

SWYM Parent Handbook

2017-2018

encounter

www.saintwilliams.org/swym

youthministry@saintwilliams.org

512-600-8173

Greetings Parents and Teens of Saint William Catholic Church,

In a recent letter to the bishops of the United States, Pope Francis wrote, “Our great challenge is to create a culture of encounter which encourages individuals and groups to share the richness of their traditions and experience; to break down walls and to build bridges.” Beginning this year, we will be seeking to create this culture of encounter by combining our *Rebaño Sagrado* and SWYM youth programs to form a new, united youth program known as SWYM. SWYM stands for Saint William’s Youth Ministry. This transition is one that has been on our pastor’s heart for some time and, with the blessing of the new building, this hope has encountered opportunity.

What does this mean for you and your teen? Our main youth ministry program will meet on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:30 p.m. There will be leadership development for teens who have been confirmed on Monday nights, this program is known as J-Squad. Discipleship Groups (D-Groups) will meet on Wednesday nights for those teens wishing to explore their faith in a deeper way. The Confirmation program will be for all high school students who are eligible to receive preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. However, participants will be able to choose whether they will receive the sacrament of Confirmation in a Spanish spoken liturgy or an English spoken liturgy.

The vision of SWYM is simply this, to lead teenagers closer to Jesus Christ and to empower them to be life-long disciples in His Church. The Catholic Church is the surest place where one can fully encounter Jesus Christ on a personal level. SWYM will set up contexts for this encounter through a variety of approaches including: Prayer, Teaching, Fellowship, Games, and informal moments such as Meals and Discussion.

Whether your teenager has encountered Jesus Christ on a personal level or they are just at the beginning of their faith journey, SWYM will be a safe environment where all teens can explore, discover, process and encounter Jesus Christ. In all we do at SWYM - from building community to the deep times of prayer - we will be centered on Jesus Christ, growing as Church and journeying toward a lived Catholicism, namely, Discipleship.

As parents, I ask that you pray for the teens this year and encourage you to engage them in dynamic discussion, asking them what they are learning in their faith and how they are seeking to live out that faith. Journey with them and help them to see God working in their life. Weekly Mass attendance is a vital part of this, but never the totality. Take advantage of life’s opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus. Together we can transform young hearts that will set the world ablaze with the fire of God’s love. Let’s us embrace the Holy Father’s call and be a people of faith who live the beautiful adventure of God’s plan for us when we ENCOUNTER HIM!

Chris Bartlett
Director of Youth Ministry

SWYM Mission Statement

SWYM seeks to lead all teens to Christ through creative Catechesis, Evangelization, and Fellowship. SWYM not only seeks to introduce teens to Christ, but also to give them the tools to foster a life-long relationship with Christ in His Church. Throughout all the activities, events, and teaching moments, SWYM seeks to bring Christ's love to the teens.

Parents' Role

SWYM is supplemental to the faith formation that is taking place in the home. Parents are the primary educators of faith as the family is the domestic church. This means that the parents' 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 their 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, and 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.

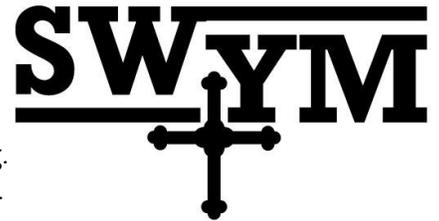
One way that SWYM is seeking to empower parents is through weekly text updates. For those who sign up, every Sunday around 8 p.m. you will receive a text message that has a discussion question or two that relates to the topic presented that night at SWYM. This will allow you and your teenager to process the faith topic together on the drive home or whenever they arrive home after SWYM.

Signing up for these text alerts is simple. Text @swymparent to 81010.

A key resource that is available to parents to assist and encourage them in their roles as the Primary Catechists of their children is Saint Williams' Adult Faith Formation program. It will lead you closer to Christ and empower you to share your relationship with others, including your teenagers. Find out more at www.saintwilliams.org/AdultFaithFormation.

SWYM Name

The model of youth ministry that was implemented in 2011 seeks to provide context for the youth to learn and live out their faith in a group. One of the best ways to promote group unity is to name the group setting. S.W.Y.M., pronounced 'swim,' stands for Saint William's Youth Ministry.



SWYM Wish List

Below is a list of items that we hope to obtain for S.W.Y.M. Please consider donating in some way.

- Prayers
- Core Team Members (Dynamic adult leaders)
- \$\$ for our scholarship fund to help teens attend retreats
- \$2,750 to cover the cost of food for the year
- Licensed bus driver (volunteer) for retreats

Registration

It is important for all teens to register for SWYM. Registration gives us vital information on your teen and helps cover some of the costs of our dynamic program. If your child(ren) are not registered for Faith Formation, please visit <http://www.saintwilliams.org/Registration>.

SWYM Sunday Night Schedule

The schedule below may be changed to meet the needs of the topic or teens.
S.W.Y.M. will always begin at 6:30 p.m. and end by 8:30 p.m. on Sundays.

5:00	Mass	Church
6:15	Dinner Begins & Social	Parish Evangelization Center
6:30	SWYM Begins: Registration, Sign in & Social	Parish Evangelization Center
6:45	Engaging Activity / Introduction of the Topic	Parish Evangelization Center
7:10	Prayer Experience	Parish Evangelization Center
7:25	Dynamic Presentation	Parish Evangelization Center
8:00	Small Group Time	Various Locations
8:30	Dismissal from Small Groups	Various Locations

- The time was determined to ensure that our teens that assist at the 5:00 p.m. Mass can arrive on time without leaving the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass early.
- In years past many students have arrived after the meal time. Please note that the fellowship that happens during the meal time is a vital to the overall mission of SWYM. One can more easily talk about something as intimate as faith if one has had a meal with that person first. All are welcome to the meals.
- **Tardy Policy:** Please note the Tardy Policy in the Attendance Policy Section on page 5.
- The suggested donation is \$2 per meal or \$20 per semester. We will have a basket where the youth can place a donation for the meal. If a student does not have money for a donation, they will not be turned away; all are welcome to the table!

Confirmation Preparation

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a program that teens become eligible for once they have met the requirements put forth by the Bishop and the Diocese of Austin. All the information regarding Confirmation is in a separate handbook located at www.saintwilliams.org/swym/confirmation.

Parents of teens eligible for Confirmation preparation who plan to receive the sacrament in Spring 2018 are invited to attend the Parent Meeting on Wednesday, October 25th at 7-8:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

If your teen has not received Baptism and/or First Eucharist, your teen would be eligible for the RCIA adapted for Teens program. For more information see below.

Sacramental Preparation

Preparation for teens who have not received Baptism, and/or First Eucharist (Communion) takes place on Sunday evenings at SWYM through our Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) adapted for Teens program. We recognize that God calls teens and families from all walks of life at specific times for these sacramental moments. The RCIA teens are part of the SWYM community. During the small group times and a few other times during the year, the content of the night will be specifically catered to Sacramental Preparation. RCIA teens also participate in the Confirmation program in the spring semester. For more information, or to enroll your teenager(s) in this program, please contact Lisa Salas: Lsalas@saintwilliams.org or 512-600-8165.

Additional SWYM Programs:

D-Groups

D-Groups' aim is to take Christians into intentional Discipleship. D-Groups, or Disciple Groups, are for teens who are interested in going significantly deeper in their faith. D-Groups are for teens 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 of all grades that are closed groups once established. D-Groups will meet on Wednesday nights from 7-8:30 p.m. at Saint William Catholic Church. There will be an informational meeting for both teens and their parents on Wednesday, October 11th from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. D-Groups will formally begin on Wednesday, October 18th.

J-Squad

J-Squad is our leadership program for teens who have received Confirmation. J-Squad will meet throughout the year for formation and preparation to help lead elements of SWYM nights and, most notably, the Confirmation Retreat.

J-Squad members are formed first in a rich prayer life and then as living witnesses. Participation in J-Squad requires a commitment to the process and to personal faith growth. J-Squad will meet on Monday nights starting September 18th in the Parish Evangelization Center from 7:15-9:15 p.m. There is a Parent Meeting on Monday, September 11th at 7:15 p.m. Location to be determined.

SWYM Policies:

Attendance

For those preparing for Confirmation, attendance is vital. According to Diocesan Policy, to be eligible for Confirmation Preparation, students must be in 10th to 12th Grade and have regularly attended formal faith formation 2 years prior to receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. For example: If a student would like to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in their 10th grade year, they must have an 80% or better attendance at SWYM (or Catholic schooling) their 9th and 10th grade year. Students who fall below the 80% attendance point will not be able to count that year toward the Diocese required 2 year prerequisite for Confirmation preparation and would thus not be eligible for Confirmation.

- SWYM 2017-2018 has 21 Youth Nights. Each night counts as an attendance point. Students must have 16 attendance points to be eligible for Confirmation. Retreats and other opportunities are offered throughout the year where additional attendance points can be earned.
- Tardy Policy:
 - When a person arrives tardy it can be a distraction and difficult for them to engage and be engaged by the youth night in progress. We recognize this happens from time to time and have a tardy policy for these instances.
 - If a teen arrives after 6:45 p.m., they will only receive half an attendance point.
 - If a teen arrives after 7:05 p.m., they are still welcome, but will receive no attendance point.
- Teens can earn additional attendance points through a variety of ways:
 - The Ignite Retreat on Sept. 8-10 will add 4 attendance points to a youth's total.

- DCYC, the Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference in Waco on Feb. 2-4, 2018 will add 4 attendance points to a youth's total.
- Imago Dei, is offered in the spring semester. It will add 3 attendance points if completed.
- Godstock on April 21-22 will add 3 attendance points to a youth's total.
- When a teen is to be absent, the Youth Office (Chris Bartlett) does not need to be contacted. The attendance policy is generous with opportunities for added attendance points. Since we are adhering to Diocesan requirements, no absences are to be excused.
- If you would like an update on your student's participation level, their weekly name tags will have their attendance point total that represents where they are currently in their accumulation of attendance points. This is updated each week.

Dress Code & Code of Conduct

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

- Dress Code
 - No youth should wear clothing that contains a violent, offensive or anti-Christian message.
 - For Girls: Short shorts, strapless shirts, low cut tops, skin tight garments and shirts exposing mid-riff or underwear are not to be worn.
 - Girls in violation of the dress code will be asked to put on a t-shirt or longer shorts to remedy the violation.
 - For Boys: Saggy pants and short shorts are not to be worn. Boys in violation will be asked to change.
- 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 teen is found possessing these items, the police will be called first and then the parent.
 - **Cell Phones** are not to be seen or used during SWYM. If a teen brings a cell phone, it must be put away from the time our meal prayer is said until closing prayer in small groups.
 - Teens who use their phones will have their phones collected and returned at the end of SWYM.
 - If a teen 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.
 - Parents, please take the time to communicate this policy with your teen.
 - Respect is vital to creating an environment where one can grow in their faith. It is expected that teens respect the adult volunteers and their peers during SWYM.
 - Leaving early: While 7-Eleven is a tempting treat nearby, God has bigger plans for our youth during SWYM. Teens who sneak off campus or do not go to the proper location will have their parents called immediately.
 - If a teen does need to leave early for a family reason, the parent should come and check them out through one of the adult core team members. Teens will not be permitted to leave without parental notification and consent prior to 8:30 p.m.
 - Physical affection: Teens who may have a significant other at SWYM should be sure their conduct reflects a focus on their primary relationship with Jesus during SWYM. Public displays of affection are not appropriate during SWYM.
 - Parents will be notified if their teen is consistently violating the Code of Conduct.

Volunteer Descriptions for High School Youth Ministry 2017-2018

All parents are encouraged to discern how they can apply their gifts to the youth ministry program. A description of all the available volunteer roles is below. It takes over 60 volunteers to make each SWYM night a success. If you see something below (or have another idea) that interests you, please email youthministry@saintwilliams.org.

Core Team Member

- Be part of a dynamic team that prepares and leads high school Youth Nights on Sunday evenings.
- Lead Small Groups in lessons and discussion of the material/topic.
- Be a living witness of Jesus Christ to the youth by making the youth a priority in your prayer time, supporting them in their role as Catholic students, and being consistently present to them at Youth Nights.

Confirmation Catechist

- Be part of a dynamic team that will prepare and lead the Confirmation Program including Super Sundays and the Confirmation Retreat.
- Lead a group of students in lessons and discussion of Confirmation Materials.
- Pray for the Confirmation Students and seek to be a living witness of Jesus Christ.

D-Group Leader

- Lead a gender specific group each Wednesday. This includes investing into teens lives through prayer, relationship, and formation.
- Meet regularly with the Director of Youth Ministry and other D-Group leaders for planning.

Meal Team

- Be part of a team that plans and prepares meals for the High School program.
- Each of the Teams will prepare a meal about once a month.
- Each Team will be responsible for the pickup, gathering, preparing and cleanup of the meals.
- Meals will be served at 6:15 p.m. or when students begin gathering following the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

Office Help

- Seeking individuals to help with:
 - Input of Sacramental Records
 - Database Management
 - Communication for events via phone and mailings

Special Events & Occasions

- Individuals who can help with the transportation and logistics of special events like retreats and celebrations.
- Individuals to help with communication via mail for special occasions for the High School students. (Birthday cards, etc.)

2017-2018 Events

Ignite Retreat: Sept 8-10, 2017 at Eagle's Wings Retreat Center in Burnet.

The Ignite Retreat is an outstanding weekend to grow in community under Christ. Come discover what happens when your passion unites with God's passion.

Ignite Retreat is not required, but will give 4 attendance points to a student's attendance total.

Visit www.saintwilliams.org/swym/ignite for forms and more info.

Imago Dei - Discovering the Truth and Beauty of Human Love: Spring 2018

For teens grades 9-12 and their parents.

In this course we will explore the richness of the Church's teaching on sexuality, love and marriage and how living our lives according to God's plan leads to joyful and fulfilling lives. Presented by parishioners Tony & Becky Saucedo, this course is designed, not only to educate, but to give parents and their teens a common language for having ongoing and healthy discussions about relationships, dating, and vocations. For more information, contact Tony or Becky Saucedo at 512-814-7758. Teens who complete this event will receive 3 attendance points.

Confirmation Retreat: January 19-21, 2018

Required for all teens preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It includes Prayer, Adoration, Reconciliation, Mass, Formation, and FUN.

Dates: Friday, January 19th through Sunday, January 21st

Location: Greene Family Camp, Bruceville, Texas, <http://greene.urjcamps.org/>

Cost: \$135 per student (paid at registration)

Drop off: Friday at Parish Hall at 5:45p.m.

Pick up: Sunday TBD (Closing Mass will be open to Families.)

Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference (DCYC): Feb. 2-4, 2018 at Waco Convention Center, Waco, TX

Ignite your faith with 2,000 other Catholic teens. Dynamic Speakers, Outstanding Fun, and life changing moments! A time to renew the faith and share it with other teens and the Bishop.

We stay overnight in a nearby hotel. Four teens of the same gender will share a hotel room. If you feel your teen is not ready to stay overnight in a hotel room without adult supervision, they should not attend this event.

Dates: Friday, February 2nd through Sunday, February 4th

Cost: To be determined

Lodging: To be determined (Hotel)

This event can be counted as Spiritual Hours for Confirmation. SWYM will not meet on February 4th to encourage participation in this event. Attendance at this event will give teens 4 attendance points.

Pro-Life Rally: January 27, 2018

Diocesan event held at the Capitol to support the gift of life! This will be an all-day event.

A march through downtown Austin to the Capitol building, national speakers, and a rally offer an opportunity to learn and experience the issues of "Life" facing our society.

This event can be counted as Spiritual Hours for Confirmation.

Godstock: April 21-22, 2018

A Diocesan event which has been described as Woodstock for God. Catholic rock bands play throughout the day, and there are opportunities for Catholic devotions, reconciliation, a national keynote speaker, Adoration and Mass.

This is a TENT CAMPING event.

Dates: April 21-22, 2018

Cost: TBD

Summer Events: Save the date!

Steubenville Lonestar: Late June 2018 in Dallas. Cost is approx. \$325.

SWYM Mission Trip: July 2018. Cost is approx. \$500.

SWYM 2017-2018 Calendar for Sunday Nights

Meal Team	Day	Dates	SWYM TOPIC
None	SUN	9/8-9/10	Ignite Retreat
None	SUN	9/17	CORE PLANNING
None	SUN	9/24	CORE PLANNING
1	SUN	10/1	Kick Off
2	SUN	10/8	One Body In Christ
3	SUN	10/15	Friars from Skate Jam VOCATION
1	SUN	10/22	Why Jesus?
2	SUN	10/29	What is Prayer?
3	SUN	11/5	XLT - Parent & Teen
1	SUN	11/12	#ExploreCatholicism
None	SUN	11/19 - 11/26	Thanksgiving Break
2	SUN	12/3	Prayer Fair
3	SUN	12/10	Prepare the Way
1	SUN	12/17	Coffee House
None	SUN	12/24 - 1/7	Christmas Break
2	SUN	1/14	Scripture / Lectio
None	SUN	1/19 - 1/21	Confirmation Retreat
3	SUN	1/28	Sex, Drugs, & Self-Control
None	SUN	2/2 - 2/4	DCYC
1	SUN	2/11	Guys/Girls TOB - CHASTITY
2	SUN	2/18	Sacrifice
3	SUN	2/25	True Friendship
1	SUN	3/4	Discernment
None	SUN	3/11 - 3/18	Spring Break
2	SUN	3/25	Passion Sunday Reflection
None	SUN	4/1	EASTER
3	SUN	4/8	Forgiveness & Mercy
1	SUN	4/15	Mission & Witness
2	SUN	4/22	Open
3	SUN	4/29	Open
	SUN	5/6	Family Social (Optional Night)