

Mass Attendance

Catholics fulfill the Third Commandment by attending Mass on Sundays and on Days of Obligation. Missing Sunday Mass without a serious reason, such as illness, is considered a grave sin, especially for parents who have promised to raise their children in the faith at Baptism. Attending Mass is the primary means by which both children and adults learn about their faith. All students enrolled in Religious Education, Youth Group, and Sacramental Preparation are expected to attend weekend Mass with their families.

Sacraments

The best preparation that a child can receive is to accompany their parents and family each week to Mass as they grow to have a sense of community and understand the importance of the Mass in the life of a Catholic.

- **Baptism**

Children under the age of seven may be presented for Baptism by their parents. Children who have reached the age of seven are considered to have attained the age of reason and are prepared for Baptism through the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA), adapted for children. For information about either one of these situations, please reach out the parish office.

- **1st Penance and 1st Communion**

Those who have not received their 1st Penance/1st Communion by the age of 14 as of September 1st are to be prepared for all remaining sacraments through the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA), adapted for teens. For information about these situations, please reach out the parish office.

- **Confirmation**

General Information: This year there are two tracks for preparation for this sacrament for which space is limited. Regardless of preparation track, all Confirmation candidates:

- Will participate in a Spring readiness interview with Father and the pastoral team to determine readiness to receive the sacrament(s).
- Will gather together at the end of the year as one class to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Must follow the Confirmation Mass dress code. Please see **Dress Code** in the **St. Rita Religious Education Handbook**.

Those who are approaching the church for the sacrament of Confirmation, please see the **Confirmation Registration Guide**.

Parish's Role

The parish serves as your partner in raising a "whole child," bridging the gap between academic learning and spiritual character. While you are the primary teacher, the parish provides the community, sacraments, and moral framework that turn those lessons into a lived faith.

Catechetical Volunteers

Catechists are important members of our parish community, assisting parents in their role as primary educators of faith. Our mission is to support parents as they guide their children in growing in faith and love for our Lord.

Parent's Role

Parents are the first teachers of their children, instilling, by their example, love of God, prayer, and the Catholic Faith at home. The St. Rita Formation Office supports parents with a structured program of catechesis and formation to complement home teachings.

Christian education is rooted in the sacramental life of the Church. Children should attend Mass and Confession regularly, as knowledge of the Faith without sacramental practice is incomplete. Religious Education and Youth Group activities enhance, but do not replace, participation in the Church. Please encourage your children to participate in the life of the Church.

Sponsor's Role

A Catholic sponsor/godparent acts as a spiritual parent and mentor, committing to support the child's parents in raising them in the Catholic faith. They serve as a lifelong role model, helping the child to live out their baptismal promises and grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. Primarily, this role involves praying regularly for the child, being a consistent presence, and guiding them to live as a true witness to the faith. **Please see "Letter of Good Standing" for eligibility requirements.**

Things to Think about before choosing your sponsor:

- Your sponsor must be approved by the church office and all required paperwork must be turned in by **January 15th**. If paperwork is not completed and received, and/or the individual does not qualify by this date, the student will be confirmed without a sponsor.
- Your sponsor should be willing and able to participate in your formation for Confirmation.
- The person you chose should be someone you admire and who is actively living out their Catholic faith.
- Your sponsor should be someone that you trust and feel comfortable turning to for help, advice, and guidance, especially in regard to your spiritual life.
- Because the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are so closely connected. Church teaching states that it "desirable that the godparent at Baptism also be the sponsor at Confirmation," however the selection of a special sponsor is also permitted.
- If your sponsor is unable to attend the actual sacrament of Confirmation, another adult may stand in his/her place as a proxy. The name of your sponsor will still be noted in the official church record of your confirmation.

Class Schedule and Times

- **Confirmation II and OCIA Adapted for Teens** class times are 10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m., Sundays from September through mid-May.
- **Youth Group** times are 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Thursdays from September through mid-May, with an occasional break.
- Schedules for **Intensive Confirmation Prep** students will occur in the Spring and will be given at a later date.
- The calendars are provided to parents at Parent Orientation, are on the parish's website (www.stritafw.org), and available upon request.

Attendance

- **Intensive Confirmation Preparation + Youth Group:** Students in the Intensive Confirmation track participate in **both** Youth Group and the Intensive Confirmation Preparation sessions.
 - **Youth Group:** Students may have up to **three absences** during the year. After the third absence, the student and parent(s) must meet with Fr. Keith Hathaway to determine whether the student is adequately prepared to receive the sacrament.
 - **Intensive Confirmation Preparation Sessions:** Because this preparation takes place over only a few sessions, attendance at **every session is required**. If a student misses one intensive session, the student and parent(s) must meet with Fr. Keith Hathaway before continuing in the program.
- **Confirmation II and OCIA Adapted for Teens:** Students may have **up to three absences** during the year. After the third absence, the student and parent(s) will be required to meet with Fr. Keith Hathaway to determine whether the student is adequately prepared to receive the sacrament.
- **Youth Group (Students Not Preparing to Receive a Sacrament):** Youth Group is offered to help young people grow in friendship with Christ and one another. While regular attendance is encouraged, there is **no formal attendance requirement** for students who are not preparing to receive a sacrament. We simply ask that students attend as often as they are able.

General Note

The **High School Formation Supplemental Policies** is intended to supplement the **St. Rita Formation Policies**, not replace it. All policies outlined in the St. Rita Formation Policy also apply to students and parents participating in teen formation programs unless otherwise noted in this handbook.