



MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY
PARENT HANDBOOK
2016-2017



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Greetings Parents and Youth of Saint William Catholic Church!

As we embark on this year of youth ministry it has been very exciting to see the many things the Lord has already lined up to draw your children, your families, and you into a more intimate relationship with him. Too often in life we are caught with so many activities and stressors that we are simply trying to keep our head above water. This generation of youth is the most stressed out generation in history. Middle school youth in particular have almost an infinite number of ways to reach out and contact others even forming online or virtual relationships with others across the world, yet this generation struggles deeply with loneliness. They can type a message to someone in Malaysia but struggle to meet the kid next door or form a bond with someone they interact with every week in small group. We strive to help the youth move ABOVE & BEYOND the stressors that are at the forefront of their mind. Sometimes they just need help to have their perspective removed from the situation they're being inundated with to realize that there is more in store for them. God has greater things planned for them in the future and He also has greater plans for them right now! Jeremiah 29:11 reminds of us this: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans for hope and a future."

Throughout the year we will draw up our theme of ABOVE & BEYOND To move ABOVE & BEYOND means to lift their eyes, their minds, their thoughts towards the heavens and remember Who created them out of a depth of love and to know Whose they are. Moving ABOVE & BEYOND means intentional movement past where they're at because the Lord has more in store for them. For some that will mean asking questions about the faith so they can learn and truly take ownership, for others that will mean opening their heart just a little and encountering Christ for the first time, and others will take their relationship with a Christ to a new depth. For all youth it means Jesus is calling them to a new depth of love, passion, and encounter with Him. Wherever your youth is at, God is calling them into a deeper relationship with Him and yearns for them to seek what is ABOVE & BEYOND to be further transformed. No matter what is going on in our lives, God's love is truly overpowering and everlasting if only we are open to receiving it. Triumph strives to create an environment where youth may encounter God through a variety of approaches including: fellowship, games, praise and worship, prayer, teachings, videos, retreats, and informal moments such as small group discussions.

It is truly a privilege to have the opportunity to minister to your families and your youth. However, Triumph Youth Ministry is only supplemental to the role and influence of a parent. I encourage you to make your Catholic faith a priority. In ten years it likely won't matter if a soccer game was missed or they weren't able to make a practice, but the formation in their faith is preparing them for all of eternity. When you make Mass, prayer times, and youth group a priority, your child will recognize this (even if they don't mention it). When you ask them about their faith life and discuss with them what they talked about in youth group and their experience at Mass or on a retreat this will open a very intimate area of their heart, as our relationship with Jesus can allow us to be very intimate and vulnerable, and your expression of love will speak volumes to them.

Middle school can be a very challenging time for youth and their parents. I encourage you to hold steadfast in your faith and persevere in what you know is right, being guided by the Holy Spirit. The Lord is doing great things in the Catholic Church and there are amazing movements of the Spirit here at St. William. Know that I am praying for you and feel free to call upon me as a resource. Together we can help our youth encounter Christ and be transformed into His living witnesses with a passion, joy, and exhilaration that has yet to be seen!

Peace,

Gwen Bartlett

Triumph Youth Ministry Coordinator

Mission Statement

Triumph strives to lead all youth closer to Christ through fellowship, evangelization, and creative catechesis. Triumph seeks to help youth build and foster a personal relationship with Christ in His Church and create a safe environment where youth are able to open their hearts and experience the love of Christ. Throughout all of the activities, events and teaching moments, Triumph seeks to bring Christ's love to the youth.

Parents Role

No one is more important than parents in passing on to their children the priceless gift of faith. The parish family assists but cannot replace the vital role and example of the parents. This means that the parent's role is to witness the faith to their children. This is done in direct and indirect ways. All children learn from their parents indirectly when faith is made a priority in the home and parenting/family life reflects virtue and the love of Christ. Parents should also seek out direct ways to form their children in the faith. This includes: family prayer, participation in Sunday Mass, intentional conversations about the faith and morality. Essentially, Jesus Christ should be a member of your family, not merely a mascot that comes out every so often.

One way Triumph is seeking to empower parents is through weekly text updates. For those who sign up, every Sunday you will receive a text message that has a discussion question or two that relates to the topic presented that day at Triumph. This will allow you and your youth to process the faith topic together on the drive home. **Signing up for these text alerts is simple. Text @triumph16 to 81010.**

While the Church has been clear that parents are the Primary Catechists of their children, resources are not always present to empower and encourage parents in their primary role. Saint William Catholic Church has an outstanding Adult Faith Formation program that will lead you closer to Christ and empower you to share your relationship with others, including your youth. Find out more at www.saintwilliams.org/AdultFaithFormation.



Triumph Youth Ministry Name

One of the best ways to promote group unity is to name the group setting. Youth are in classrooms with teachers 8 hours a day for 5 days a week. We need to move away from this terminology to help the youth be able to be more receptive to the Word of God and open their hearts to Christ Himself. Moving from a religious education mindset to youth ministry mindset for these young people can often be the difference between them being forced to come and them being excited about youth group. When most middle schoolers think of RE they think, "Oh, that's something I had to go to as a kid and sit in a classroom and listen to someone talk." We want the youth to be excited to come to youth group and also take ownership of Triumph as *their* youth group. Please help us move away from "RE, class, and student" terminology to "youth group, Core Team (the adult volunteers/catechists), and youth" terms.

Most importantly, the youth ministry mindset can greatly affect youth's receptivity and openness so that conversion of heart may take place. Please join us in educating others on our youth group name.

Triumph Sunday Sample Schedule

The schedule below may change to meet the needs of the topic or the youth. Triumph will always begin at 3:00 p.m. and end by 4:30 p.m. on Sundays.

Please ensure your youth is in the Parish Hall no later than 3:00 p.m. We start promptly at 3:00 since we only have 90 minutes with the youth each week. When youth arrive late they are not only missing vital fellowship, prayer, and catechesis but they are also disruptive to those who are on time. Youth are welcome to arrive as early as 2:45 p.m.

2:45 Youth begin arriving at the Parish Hall

This is a wonderful time for building fellowship and community.

3:00 Greeting and Opening Prayer

3:10 Icebreaker, Praise and Worship, or Engaging Activity

3:25 Introduction of the Topic

3:30 Dynamic Presentation

This may include a talk, video, skit, talk show, etc.

3:55 Small Group Time

Small Groups meet in the Parish Hall, Pavilion, Education Building, or Parish Evangelization Center (PEC).

4:30 Dismissal from Small Groups

Youth will meet on the lawn in front of the Education Building / Parish Hall for pickup.

Youth are not allowed to leave by themselves, even to the Church, but must always be picked up from in front of the Parish Hall (this may change to the Pavilion side of the PEC pending construction).

Altar servers at the 5pm Mass may go to the Church once we conclude at 4:30p, with permission from Gwen.

Additional Triumph Activities

Retreats: Heroic Fall Retreat is Oct. 14-16
Spring Retreat is Feb. 3-5



Weekend retreats are a phenomenal way for the youth to develop deep friendships with those who share their Catholic faith. Triumph retreats give the youth an opportunity to take a break from the busyness of life to learn about and explore their faith. They offer a chance for youth to encounter Christ in an intimate and experience conversion of heart. Most youth generally arrive at the retreat on Friday feeling like they don't know many people but by the time they return on Sunday they have dozens of new friends. Visit www.saintwilliams.org/triumph/retreat to learn more!

Discipleship Groups

D-Groups' aim is taking Christians into intentional Discipleship and developing strong friendships in the process. Discipleship Groups, or D-Groups, are for 7th or 8th grade youth who are interested in going significantly deeper in their faith. D-Groups are for youth who have a personal relationship with Christ and his Church, have an active prayer life, and a desire for God. While D-Groups should be encouraged by parents, teens should not be forced to join a D-Group and should join only if they have the desire.

D-Groups are gender specific groups that are closed groups once established. D-Groups will meet on Wednesday nights or Thursday evenings at group members homes. There will be an informational meeting for both youth and their parents on Wednesday, Oct. 19th from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Education Building; the youth and one parent must attend.

Keep Up To Date

Check our website: www.saintwilliams.org/triumph

Get updates on social media: search TriumphRR

Volunteer Descriptions for Triumph Youth Ministry

Core Team: Do you love the Lord and love youth? If so, then Core Team may be a fit for you!

The Core Team makes Triumph Youth Ministry effective! They're part of a dynamic team that build relationships with the youth, model God's love, lead small group discussions, and journey with youth in their faith. Most of all, the Core Team are a living witness of Jesus Christ. Core Team commit to helping with Triumph each week.

Discipleship Group Leader: Do you love the Lord and love journeying with youth in their faith and daily life? These gender specific groups journey deep into the faith, building brotherhood and sisterhood focused on 'knowing God and making God known'. A discipleship group leader meets with their small group on a weekly basis and, through the materials and training provided, helps the youth process their struggles and victories on their faith journey and in their life over the past week.

Stealth Crew: Do you enjoy logistics and prefer to serve behind the scene? If so, then the Lord may be calling you to Stealth Crew! The Stealth Crew handles logistics so that Core Team can focus on the relational ministry with the youth. Stealth Crew will pass out name tags, log attendance, distribute Bibles and flyers, and meet other logistical needs. Stealth Crew help with Triumph as their schedule permits.

Prayer Warriors: Do you often include praying for others in your prayer time? If so, then being a Triumph Prayer Warrior may be a perfect fit! Triumph Prayer Warriors vastly impact the conversion of heart and transformation that takes place within the youth and volunteers. Prayer Warriors commit to praying on a weekly basis for all involved in Triumph and receive updates about specific intentions for the youth ministry.

Greeter & Hall Monitor: Do you love saying hello with a smile? Then you may be called to be a Triumph Greeter! These volunteers give the youth a warm welcome as they arrive and help the youth find where they need to go during transition times moving from room to room.

Dress Code & Code of Conduct

In efforts to create a Christ-Centered environment, dress and behavior must reflect the attitude of Christ.

- Dress Code
 - All those participating in Triumph Youth Ministry should come in attire that is appropriate for and respectful of themselves, the program, and others. This can be defined for both genders as **t-shirts and tops that are not sleeveless (no spaghetti-straps or strapless), tops that do not have plunging neck/back lines**, do not show mid-drift and do not bear any profane, abusive or offensive language/slogans.
 - Pants or **shorts should not be more than 2 inches above the knee** (this includes work-out and running shorts). Shirts, pants and shorts should also be in good condition, not full of holes. We will ask your child to change his/her clothing if deemed necessary, and will call you if your child does not have correct attire to change into.
- Code of Conduct
 - Bullying and/or aggressive, threatening or violent acts will not be tolerated.
 - Drugs, alcohol, weapons or other illegal items will not be tolerated. If a youth is found possessing these items, the police will be called first and then the parent.
 - **Cell Phones** and electronics are not to be seen or used during Triumph. If a youth brings a cell phone, it must be put away from the time they walk into the building until after they are dismissed.
 - Youth who use their phones will have their phones collected and returned at the end of Triumph.
 - If a youth will not release their cell phone after violation of the cell phone rule, their parent(s) will be notified and they will be sent home.
 - Respect is vital to creating an environment where one can grow in their faith. It is expected that youths respect the adult volunteers and their peers during Triumph.
 - Leaving early: While 7-11 is a tempting treat nearby, God has bigger plans for our youth during Triumph. Youths who sneak off campus or do not go to the proper location will have their parents called immediately.
 - Physical affection: Youth who may have a significant other at Triumph should be sure their conduct reflects a focus on their primary relationship with Jesus during Triumph. Public displays of affection are not appropriate during Triumph.
 - Parents will be notified if their youth is consistently violating the Code of Conduct.



ABOVE & BEYOND

Date		TRIUMPH TOPIC
9/11		Fall Kickoff
9/18	Featuring Catholic Rapper Paul J. Kim	Taking Your Gifts & Talents Beyond
9/25		Divine Fatherhood
10/2		Above A Fallen Humanity
10/9	Featuring Pro-Skater Brian Sumner	Beyond St. William - responding to God
10/14-10/16	www.saintwilliams.org/triumph/retreat	HEROIC RETREAT - No Triumph
10/19	Discipleship Group Parent/Youth Meeting	7:00 p.m. – Education Building
10/23		Above & Beyond Earth - faith and science
10/30	Come dressed as a martyr and ready for fun!	Martyr's Ball
11/6		How the Bible Came to Be
11/13		Salvation History
11/20 - 11/27		Thanksgiving Break - No Triumph
12/4		Beyond Ourselves - filial relationships
12/11		Above Receiving - Christmas Good for Others
12/18 - 1/8		Christmas Break - No Triumph
1/8		Spring Kickoff - bring a friend!
1/15		Christ, True God & True Man
1/18	Summer Camp Meeting	7:00 p.m. – Education Building
1/22		Above & Beyond Opinions - Absolute Truth
1/29		Beyond Fake Smiles - God in Our Suffering
2/3 - 2/5	www.saintwilliams.org/triumph/retreat	SPRING RETREAT - No Triumph
2/12		Above Our Humanity - Jesus Heals
2/19		Beyond Misconception - SSA, part 1
2/26		Beyond Misconception - SSA, part 2
3/5		Above Our Knowledge - Q&A
3/12		Spring Break - No Triumph
3/17-3/18	Discovering the Truth & Beauty of Human Love	Imago Dei Retreat (Youth & Parent) at St. W
3/19		Spring Break - No Triumph
3/26		Beyond the Present - History of Churches
4/2		Step Above & Beyond - Living Faith Daily
4/9		Beyond Mortality - Death of Jesus
4/16		Happy Easter!!! - No Triumph
4/23		Above & Beyond Death - Resurrection
4/30		Above & Beyond