

Words to prayers are found in the student text, the student's class folder, and are available online: <http://stmaryoldtown.org/wp-content/uploads/Prayers-to-Master-by-Grade.pdf>

## ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

### Children's Faith Formation Classes for Rising Kindergarten – Year 8

Thank you for your interest in enrolling your student/s in the Children's Faith Formation Program at The Basilica of Saint Mary, Alexandria, VA. To register your child/ren into the parish catechism classes held on Sunday mornings, the family must be registered member of The Basilica of Saint Mary (if you are not sure if you are registered, please call the Parish Office at (703) 836-4100). Upon registering your child into our faith formation program, it is necessary to submit a copy of the child's birth and baptismal certificates and include the dates of any other sacraments that the child may have received (e.g. Penance, Communion). Our on-line registration form allows parents to upload birth and baptismal certificates.

Classes are held on Sundays at The Basilica School of Saint Mary (400 Green Street, Alexandria, VA) from 10-11:15 a.m., September-May. The timing allows your family to attend Holy Mass together before or after class - - CCD class complements Holy Mass and sacraments but does not replace them. As with other subjects in school, children should be enrolled in Religious Education classes every year because each year builds on one another and provides opportunities for your student/s to further strengthen his/her relationship with the Lord.

By your examples of Sunday Mass attendance, prayer, receiving and living the Sacraments, reading scripture and other spiritual works, attending Catholic faith presentations/joining a parish ministry, striving for a more personal relationship with the Lord, and performing works of mercy, your children will come to know and love the faith.

## **Grade Level Entrance Requirements**

Faith formation is over one's lifetime and not only for the sacraments. As with other school subjects that a student takes every year, formation in the Catholic faith is a yearly subject.

We will evaluate students participation and assessments to determine what year to place him/her in for the 2023-2024 Religious Education school *year with the understanding that a child's school grade may differ from his/her assigned CCD year*. If your child was not enrolled in a Roman Catholic School or Religious Education Program during 2022-2023 or did not complete his/her grade level curriculum by August 15 (or earlier), he/she may need to take a grade level assessment to determine the appropriate CCD year for 2023-2024. Grade level assessments will be conducted prior to faith formation classes, sometime in late August/early September.

## **Two Year Sacramental Preparation**

Administration of the sacraments is conducted for children who show evidence of desire for the sacraments. The Diocese of Arlington and The Basilica of Saint Mary has a two-year sacramental preparation program for grade/age appropriate sacraments.

To receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist in Year 2 generally, the child must be validly baptized and have been enrolled in either a Catholic school or catechesis program for Year 1 (or appropriate equivalent), regularly attends Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation, and desires to receive the sacraments. Parishes in the Diocese of Arlington have a two consecutive year program that begins in the Fall of his/her Year 1 and culminates in the Spring of his/her Year 2. More information is available in our First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Handbooks.

To receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in Year 8 generally, the student must be baptized Catholic or made a profession of faith, goes to Confession, receives Holy Communion, regularly attends Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation, and completed Year 7 the prior year in either a CCD program or in a Catholic school. In preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the students must attend Year 8 class weekly, participate in a mandatory retreat, write a report on his/her chosen patron saint, write a letter to the bishop/pastor, participate in volunteer service hours/corporal works of mercy, and complete lessons and projects satisfactorily and on-time. More information is available in our student Confirmation Handbook.

## **RCIA Adapted for Children**

These classes are intended for children of catechetical age, 7 years or older, who are not baptized and who desire to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion).

If your child is baptized Catholic and "missed" receiving First Confession, First Communion, and/or Confirmation, please contact the Director of Religious Education for further instruction on registration for the appropriate classes.

## **Homeschool/Self-Directed Catechesis**

Because we recognize that parents are the primary catechists for their child(ren), committed families may opt to provide systematic faith formation at home. This program is open to parishioner families and is a self-directed study at home where the parent is the primary catechist. We use the same instructional materials for the homeschool option as we do for in person classes, using MyCatholicFaithDelivered.com. Sacramental preparation years may include additional instructional materials. This includes online textbooks, engaging videos, activities, and online assessments. For sacramental years, please consider enrolling your student in our in-person classes to better-ensure consistent presentations and communications on projects/activities.

We recommend completing one chapter of MCFD each week along with achieving at least 85% best score on the quizzes, tests, and assessments. At anytime, you can review your child's progress. In December, you will be sent your child's assessment. For students in sacramental years, completion of certain lessons is expected before the child receives a sacrament. Assessments serve as benchmarks so that students complete successfully the curriculum during the academic year. Students enrolled in the homeschool option will remain in this option for the school year and have from September to May to complete the curriculum. Students who do not complete lessons will be delayed in advancing to the next year.

Families who wish to minimize screen time with their child(ren) are welcome to request textbooks along with weekly homework to be turned in in lieu of the online class, with permission from the Director of Religious Education.

## **Non-Parishioner Families**

Registration in our children's faith formation program places a priority on The Basilica of Saint Mary parishioner families. If there is room, classes may be open to non-parishioners with special permission from the Director of Religious Education. Once permission has been granted, permission for future years is automatically granted. Registration in the Homeschool/Self-Directed learning is restricted to parishioners only.

Diocesan sacramental policy stipulates that candidates receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) in the parish where his/her family is registered. Non-Parishioner families who desire to have their children receive Sacraments of Initiation at The Basilica of Saint Mary must obtain a letter of permission from the pastor of the parish where they are registered in order to receive these sacraments at The Basilica of Saint Mary.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING**

The Basilica of Saint Mary follows the Diocese of Arlington's commitment to providing a safe environment for all children and assisting each child to grow in grace and wisdom and to live in right relationships. Parents may review the program materials online (<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/youth-training-programs/>) Although we highly encourage parents to present this material to their child(ren) as best fits the needs of the family, parents may choose to opt-out their child(ren). A signed opt-out form is due before the beginning of the class. For elementary students in Years 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8, the training program we use is Formation in Christian Chastity/Circles of Grace. The program is part of a regular Sunday class/retreat. Children who are opted out are asked to come to class that day and a catechetical lesson will be presented in another classroom Training will occur during CCD on the designated dates which can be found on the CCD calendar (<https://stmaryoldtown.org/ccd-calendar>).

For high school students, the training will be provided by the Director of Youth and Young Adults, the training program may be either Called to Protect or Tricked. Please see the Diocesan website listed above for more details.

In compliance with the Diocese of Arlington's Office of Child Protection, Religious Education staff, catechists, assistant catechists, and other adult volunteers have undergone a Virginia Background Check and attended a Virtus seminar.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

**Registration for Religious Education programs are available online at The Basilica of Saint Mary's website: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/apostolate/ccd/>**

Registration for our children's faith formation classes begins at the conclusion of the academic year (in May or early June) for rising Kindergarten through Year 8 students. Students who are in sacramental preparation years (Year 2 for First Holy Communion and Year 8 for Confirmation) are required to have met all pre-requisites for entrance into those grades. Please see the Entrance Requirements section for more details. Please contact the Director of Religious Education if you are experiencing financial difficulties and cannot tuition. We have a generous benefactor who will cover costs.

Homeschool Registration begins at the conclusion of the academic year (in May or early June) for rising Year 1 through Year 8. Students who are in sacramental preparation years (Year 2 for First Holy Communion and Year 2 for Confirmation) are required to have met all pre-requisites for entrance into the appropriate class. Please see the Entrance Requirements section for more details.

### **Registration for Sacraments**

Students in Year 2 (who have completed successfully Year 1) and Year 8 (who have completed successfully Year 7) are required to register for Sacraments. By enrolling in our parish religious education program, your child(ren) is/are automatically registered for the grade/age appropriate sacraments and paying resources fees.

**Confirmation Registration: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/confirmation>**

**First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Registration: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/youth-first-holy-communion-registration/>**

Children at The Basilica of Saint Mary School, other Catholic School in the area must register in Year 2 (traditionally 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and in year 8 (traditionally 8<sup>th</sup> grade) for Confirmation. Additional registration fees are collected to cover the cost of preparation activities, certificates, and other costs. No one will be denied access to the Sacrament if you require financial assistance. Please reach out to the Director of Religious Education.



### Registration Fees 2023-2024:

Registration fees reflect the cost of educational materials for our programming. No one will be denied access to faith formation or sacraments because of financial difficulties; if your family requires financial assistance, please reach out the Director of Religious Education for a reduction in fees or waiver as appropriate.

	Before 15 AUG	After 15 AUG
<b>Children's Faith Formation Registration Fees (in person or homeschool):</b>		
Per student	\$65	\$80
<b>Sacramental Preparation Fees (in addition to the registration fee):</b>		
First Holy Communion per child (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year)	\$40	
Confirmation per child (8 <sup>th</sup> Year)	\$70	

## **ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN**

Parents/guardians are a child's first and enduring teachers. Parents/guardians play a crucial role in helping their child(ren) learn and are expected to take the primary role in their child(ren)'s faith formation. It is essential to the child's growth and development in the Catholic faith that the parents/guardians live the life of faith at home. Parents/guardians have the primary and sacred responsibility to educate their child(ren) in the Catholic faith. The Basilica of Saint Mary Faith Formation programs are established to assist them in this responsibility.

Children's growth and development in the Catholic faith depends on the parents/guardians outwardly living lives of faith. The effectiveness of the faith formation process radically depends upon this parental involvement in faith. Children learn in faith formation class that celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday in his/her local parish as a community of faith is essential to being a Catholic. Therefore, children must attend the weekly Sunday or Saturday evening liturgy supported by his/her parents/guardians.

The values of parents/guardians form the values of the child. When children do not experience what is being taught in Faith Formation classes at home, they receive a "mixed message" which can cause inner conflict for children.

### **Parent/Guardian:**

- Follow the Precepts of the Catholic Church:
  - Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
  - Confess sins at least once a year.
  - Humbly receive Holy Communion at least during the Easter Season.
  - Observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.
  - Provide for the material needs of the Church according to his/her abilities.
- Act as the primary educators of his/her child.
- Initiate his/her child into the sacramental life.
- Serve as role models for his/her child by being moral Christians.
- Help his/her child in forming a good conscience and a Christian code of morality.
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly with his/her families.
- Participate in meetings, activities and prayers that are planned to help his/her child prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Encourage his/her child to continue learning more about his/her faith as they mature.
- Help his/her child understand service projects are the beginning of a life committed to Christian service.
- Ensure the child is prepared for class by arriving on-time, brings texts and homework, is rested and fed.

## **ROLE OF THE STUDENT**

### **Students are expected to:**

- Attend class regularly (no more than 4 absences), bring books and completed homework, arrive on-time, be ready to learn, wear modest clothes (no pajamas, hoodies, etc).

- Participate respectfully in class activities and discussions.
- Learn assigned prayers for each grade level.
- Attend and participate in faith formation activities as required for sacramental preparation.
- Respect his/her catechist and classmates at all times.
- Respect the property of others.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct contained in this handbook (beginning on page 19).
- Not have a cell/mobile phone with him/her in class.

## **CATECHIST RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents are the primary educators of their children, and parish catechists support parents in this duty. Catechists assist parents in providing a systematic, age-appropriate presentation of the faith, which adheres to the curriculum of the parish faith formation program and the Standards of Learning for each grade as set by the Diocese of Arlington's Office of Faith Formation.

### **Catechist qualifications:**

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church.
- Be 18 years or older.
- Be in full compliance with the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYC) before beginning and while serving in ministry.
- Be committed to presenting and bearing witness to the authentic teachings of the Church and signing an Oath of Fidelity.
- Be willing to continue his/her ministry training and work towards certification.

All catechists must strive to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to communicate the faith effectively. They must have a solid understanding of Catholic doctrine and worship, Scripture and Tradition, and Church history. In addition, catechists must have the necessary communication skills and ability to use various methodologies; they must understand how people grow and mature, and how persons of different ages and circumstances learn.

Catechists must continue his/her own faith formation (e.g. Scripture, Catechism, Church history, etc.), as well as training in faith development, learning styles, and teaching methods. Special ministry training must also be pursued for catechizing those with specific needs (e.g., teaching children with special needs, etc.).

Local and diocesan courses, workshops, institutes, conferences and online (internet-based) classes are offered to assist catechists in attaining appropriate training. Please see the Director of Religious Education for more information on certification programs and opportunities.

### **Guidelines for Catechists of Children:**

- Be capable of serving according to the policies and guidelines for catechists.
- Accompany children from first evangelization, through catechesis, to life-long discipleship.
- Nourish the gift of faith received in Baptism and provide sacramental preparation and liturgical formation so that children may become active participants in the Church's community and Her worship.
- Emphasize that growth in faith includes knowledge of truths of faith as taught by the four pillars of our Catholic faith: the Creed, sacraments, moral life, and prayer.
- Foster a sense of community and service to God and neighbor, including those who are marginalized.
- Work with the Director of Religious Education to teach the entire content for his/her classes as

part of a larger religious education program.

- Utilize the curriculum of the parish religious education program.
- Follow and adhere to the current policies and Standards of Learning established by the Diocese of Arlington's Office of Faith Formation.
- Arrive no later than 15 minutes before classes to set up classrooms and be present in the school gym to welcome students before prayer and dismissal from the gym to the classrooms.

### **Catechist Certification:**

To grow in his/her faith and best serve in his/her ministry, catechists should strive to attain Diocesan catechist certification in a timely manner.

### **Catechist Certification in the Diocese of Arlington may be attained at three levels:**

1. Catechist Certification
2. Specialized Catechist Certification
3. Master Catechist Certification

### **Catechist Certification**

Catechist Certification is strongly encouraged for every catechist, assistant catechist, and substitute catechist. Courses for Catechist Certification are designed to provide a comprehensive foundation in the Catholic faith and the resources and training necessary to teach in the elementary and high school levels.

Catechist Certification is met with 50 hours of verified course work in the following areas:

- 10 hours in ministry training
- 10 hours of study of the Creed
- 10 hours of study of the Sacraments
- 10 hours of study of the Moral Life
- 10 hours of study of Prayer and Tradition

- Catechist Certification must be renewed every three years with an additional 10 hours of verified study.
- Those who have already satisfied these requirements through past certification may renew his/her Catechist Certification or work towards Specialized Catechist Certification.
- Those whose previous Catechist Certification does not meet these requirements must first fulfill these fifty hours within three years to maintain his/her Basic Certification.
- Catechists must first attain Catechist Certification before advancing towards Specialized Certification.

The Diocese of Arlington recognizes these apostolates that offer Catechist Certification courses (see Diocesan website for links and detailed information: <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/catechetical-resources/catechist-formation/catechist-certification/>):

Catholic Education Center, LLC  
Institute of Catholic Culture  
Catholic Distance University

### **Specialized Catechist Certification**

Specialized Catechist Certification is designed for those who teach high school faith formation, adults, or areas of specialty. To attain a Specialized Catechist Certification, the participant must complete 50 hours of verified course work in one of the following areas:

Scriptural/Biblical Catechesis

Church History

Evangelization and Discipleship

Faith Formation and Spirituality

Classroom Methods and Management

Catechetical Tradition

Ministry Coordination and Leadership

- Specialized Catechist Certification must be renewed every three years with an additional 10 hours of verified study in his/her area of specialty.

The Diocese recognizes these apostolates that offer Specialized Catechist Certification courses:

Catholic Education Center, LLC

Catholic Distance University

Franciscan University

### **Master Catechist Certification**

The Master Catechist program is designed for those who teach youth or adults, or who are expected to provide support to other in the faith formation program at the parish. The Master Catechist Certification is offered by Christendom College Graduate School of Theology. The program is offered every other year and consists of 6 courses plus teaching. These courses may also be taken for academic credit towards a Master of Arts in Theology. See the Diocesan website for more details:

<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/catechetical-resources/catechist-formation/catechist-certification/>

### **Application for Certification**

Applicants for Catechist Certification (any level) must submit transcripts indicating successful course completion and a completed application form to the Director of Religious Education at the Basilica of Saint Mary for review and signature prior to final submission to the Special Consultant for Catechesis at the Office of Faith Formation to attain certification (see Diocesan website for application form and instruction: <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/catechetical-resources/catechist-formation/catechist-certification/>).

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## SAFETY PROCEDURES AND ESCAPE ROUTES/EVACUATION MEETING PLACE

No matter the situation, catechists, assistants, aides, and students need to know the exits closest to their classroom in The Basilica of Saint Mary School. Adult volunteers should always keep their phone close by in case you need to call a staff member or emergency services.

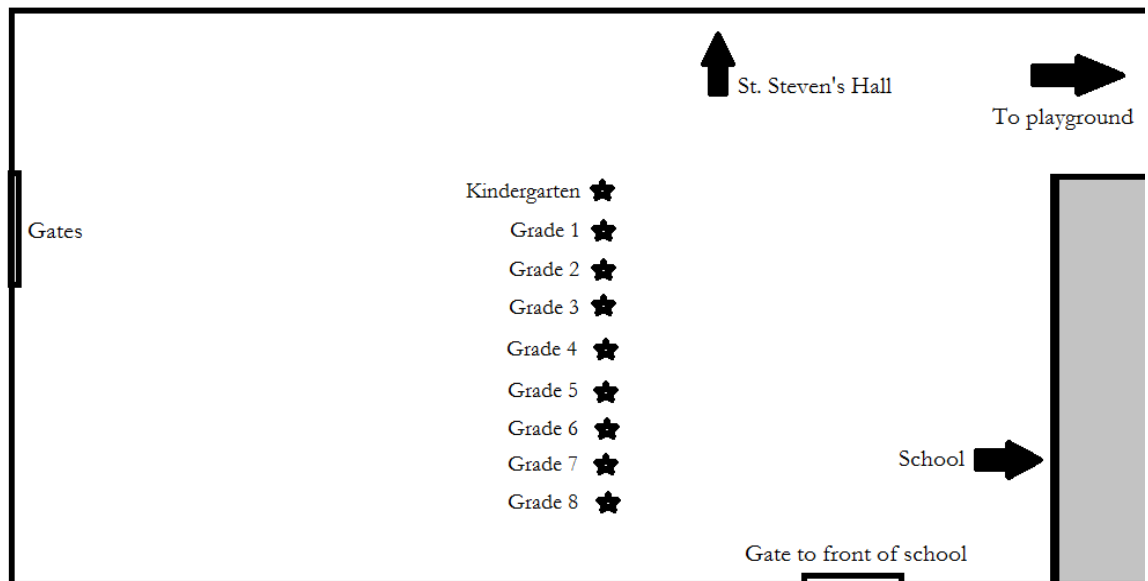
During an evacuation, students will be escorted to the blacktop (parking lot), lining up parallel to St. Steven's Hall. See diagram for further details.

### Fire Drill:

In the event of a fire, an announcement will be made over the intercom system instructing everyone to evacuate the building or the fire alarm will sound.

1. Students exit the classroom and WALK in orderly lines, leaving personal items in the classroom.
2. Students evacuate the building via designated routes to the designated meeting area.
3. No talking is permitted (this helps with keeping the situation calm and orderly).
4. **Catechists:**
  - Take your class roster and sign-in/attendance sheet with you.
  - Check that all students are out of the classroom.
  - Check that all exits are clear.
  - Close classroom doors, but DO NOT LOCK them.
5. At designated meeting area, and using your class attendance sheet, take account for all students.
6. Students remain silent in his/her lines until the "all-clear" signal is given.

### Fire Evacuation Diagram:



**Earthquake:**

1. If intense shaking occurs during class, catechists give the command “DROP”
  - Upon command, drop down to knees.
  - Get under/below equipment (desks, chairs, tables, etc.).
  - Grasp equipment with both hands and keep body under or below equipment.
  - Wait for further instructions.
2. Wait for shaking to stop.
3. Check for injuries or trapped individuals and move all students who can be moved when you evacuate. Assure trapped individuals that help is coming.
4. After checking for blocked exits, evacuate to the designated meeting area.

**5. Catechists:**

- Take your class roster and check-in sheet with you.
6. At the designated meeting spot, take attendance and account for **all** students.
  7. Await further instructions from staff and/or emergency response teams.

**Lock Down:**

If the situation arises, an announcement will be made over the intercom system instructing everyone to “lock down”. The point is to put as much distance between you/your class and the intruder.

1. When class is occurring, everyone is to remain where they are (classroom, office...). If someone is in the hallway, find the nearest room.

**2. Catechists:**

- Quickly glance outside the room to direct any students or staff members in the hall into your room immediately. Keep students silent.
  - Close/lock the room door. Pull down the door window shade. Close window blinds. Turn off the lights and computer monitors/projector screen.
  - Place students in such a way that an attacker cannot see them: having them sit down against a wall/making a “barricade” with a table, etc. – be out of sight.
  - PUT YOUR PHONE ON SILENT. Don’t even have it on vibrate.
3. In the gym:
    - Move to the bathrooms or a storage closet and lock doors.
    - If it is not possible to move to another location, drop in place and remain still.
  4. Anyone in the hallways should seek entrance into the nearest classroom and lock the door.
  5. Anyone in a bathroom should move into a stall, shut the door, and stand on top of the toilet seat.
  6. Stay in safe areas until directed by law enforcement or staff to move or evacuate.
  7. If an evacuation occurs, all persons/classrooms will be directed by a law enforcement officer or administrator to a safe location. Once evacuated from the building, teachers should take roll to account for all students present in class.

### Lock Out:

If a situation arises, an announcement will be made over the intercom system instructing everyone to evacuate the building.

- Everyone in the building must evacuate to the off-site location designated for emergency pick up according to The Basilica School of Saint Mary policies (Lyles Crouch Traditional Academy, 530 South Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria VA 22314).
  - **Catechists:**
    - Quickly escort the students in your class using the nearest exit.
      - Take your class roster and check-in sheet with you.
      - Check that all students are out of the classroom. Leave personal items in the classroom.
      - Check that all exits are clear.
      - Close classroom doors.
      - Keep students quiet.
      - Walk quickly and orderly to the off-site location.
  - Stay in safe areas until directed by law enforcement or staff to move or until parents come to pick up all students.
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### ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Students are to report to The Basilica School of Saint Mary, located at 400 Green Street, Alexandria, VA no earlier than 9:45 a.m. and no later than 9:55 a.m. Parents and students are to enter and exit the school via the gym entrance under normal conditions, generally through the gate on South Royal Street. Due to on-going construction, we may have an alternate plan and will make known the proper entrance and exits as the situation develops.

Students and parents of children in Kinder-Year 3, will report to his/her catechist or assistant catechist and remain in the gym for the opening prayer and announcements.

- **For everyone's safety and in compliance with the Arlington Diocese's Office of Risk Management, do not prop the front door or side doors allowing anyone (known or unknown) to enter the school building. We will strive to have one place for entering and exiting. At this time, we expect to use the School Gym for entering and exiting the building.**
- All students remain in the gym with his/her class until dismissed to his/her classroom with the catechist.
- We begin with a prayer promptly at 10 a.m. followed by announcements before releasing students to his/her classrooms. Parents are welcome to stay for prayer and the announcements.
- Children in Kindergarten through Year 3 need to be signed in by a parent/guardian with his/her catechist in the gym.
- All parents not attending a parent meeting or adult education class must exit the building promptly, as doors need to be secured and all hallways will be kept clear during class.
- Please help us keep your child(ren) safe by sharing with them that no one is allowed to climb on or sit on the gym bleachers when they are not set out. We will certainly remind them of this rule, but we need your help in ensuring that no child is hurt and no items are lost in the bleachers.
- Please strive to be on time and respect the catechists time and lesson preparation and student learning. Students are to bring their textbook, completed homework/projects as directed by the catechist.



- Those who arrive late must check in with the volunteer or staff in the gym. Students in Kindergarten through Year 3 will be escorted with his/her parents to be signed into the classroom. Students in Year 4 and above will be escorted to his/her classroom by an adult volunteer/staff.

## DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

- Because of our limited time with teaching the faith to your children, please avoid early pickups.
- Children in Kindergarten through Year 3 are to be signed out from the classroom at the conclusion of catechesis at 11:15 a.m. Parents may stand along the classroom wall and wait quietly until the end of class and sign out.
- Students in Years 4 through 8 will be released to the gym for dismissal after signing out with the catechist.
- You are welcome to come to the gym and wait inside if you arrive earlier than dismissal (11:15 a.m.). **To avoid disruptions to the classrooms, please keep the hallways clear until the dismissal.**

## EARLY DISMISSAL

If a child needs to leave class early, his/her parent needs to give **the catechist and the DRE** advance written notice. This can either be a hand-written note or an email directed to the above-mentioned persons before class. The parent is to come into the school - - a child is not to leave on his/her own to meet the parent in the parking lot.

Upon entering the school building, a student's parent will check in with a volunteer hall monitor or staff member, who can escort the parent to the appropriate classroom. Upon collecting their children, parents will be escorted to the appropriate exit. No student is to be dismissed without a parent for early dismissal.

## DISMISSAL WAIVERS

If desired, parents may authorize an arrival and dismissal waiver that allows students in years 4-8 to arrive and depart from catechesis without adult supervision. Dismissal will be from the gym – no other door/exit is to be used. Students in Kindergarten through year 3 **MUST** arrive and leave the school with an approved adult.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Basilica of Saint Mary faith formation programs follow Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) policy for weekend events regarding inclement weather closings and Alexandria City Public School (ACPS) policy during weekday events, unless otherwise informed.

Parents and guardians will be notified of CCD class closings through email or text message via the CCD Flocknote distribution platform. A notification will be made no later than 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings.

Parents must make the final determination regarding the safety and welfare of their children. If you feel it is unsafe to drive, please notify the Office of Religious Education via email to [sgray@stmaryoldtown.org](mailto:sgray@stmaryoldtown.org) and your child(ren)'s catechists that your child/children will be absent.

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

The children's faith formation school year is September 10, 2023 to May 5, 2024 for in-person learners. Excellent attendance is expected of all children in the faith formation program and perfect attendance will be recognized and rewarded at the last class. Catechists must accurately record attendance for each session and students are not to have more than four absences. Poor attendance and lack of participation will be addressed by the Director of Religious Education.

To successfully progress through the faith formation program, students must have regularly attended classes (no more than four absences in an academic year). In the event of an extended absence due to illness or other circumstance, please contact the Director of Religious Education to formulate a plan of action to make up missed sessions or to switch to the homeschool option.

## ILLNESS/SICK STUDENT

While we don't want to encourage absences from catechesis classes as we value educating your children in the faith, please do not send your child if they have the following symptoms:

- Fever and low-grade fever (99.8 F and above)
- Signs of flu: cough, chills (fever), muscle aches and malaise, vomiting, diarrhea,
- Exhibiting red eyes with discharge
- Head lice
- Unexplained rash not related to plants
- Any exposure to a virus such as COVID-19 that requires quarantine according to current CDC and local health authority guidelines

Students are welcome if they are fever-free without the use of Tylenol or Advil, have had at least three doses of antibiotics for strep throat, or other infectious disease with no fever, are no longer required to quarantine according to CDC and local health authority guidelines, and have not vomited or had diarrhea for twenty-four hours.

Please contact your child's catechist and our office when your child will be absent due to illness. We will mark your child as excused for attendance and will work with you and his/her catechist to catch up on any lessons they miss.

If a child becomes ill while present at CCD, the Director of Religious Education will contact the parents by phone. When arriving for the child, the parent should report to the Director of Religious Education (enter through the gym). If the parent cannot be reached, the Director of Religious Education will call the emergency number listed on the child's emergency contact in his/her registration. Please keep emergency telephone numbers up-to-date. Contact the Director of Religious Education if there are changes regarding the number, or if there is any special problem or special procedure that must be followed in an emergency situation.

**It is a parent's responsibility to arrange PROMPT PICKUP of a child deemed too sick to remain at CCD.**

If we are unable to reach a parent, and the situation is determined to be serious, we will call 911 for emergency professional assistance.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Items that are left behind in a classroom should be collected and returned to the family as soon as possible. In the event something is not claimed at the end of CCD, said items will be collected by the Director of Religious Education and brought to the Basilica of Saint Mary parish office. Parents may pick up lost items at the parish office during normal business hours.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Students in will receive text and activities books appropriate to his/her year. Your student should bring his/her text to class every week. Texts are required for classwork and homework. If a text becomes lost, a new text can be purchased through the Director of Religious Education.

## **FLOCKNOTE**

The Basilica of Saint Mary uses Flocknote to communicate regularly with parishioners. All faith formation programing uses Flocknote. Program wide messages will come out regarding registration, first day of class, holidays, weather cancellations, and other program activities. Catechists also have access to Flocknote to send messages. First Penance/First Holy Communion, Confirmation, and RCIA groups will receive regular communications through Flocknote throughout the year.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

In all areas of learning, discipline must be considered in the development of the whole person. The Code of Conduct is based on the Gospel message of Jesus. Growth in self-discipline, a responsibility for Catholic moral values, and a loving respect for the rights of all persons is encouraged and nourished by the Code of Conduct. To achieve these ends, parents, faculty, and students work together to create a Catholic school environment. These basic components include:

1. Teachers have a right to teach. No student will stop the teacher from teaching.
2. Students have a right to learn. No student will stop another student from learning. Based upon the Catholic moral values and loving respect for others taught by Jesus, students:
  - a. Will be honest and committed to integrity
  - b. Will be respectful and courteous toward all teachers and adults
  - c. Will refrain from harassment of any kind
  - d. Will use appropriate language
  - e. Will speak respectfully to and about others
  - f. Will complete all assignments and participate fully in class
  - g. Will respect all school and personal property
  - h. Will refrain from any deliberate disruption in the school
  - i. Will adhere to the school's cell phone policy

j. Will adhere to the dress code (see also *Dress Code*)

k. Will not give or receive unauthorized assistance on tests, quizzes, or assignments

l. Will not leave school grounds during the school day for any reason without permission from the Director of Religious Education/Religious Education Staff.

m. Will not bring to school nor possess at school any real or toy knives, guns (or any facsimile thereof), sharp objects that may be used as a weapon, matches, lighters, sparklers, laser devices, or any facsimile thereof. It is understood if this term is violated, suspension or expulsion may result.

n. Will maintain and support others who maintain a safe and drug-free environment at or near school and at all school-sponsored functions/activities with the understanding that possession or distribution of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or any other substance that may be harmful or dangerous and forbidden will result in suspension or expulsion from the CCD program.

o. Will not engage in any physical or verbal contact with another student which could be interpreted to be an inappropriate display of affection. Such conduct is prohibited on school grounds or at Religious Education sponsored activities.

p. Will, at all times, whether at school or in the community, conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the Catholic values and principles of the school.

[All of the conduct expectations include student use of the Internet.]

The Religious Education Department observes this Code of Conduct because it is built on fundamental Catholic social teachings. The role of the Director of Religious Education, staff and faculty is to work with the students and parents to assist the students in developing a strong Christian attitude toward life.

The Basilica of Saint Mary Religious Education Department provides a safe environment for all individuals. Verbal or written threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Students making such threats (seriously or in jest or online) face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. The Director of Religious Education investigates all complaints of harassment. Students involved in harassing behavior face detention, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Inappropriate content on personal sites/blogs such as, but not limited to, MySpace.com, Xanga, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Snap Chat that is associated with The Basilica of Saint Mary or is considered to be in conflict with the rules of conduct as outlined in this handbook is subject to disciplinary action at The Basilica of Saint Mary. This includes, but is not limited to, defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

This action is based on the fact that this information could possibly put all our students and faculty at risk. Anyone who has access to the World Wide Web can go to a website, gather information about the student and approach him/her using the information they learn about the student from the blog.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Because it is impossible to foresee all problems which arise, this handbook empowers the Religious Education staff to take disciplinary action for any behavior which violates the spirit, philosophy, and code of conduct of The Basilica of Saint Mary Faith Formation Program, even though not specified.

In justice to the other students, circumstances may dictate that a student be removed temporarily or permanently from the particular Religious Education setting.

In cases where a student is continually disruptive of others or in the case of a single serious disciplinary infraction, the catechist will inform the Director of Religious Education of the situation. They will assist in the development of a course of action to be taken to correct the situation.

Students who lack self-discipline or who violate the rights of others can expect disciplinary action. Each offense will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the age of the student, the nature of the infraction, and the severity of the case. Repeated infractions can result in more serious consequences, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, but there is no requirement for progressive discipline.

The following are some approved disciplinary measures:

- a. Counseling and/or conference with the student and family
- b. Assignment of special tasks
- c. Denial of privileges
- d. Detention
- e. Probation
- f. Suspension
- g. Dismissal
- h. Expulsion

At the beginning of the year, classroom rules are discussed, and policies are established so that the students understand what is expected of them.

The Director of Religious Education is aware of and supports each catechist's discipline policy. Offenses are dealt with by the catechist and/or Director of Religious Education as the need arises.

Behaviors that show a pattern of disrespect or disregard for the code of conduct will be noted in the students file. Parents will be made aware of the infraction(s) via email, phone call or in person by the catechist or the Director of Religious Education. Parents are asked to discuss these notifications with his/her child and help them make a plan for improvement.

Increased intervention without noticeable changes of serious behavior problems will result in more serious consequences, in order to ensure a safe environment for all of the students. The Director of Religious

Education is the final recourse for all disciplinary situations and may waive any and all regulations for just cause at his/her discretion.

The following are examples of serious infractions of the code of conduct and may result in serious disciplinary action including suspension, dismissal, and expulsion:

- Aggressive behavior, including verbal aggression and vulgarity
- Physical Altercation
- Language or actions that violate the dignity of the human person such as racially charged words
- Theft
- Vandalism / destruction / defacement of school property

This does not represent a comprehensive list. The Basilica of St. Mary reserves the right to add other infractions to this list during the school year. The Director of Religious Education is responsible for determining appropriate consequences for behavior.

The following offenses may result in or disciplinary repercussions:

- Forgery
- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Presenting or assisting someone else to present another person's ideas, words, or information as one's own, falsely claiming ownership of work or a signature. Acting upon these three offenses include but are not limited to:
  - Copying another student's homework or any other work assigned by a catechist, whether an entire piece of work is involved or just a few words are altered
  - Providing answers or questions to a test previously taken by other students in an earlier class period
  - Looking at a book, notes, or another student's paper during a quiz or test
  - Helping another student to cheat in any way, such as writing a paper for someone else, providing answers or allowing another student to copy homework
  - Plagiarizing or presenting information as one's own without giving credit to the source
  - Allowing parents, siblings, or other adults to do your homework and turning it in as if it was work produced by the students
  - Falsifying parent's signature

## **DRESS CODE**

God created our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, and even after the Fall Baptism perfects this divine intention. Thus, our bodies are sacred, and so we must dress in a manner that recognizes our dignity and shows respect for ourselves and for others. We must avoid distracting others or becoming an occasion of sin for others. We are indeed our brother's keeper and we must act charitably in regard to modesty lest we incite in them immoral thoughts and imaginations; we must assist them to attain heaven. Thus, students are to present themselves at Holy Mass and for Religious Education classes in such a way that reflects his/her dignity as a child of God, that is, they will dress with modesty and show good manners. It is the responsibility of parents to make sure that his/her children follow this dress code.

In Mass and Religious Education classes or events, in general, the bodies of the boys and girls will be covered from the neck area to the knees with clothes that are clean and neat. The back of the torso and shoulders must always be covered. This means that “muscle shirts”, athletic T-shirts, “spaghetti strap” tops, halter tops, and any sort of revealing blouses will not be allowed, nor are any offensive words or pictures to be worn on the clothing. Gym clothes are unacceptable for Religious Education classes. Those coming from or going to a practice or game should bring with them a change of clothes if the uniform does not comply with the above dress code.

Pants and shorts are not to be overly baggy and are to be belted at the waist. In no case should the undergarment of any boy or girl be visible. Shorts and skirts must reach at least the top of the knee. The “short shorts” that are popular with young ladies today are inappropriate everywhere, and especially at church or Religious Education classes. In no case are there to be any words displayed across the posterior of the garment worn below the waist (this obviously does not include standard brand tags). Pajamas are not allowed, nor should skintight clothing be worn above or below the waist. Hats, hooded sweat shirts, and coats may not be worn in class if they obscure the face of the child.

### **CELL/MOBILE PHONE/DEVICES POLICY**

We follow The Diocese of Arlington’s policy that students are not to bring cell/mobile phones to faith formation classes. Parents, please help us maintain this cell phone/device policy and discourage children from bringing phones to CCD and all Religious Education related activities.

Distractions from mobile phone and other devices limits the students time to fully participate and for volunteer catechists to systematically teach the Catholic faith.

If a student brings his/her phone to class, it will be confiscated by the catechist or Director of Religious Education until the conclusion of the class/activity.

### **PHOTO-VIDEO POLICY**

Photographs or video taken during Religious Education activities may be selected for promotional use by Basilica of Saint Mary staff.

A parent may withhold permission to have a child photographed and/or videotaped during Religious Education at The Basilica of Saint Mary. If you do not want your child(ren) to be photographed and/or videotaped, please send notification in writing to the Basilica of Saint Mary's Office of Religious Education with the name of your child(ren) stating: I DO NOT allow my child(ren) to be photographed or videotaped during Religious Education activities at any time throughout the academic year. Each year a new notification is required for the Office of Religious Education to keep files updated; previous year notifications do not hold from year to year.

### **PREPARATON FOR SACRAMENTS**

Sacrament preparation normally requires two consecutive years of faith formation, in either our CCD program, a Catholic school, or another approved program at home for a student to be eligible for a year/age-appropriate sacrament. For a student to receive a sacrament, the child must fulfill all requirements and show evidence of desire for the sacrament(s). Children who were not registered in the previous year’s faith formation classes must enroll at the year level that corresponds with his/her knowledge of the faith per the Standards of Learning established by the Diocese of Arlington.



If you have a child who has not been Baptized, is 7 years old or older, has not received his or her First Confession/Holy Communion, or is older than 8th grade and has not been Confirmed, please contact the Director of Religious Education to discuss a plan for receiving catechesis.

### **First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion**

Children are normally prepared to receive the Sacrament of Penance (Confession/Reconciliation) and Holy Communion during Year 1 and 2. The Diocese of Arlington and at The Basilica of Saint Mary have a two-year preparation period for baptized children who desire to receive the Sacraments. Preparation for these sacraments begins at home with parents witnessing and practicing the Catholic faith, and in our programs before the start of Year 1. In a more formal and intentional way, the process begins in September of Year 1 of our CCD program. We prepare the children to go to confession for the first time usually in February of Year 2. Monthly confession is recommended after his/her first confession. Then, we have our first Holy Communion Masses in May. In September, parents of students in Year 2 will attend a meeting with Fr. Hathaway and receive more information about preparation for First Reconciliation (generally held in February) and First Holy Communion (generally held in May).

### **Confirmation**

In the Diocese of Arlington and at The Basilica of Saint Mary, we prepare baptized children who desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation during Year 7 and 8. Confirmation preparation is a two-year program - - the preparation process includes all of one's religious education and formation for many years prior to Year 8. In a more intentional and formal way, we begin the process in September of Year 7.

We use materials and resources from the *Faith and Life* and *Chosen* series, the Bible, and Catechism, along with Formed.org and other materials.

Students in Confirmation Preparation are required to attend a retreat in Year 8, participate in volunteer service hours/perform works for mercy, write a report on his/her chosen saint, write a letter to the Bishop or Pastor, choose a suitable sponsor, be interviewed by a priest, and complete lessons and assignments on time. In September, parents will attend a meeting with Fr. Hathaway and receive more information about preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation (generally held in the Spring).

An eligible Confirmation Sponsor is:

- Be a Catholic who has been baptized, received the Eucharist and been confirmed, and who is currently living a sacramental life (e.g., attending Mass regularly, making use of the sacrament of Reconciliation) is not in an irregular marriage, is not living a life of habitual sin, and is living in accord with the Church's teaching on sexuality;
- Be at least sixteen years of age;
- Lead a life of faith in harmony with the ministry they are undertaking, and have the intention of undertaking the ministry of a sponsor;
- Not be a parent, or step-parent, of the individual to be confirmed.

### **Out of Sequence/Delayed Students and Sacraments**

If you have a child who has been Baptized, is older than 7 years of age and has not received his or her First Reconciliation or First Holy Communion, or is older than 13 years of age and has not been Confirmed, please contact the Director of Religious Education to make the appropriate arrangements.



## HIGH SCHOOL APOSTALATE

The Basilica of Saint Mary offers programs and activities for high school students who are fully-initiated Catholics and desire to learn more about the faith with peers. Weekly, monthly, and annual activities are available for boys and girls. Learn more by contacting Mariane Staron at [mstaron@stmaryoldtown.org](mailto:mstaron@stmaryoldtown.org) or calling 703-836-4100 ext. 3030. Learn more: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/apostolate/high-school->

## CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION (CYO) SPORTS

CYO programs seek to help young men and women appreciate Christ's presence in their opponents, use their physical gifts and play fairly and enthusiastically, both on and off the field. Through programs and training linked to parish life, CYO offers young people, coaches, and their families another opportunity to work together in communion, showing the world a new vision of competition in sports.

The Basilica of Saint Mary's CYO sports programs are open to all youth whose families are members of the parish community. Active participation in faith formation, whether students at The Basilica School, in our children's faith formation program, or are homeschooled, is a requirement to register in CYO sports programs. Families need to strive to have a balance of practicing the Catholic faith and recreation. Learn more here: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/apostolate/cyo-sports/>

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION/EDUCATION

The Basilica of Saint Mary offers many groups and activities that can help adults continue to learn more about the Catholic faith or to explain concepts to their children. Please visit the Basilica website ([www.stmaryoldtown.org](http://www.stmaryoldtown.org)), also available in the bulletin (available in print or online), to view current offerings to connect with Apostolates in the parish.

Also, the Office of Religious Education offers programs and events throughout the year, generally in the fall, spring, and summer.

### Recommended Adult Education Resources:

- [Formed.org](http://Formed.org) is a free, online resources that offers informative and entertaining Catholic audio talks, eBooks, films/movies, documentaries, and video-based study programs. Materials are available for children and adults in English and Spanish. You can register by searching for the Basilica of Saint Mary at [Formed.org/signup](http://Formed.org/signup)
- [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) Available online or in print, the Catechism of the Catholic Church presents the essential elements of faith in the most understandable manner, enabling everyone to read and know what the Church professes, celebrates, lives, and prays in her daily life.
- [Outlines of the Catholic Faith](#) Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, this book contains the basic terms, truths and identifiers of the Catholic faith succinctly presented in simple outline form along with a comprehensive addendum of basic Catholic customs and prayers. Copies are available by request for \$5.00 through the Office of Religious Education.

## Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

For adults who are missing Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion, Confirmation), the Basilica of Saint Mary can assist. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process through which adults join or complete their initiation into the Roman Catholic Church.

**RCIA is for Adults who are:**

- not baptized in communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
- were validly baptized into another Christian denomination and wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.
- baptized Catholic who were not fully formed in the Catholic faith and have not completed their initiation (First Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and/or Confirmation).

RCIA Classes are offered from August/September to April/May on Mondays, 7-8:30pm in The Basilica of Saint Mary Lyceum Auditorium (313 Duke Street) and are taught primarily by the pastor, parochial vicars, and seminarians assigned to The Basilica of Saint Mary. Books are provided free of charge to inquirers. Registration for those living in the parish boundaries is available online (registration does not commit oneself to becoming Catholic, rather it allows us to minister to your sacramental needs). Learn more: (<https://stmaryoldtown.org/apostolate/rcia/>).

**Adult Confirmation**

In the Spring, generally in April-May, The Basilica of Saint Mary offers an Adult Confirmation Short Course (4 classes) for Baptized Catholics who attend Mass regularly, go to Confession, receive Holy Eucharist, are in a valid Marriage, but are not Confirmed. Send a message to Susan Gray if you are an adult and desire to be Confirmed: [sgray@stmaryoldtown.org](mailto:sgray@stmaryoldtown.org) or call 703-836-4100 ext. 3023. A reissued (dated in the past 6 months) Catholic Baptismal Certificate, with notations, is required.

**Catholic Marriage**

For couples who are not married in the Catholic Church, our priests can help prepare you for the Sacrament of Matrimony, an important step to receiving the other sacraments and living the Catholic faith. Please contact the parish office and set an appointment to meet with a priest.

Regardless of what happened in the past, the Catholic Church invites you to bring new meaning to your lives by embracing the vocation of marriage and dedicating your family's mission to sharing God's love.

“It is the presence of the Lord, who reveals Himself and the gift of His grace, that will render your marriage full and profoundly true.” – Pope Francis

***You may be wondering:*****Is my Marriage Recognized by the Church?**

Is your marriage fully recognized by the Catholic Church? Catholic Church law ordinarily requires baptized Roman Catholics to marry before a priest or deacon. Unless they received a “dispensation from canonical form,” Catholics who exchange vows in the presence of ministers from other religious traditions or civil officials are not considered validly married in the eyes of the Catholic Church.

**Why Marry Catholic?**

Catholic Marriage is unique among other marital relationships because it is a sacrament that makes Christ present in our world. The relationship between husband and wife mirrors the relationship of Jesus Christ for his people. In the Catholic tradition, the husband and wife accept a role in God's plan for humanity. They are ambassadors of God's love, and they collaborate with God to keep humanity alive.

The vows exchanged by the couple are a sacred pact through which the spouses embrace each other, and, together, embrace Jesus as their partner. Through their union with Christ, they participate in the unbreakable pact between God and humanity: the covenant that was sealed in the death and resurrection of Christ.

### **Benefits of Catholic Marriage**

One of the many benefits of a sacramental marriage is the power of God's grace, which helps couples keep their commitment and find happiness together. Social scientists are finding that couples who recognize God's presence in their relationship experience more satisfaction and are more likely to achieve lifelong marriage.

Couples who choose to bring their marriage into the Church receive many gifts – peace of heart, oneness with the Church, the fullness of the sacraments, and God's special blessing upon their marriage.

### **What if there is a Prior Marriage?**

In the simplest terms, if a Catholic wishes to marry in the Church when there has been a previous marriage for either party, the partner in the earlier union must have died or the Church must have issued a declaration of nullity (frequently called an annulment) of the previous marriage.

The Catholic Church views all true marriages with respect. It presumes that they are valid and considers the marriage of two Protestant, Jewish or even non-believing persons, any of whom marry according to their own tradition, to be binding in the eyes of God.

Contact the parish office to schedule a time to meet with a priest: 703-836-4100.

## **PRECEPTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The Precepts of the Church describe the minimum effort we must make in prayer and in living a moral life. All Catholics are called to move *beyond the minimum* by growing in love of God and love of neighbor.

### **The Precepts are as follows:**

1. Attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
2. Confession of serious sin at least once a year
3. Reception of Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season
4. Observance of the days of [fast and abstinence](#)
5. Providing for the needs of the Church

## MASS AND CONFESSION

### Sunday Mass

Saturday	5:00pm (Vigil)
Sunday	7:00am 8:30am 10:00am 11:30am 1:00pm 5:00pm
Holy Days	Will be announced on website and in bulletin
When traveling, check Masstimes.org to find the local Catholic Church.	

### Holy Days of Obligation in the Diocese of Arlington, VA in addition to Sunday Mass:

- January 1, Mary, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God\*
- Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
- The Ascension of the Lord\*\*
- August 15, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary\*
- November 1, Solemnity of All Saints\*
- December 8, The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- December 25, The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

\* In the United States of America, when the solemnities of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15), or All Saints (November 1) falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the obligation to participate in Mass may not apply.

\*\* In the Diocese of Arlington, the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated on the Sunday following the Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter (that is, the Ascension is celebrated in place of the Seventh Sunday of Easter).

### Daily Mass

Saturday	8:30am
Monday – Friday	6:30am 8:00am 12:10pm

### Confession

Monday – Friday	After 12:10pm Mass
Wednesday	7:00-8:00pm 6:30 – 8:00pm (during Lent)
During Advent and Lent other Confession times may be added.	9:00 – 10:00am and 4:00 – 5:00pm

## Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesday	12:30 – 8:00pm
Wednesday (Holy Hour & Benediction)	7:00 – 8:00pm
First Friday (Nocturnal Adoration – Friday night through Saturday morning)	9:00pm – 8:20am

## Devotions:

**Rosary** – Monday through Friday before the 8:00am Mass

**Miraculous Medal Novena** – Mondays at 12:00pm

**Mother of Perpetual Help Novena** – Wednesdays at 7:30pm

**Communal First Saturdays** – First Saturdays at 8:00am

## PARISH REGISTRATION

Please join our parish family and become a registered member so that our clergy and staff may respond appropriately to your sacramental needs, including Sponsor Certificates, and that you receive our parish communications and become active in parish ministries. You are encouraged to register through <https://stmaryoldtown.org/parish-registration/> or stop by the parish office located in The Basilica of Saint Mary Lyceum (313 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314). Also, please notify us of changes to your contact information.

## CALENDARS

Calendars for CCD and RCIA are published in the summer. Calendars are distributed via email, printed by request and are available on our website.

- CCD: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/ccd-calendar>
- RCIA: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/rcia-calendar>