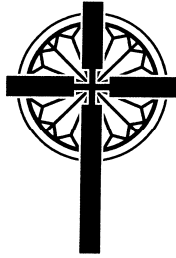


**Parish Website: <http://stmariagoretti.org/>  
Click on REL.ED/YM heading to access the  
latest Religious Ed. & Youth Ministry  
calendars, newsletters, forms, special dates,  
email links to staff and more!**

## *St. Maria Goretti Catholic Parish*



2009-2010

# youthministryhandbook

## Middle School & HIGH SCHOOL

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## *St. Maria Goretti Catholic Parish Mission Statement*

*Our parish family is called to grow in faith and love.  
We desire to be in union with Jesus Christ and one another.  
We will accomplish this mission through worship and prayer,  
education and evangelization in our community and world.  
With St. Maria Goretti as our patron, we strive to follow  
her life of forgiveness and holiness.*

*May we pursue this mission faithfully,  
encouraging others to join us in discipleship for the Lord*

### **WELCOME!**

Welcome to Youth Ministry at St. Maria Goretti Catholic Parish, a many faceted ministry to, for and with young people. The purpose of this booklet is to introduce the Middle School & High School Youth Ministry Programs. You will also find information on Confirmation preparation, retreats, other outings and various program policies.

Most of your questions should be answered in this booklet **or checkout our parish website: <http://stmariagoretti.org/> for updates and events.** If I can help you (parents or teens) in any way, even if it is only to have someone to talk to, please feel free to share with me your needs. Stop in the Youth Ministry Office, which is in the school. Office hours are usually 8:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday through Friday (however, I'm frequently here longer). You can reach me by phone at 298-2098, or you can call Maria Dulli, our Program Assistant at 268-2967 or Misty Brumm, our secretary at 271-8081. We look forward to a faith-filled year of growth and fun together!

Joe Rausch

Director of Religious Ed. & Youth Ministry

608 / 298-2098

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## LET'S COMMUNICATE!

Please keep in mind that all our small group leaders are *volunteers* and be sure to offer them the courtesy of a phone call if you have any questions, comments or concerns. If you don't have your teen's leader's name and phone number, please call the RE/YM office and we'll get that for you.

**CONCERNS? PROBLEMS?** It is our goal to provide a positive experience of faith and community for your son or daughter. Please don't wait until the end of the year to let us know of difficult situations or problems that occurred. By then it is too late to address them. Often difficulties are a result of misinformation or the lack of information. Let's talk! Give us the chance to work with you and your teen. Please let us know your needs!

## GOAL OF YOUTH MINISTRY:

To carry out activities in such a way as to provide the facts, the atmosphere, the opportunities, the example, the helps and the love to assist teens: **A)** To become aware that Jesus is alive and with them. **B)** To know more about Christ & Catholicism. **C)** To come to truly love Christ and build a prayerful, personal relationship with Him. **D)** To belong to a caring Christian Community where their personal friendship with Jesus can be nurtured, and **E)** To eventually make a personal life commitment to Christ & His Church.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY FOR YOUTH MINISTRY:

- Jesus came to herald the Kingdom of God on earth and the Kingdom is *now!* (Mark 1:15)
- Each individual (made in God's image) has unique and special gifts to use in building the Kingdom.
- Middle & High School teens are a vital part of the Kingdom and have a responsibility to spread God's love and Christian values. They also have a right to support (from adults) in their quest for a deeper faith.
- Youth Ministry in our parish should be about building the Kingdom of God on earth by accepting and welcoming everyone, teaching, healing, serving, praying and loving.
- Youth Ministry is most effective when carried out *for* youth, *with* youth, and *by* youth and based on a lot of prayer and discernment. We seek to build up leaders from the youth to be able and willing to return and minister to their peers.

## ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE TEEN YEARS:

Mindful that we serve approximately 600 children and youth, we need the support and participation of all families who are registered in the program.

**Parental involvement throughout a teen's years  
is vitally important to BOTH your teen and the success of  
our parish youth ministry programs.**

*Parents, we ask you to...*

- **VOLUNTEER** in our youth ministry or parish education programs. There are MANY opportunities, times, tasks: volunteering as a small group leader, help with concessions at UW and other fundraisers, be a chaperone for one of the social events, help w/session set-up/clean-up, be tech help with audio-visual & multi-media presentations, help video sessions/events, volunteer as a catechist for the younger grades, assist in the office during the week or during sessions, providing child care for the catechists/teachers, and lots more!
- **PRAY...** Pray *for* your teen. Pray *with* your teen. Pray for all the catechists and small group leaders who teach, lead and spend time sharing the Word of God with our young people.
- **PARTICIPATE IN THE LITURGICAL & SACRAMENTAL LIFE** of our parish. Go to Mass weekly/regularly. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith! Be an active member of St. Maria Goretti parish. Get involved! Make new friends!
- **SHARE YOUR OWN FAITH STORIES** with your teen. Share why your faith is important to you. Talk about the joys as well as your struggles and doubts in your efforts to live out your Catholic faith. Can they see in your life the joy and freedom that your faith gives you?
- **ENCOURAGE YOUR TEEN** to honestly examine their faith, to seek and listen for God's will in all areas of their life through regular prayer, reflection and time with Scripture.

*It is indeed a joy and privilege to partner with you  
in forming hearts and minds for Christ.*

## PARISH POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### ▶ Attendance ◀

**Absences** are to be called in to the Religious Ed. Office (271-8081) prior to the start of sessions. A voice message can be left with your child's name, grade, parent name and reason for the absence. If there is no notification of an absence by a parent, a phone call will be made by the attendance clerk to verify with a parent that the teen is absent. Please be patient if you called in and your message is not passed on. Our calls are for your child's safety.

**Late Arrival:** Teens arriving more than 5 minutes late should check in with the attendance clerk in the Religious Ed. Office. Please strive to be on time.

### ▶ Leaving Early ◀

- **PARENTS MUST COME IN & SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT.** Come in the school & sign them out in the Religious Education Office with the attendance clerk. Please do not go to your child's room.
- **Also, send a SIGNED PARENTAL NOTE** with your child stating time of pick up, reason & the name of person picking your child up. A child will be released only to the person specified in the note.
- **GIVE THIS NOTE TO THE OFFICE AT BEGINNING OF THE SESSION,** Not to your leader.
- These rules are meant for your teen's safety and protection, we're sorry for any inconvenience this causes you. If you have special needs regarding this policy please call us.

### ▶ Custody Issues ◀

In the event of a divorce or separation it is assumed by the RE/YM office that each parent has been awarded equal rights in regard to access to their children. If there are special circumstances such as sole custody, limited access or restraining orders, copies of these court documents must be on file in the Religious Ed. Office.

### ▶ Parking Lot – Drop-off & Pick-up ◀

Please follow the signs to guide traffic for drop-off and pick-up of students. Be patient! Exercise Caution! **Newly licensed drivers should exercise extra caution!**

**TEENS: WATCH & WAIT FOR MOVING VEHICLES!**

### ▶ Cancellation of Classes ◀

Threatening weather or other circumstances may require the cancellation or early dismissal of sessions. When MADISON schools close due to bad weather, we will automatically cancel our sessions. When weather conditions deteriorate after school dismissal resulting in the cancellation of sessions we will take the following steps to inform registered families:

- 1) We will contact local radio stations with an announcement of cancellation.
- 2) We will call all small group leaders, requesting they call as many of their teens as possible with notice of cancellation.
- 3) We will place a voice message on our phone's voice mail.

Should weather conditions deteriorate during sessions, we ask parents to use their discretion in coming early to pick-up their teens. Emergency procedures will be followed as required by the situation (tornado, flash flood, etc.)

Parents bear the responsibility for being informed regarding cancellation and for making decisions about session attendance under questionable conditions. If you are concerned about road conditions because of weather, please do not bring your teen to the session. We serve five school districts and each district may reach a different decision about school cancellations due to the weather.

### RADIO STATIONS

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1310 AM / 101.5 FM WIBA | 1070 AM WTSO  |
| 1191 AM / 102.5 FM WNWC | 92.1 FM WMAD  |
| 96.3 FM WMLI            | 104.1 FM WZEE |

### ▶ Fire Safety & Disaster Preparation ◀

A fire and disaster plan is posted in each classroom used by the youth ministry program identifying a floor plan and the preferred exit route and gathering site outside the building. Catechists/Small Group Leaders are instructed to review procedures with the students.

### ▶ Health Concerns & Medication ◀

Small Group Leaders (Catechists) and other volunteers are not allowed to dispense medications to students. If there is a need to make a policy exception, please contact the Youth Ministry Office to obtain a form authorizing the administration of medication.

# Middle School Youth Ministry

It's all about growing in our faith and connecting our faith to real life. The program is a holistic, multidimensional parish program for *both* parochial *and* public school students that encompasses faith formation, social development and interaction, service and outreach, prayer and retreats and more in an engaging, highly **energetic and fun atmosphere!** We incorporate large and small group formats, music, skits, speakers, multi-media, activities and community service.

**Times, Days & Location...** Wednesdays Oct - April  
6:30 - 8:00 pm  
in the Parish School

## HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE...

- Halloween Party/Dance
- Group Color Night in December
- Parish Ash Wed. Soup & Bread Meal
- Giant Beachballs & other wacky games
- Awesome Guest Speakers
- Lock-In / Retreat
- And MORE!!!

## Other Socials & Activities...

Oct. 16 Fun Night @ the O'Connor Center 7:00-9:30 pm  
Nov. 14 Party Bus - Pizza, Bowling, Mini Golf  
Dec. 11 Fun Night @ the O'Connor Center  
Jan. 29 Lock-In/Retreat Friday night to Sat. morning  
Feb. 6 Pizza Factory! Come help make a bazillion pizzas!  
Feb 20 Kalahari - indoor water park!!!! Dude!  
Apr. 17 Party Bus (see Nov.)

# HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

High School Youth Ministry encourages teens to grow in their personal faith, inviting teens to look at their life experiences and recognize and respond to God's constant presence. Our goal is also to help teens grow in their understanding of and connection to the Church. Through community service we encourage teens to adopt a lifestyle of faithful service to others as disciples of Jesus.

Sessions are a combination of large and small group formats that include teaching, discussion, prayer, reflection and fellowship through the use of speakers, skits, multi-media, activity, discussion, music and liturgy. Each missed session will require a make up session.

Sessions start each week in the school cafeteria. Teens are assigned to small groups by grade level, with about ten teens per group.

## NOTES FOR HS PROGRAM...

- We meet on **SUNDAYS 6:30 - 8:30 pm**
- Sessions are **2 HOURS**
- We meet **about** twice a month end of Sept. through April (not a regular pattern - check your program calendar!)
- Confirmation is celebrated the spring of the sophomore year. Unconfirmed Jr.s & Sr.s are welcome too.

## Confirmation Preparation

Sacraments are movements of God in our lives. But sacraments also presume that movement and change are also going on in the life of the person experiencing the sacrament. All sacraments are both ceremonies and ways of life, which precede and follow the ceremony.

Each individual teen is responsible to determine his or her own readiness through prayer, reflection and dialogue with their family, sponsors and catechists. The age of the person cannot be the main determining factor of readiness.

**For Confirmation Program Expectations see the next page...**

# Parts of the Confirmation Program

## For celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation a teen should:

- Be able to freely request the Sacrament of Confirmation and give reasons for doing so.
- Regularly attend and participate in the Mass and the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- Have an adequate grasp of the basic content of the Catholic faith.
- Be open to growth in their faith & opportunities for Christian service.
- Be able to recognize that he/she is a unique individual with gifts to offer, and begin to assume the responsibility for ministry and service to the parish, the Church and the world.

## In addition to the above, each teen is expected to:

- **Be a Sophomore** or older registered in the High School Youth Ministry Program. They should have attended HS Youth Ministry program their freshman year (**Including: Edgewood Students**). Teens entering their Soph. year w/out the freshmen year will be confirmed in the spring of their junior year.
- **Regularly attend and participate in the sessions.** Each missed session will require a make up session. Multiple absences may mean delaying Confirmation.
- **Community Service:** Carry out 20-25 hours of community service each year. Up to half of the hours can be done in the summer.
- **Confirmation Retreat:** As a sophomore attend one of the two Confirmation Retreats. Teens must attend the entire retreat, and can not arrive late or leave early. Teens will be assigned a weekend with their small group. However, requests to switch weekends will be based on availability of space on a first come first serve basis.
- **Baptismal Certificate:** If the teen was not baptized at St. Maria Goretti, they are to obtain a baptismal certificate and turn it in to the Religious Ed. Office. For those baptized at SMG, please provide the date of baptism to the RE office.
- **Teens Write a Letter to the Pastor & the Bishop** stating in their own words why they want to be confirmed, how they grew in their faith over the last two years, and how they plan to serve the church and others through their confirmation.
- **Attend the Confirmation Practice.** Dates will be announced after we have been assigned our Confirmation date by the bishop.
- **Choose a Sponsor & Confirmation Name** fill out the blue sheet mailed to you over the summer and turn it in by **September 30<sup>th</sup>**. Teens should meet with their sponsors for prayer and discussion at least twice before Christmas and twice after Christmas.

# Community Service

Part of the mission of the church is the call to ministry, social action, justice and service. On Holy Thursday we recall Jesus washing his disciples' feet. After he washed their feet (something only the lowliest of servants did), he asked them, ***“Do you understand what I just did for you? You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’, and fittingly enough, for that is what I am. But if I washed your feet, I who am teacher and Lord, then you must wash each other’s feet...as I have done, so you must do.”*** (John 13:12-15). Over and over again in scripture we see Jesus reaching out to those in need, to the hungry, the lost, the hurting, the outcasts, giving them love, peace and healing through his touch and words. **We are to follow Jesus' example.**

**Community Service:** To help the teens grow in their understanding, experience and appreciation of this vital part of our lives as Catholic Christians, **teens are expected to carry out at least 20-25 hours of service during each school year. Teens can get a head start and do up to half of their hours during the summer.** Small groups may plan some service projects, others will be announced throughout the year. Check the bulletin, parish activities, and the bulletin board outside the Youth Ministry Office for postings for community service needs. Helping our extended families (cousins, Aunts/Uncles, Grandparents) is a great thing to do. However, here we are asking you to look beyond your family to find ways to reach out and serve others who are in need.

# The Confirmation Retreat

The bi-monthly sessions are for discussion and instruction. Community service helps teens live out their faith, putting it into practice. The retreat is a time set aside for prayer & reflection to help sophomore confirmation candidates focus on their interior spiritual life & their personal relationship with Jesus, and to help them discern their readiness to receive and live out the Sacrament of Confirmation as part of the parish.

Retreats help us step back from our normal surroundings and schedules to gain a clearer perspective on our faith, our direction and our relationships. Teens have consistently reported the retreats to be the highlight of their year, standing out as major turning points in their faith.

The retreats are in November & the end of January. The retreats are overnight (Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon). Sophomores attend either one. Please call the Youth Ministry Office if medical or other special needs would restrict a teen from being with us overnight.

## ▶ **Special Events & Field Trips** ◀

On occasion, special events of a social/recreational nature, service activities, or retreats will be with the written consent of parents and with the supervision of at least two program coordinators, small group leaders or designated adults. Permission Slips will be sent home for any of these activities.

The use of private cars is discouraged; bus transportation will be provided whenever possible. When private vehicles are used, a signed volunteer driver information sheet must be submitted to the Youth Minister.

The possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol and/or drugs by students, staff and/or chaperones in any youth ministry activity are absolutely prohibited.

## ▶ **Discipline** ◀

Since all the leaders are volunteers, we have set up a particular structure to help them with group management and discipline. At no time should they feel that they are unable to conduct a session, activity or event because a particular teen is causing a problem or a disturbance.

One of the volunteer's first concerns is to foster an atmosphere in which teens can form community. Teens are expected to act with respect toward other teens and adults. Teens are expected to treat the buildings and materials with care. The possession or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products or any weapons will not be tolerated on parish grounds before, during or after sessions. If a teen is disruptive or breaks program rules, bullies or threatens anyone the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) At the first incident, if it is not severe, the leader will attempt to reconcile the problem directly with the teen.
- 2) If the problem persists, the teen will be sent to the attendance clerks, who will call the parents to come and pick up the teen. They will not be allowed to return until the leader and the parents discuss the situation. The leader should talk to the parent(s) as soon as possible (that evening if possible). The leaders will discuss situation with the Youth Minister.
- 3) If the problem persists, or in extreme cases where drugs, alcohol, violence or vandalism are involved, the teen is escorted to the RE office. Parents are called and a conference is held to determine programming alternatives.