

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



St. Maria Goretti Catholic Parish

2016-17

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, but please also **check out 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 contact me or contact Maria Dulli, our Program Assistant at 268-2967. It is a joy and privilege to partner with you in forming hearts and minds for Christ. We look forward to a faith-filled year of growth and fun together!

Becky Phillips
Director of Youth Ministry
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LET'S COMMUNICATE!

Please keep in mind that all our small group leaders are *volunteers*, so 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:

The goal of Youth Ministry is to carry out activities in such a way as to provide the facts, the atmosphere, the opportunities, the example, the support and the love to assist teens: **A)** To become aware that Jesus is alive and with them. **B)** To know more about Christ and 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 and 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 and 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 be supported 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:

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. We serve approximately 600 children and youth, so we need the support and participation of all families who are registered in the program. There are MANY opportunities, times, tasks: volunteering as a small group leader, help with fundraisers, be a chaperone for a social event, help w/session set-up/clean-up, be tech help with audio-visual & multi-media presentations, help with 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 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.

PARISH POLICIES & PROCEDURES

▶ Attendance ◀

Absences are to be reported by contacting the YM Office: **298-2098**, **becky.phillips@stmariagoretti.org** 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 your high school teen is absent for a session, you will receive an email regarding make up instructions the following day.

Late Arrival: Teens arriving more than 5 minutes late should check in with the attendance clerk in the Religious Ed. Office (HSYM) or the Concession Stand Area (MSYM). Please strive to be on time.

▶ Leaving Early ◀

- **PARENTS MUST COME IN & SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT.** Come in & sign them out in the Religious Education Office (HSYM)/ Concession Stand Area (MSYM) 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 their 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 that each parent has been awarded equal rights regarding 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 ◀

Be patient and exercise caution when in the SMG parking lot! **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 place a voice message on our phone's voice mail.
- 3) We will send out an email.

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.

▶ Policy for Parents Posting Pictures/Videos on Websites *Not* Associated with St. Maria Goretti ◀

In the interest of safety for our students at St. Maria Goretti School, Religious Education and Youth Ministry we strongly encourage parents to follow this policy regarding the posting of photos and/or videos online.

Parents who share pictures and/or videos of St. Maria Goretti students at St. Maria Goretti School, Religious Education and/or Youth Ministry sponsored events need to follow these guidelines:

- Do not post any names of children
- Do not allow comments on the website
- Do not identify this website as associated with St. Maria Goretti (i.e. no teacher name, class name, grade level, etc)
- Parents who set up a website are responsible for continuous oversight of this website
- Parents who choose to post pictures of their children's friends/classmates on their own website, including social media sites such as a Facebook page, should ask permission of other parents before posting.

Middle School Youth Ministry

We strive to grow in faith and connect 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, 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 Wednesday Soup & Bread Meal
- Giant Beachballs & Other Wacky Games
- Awesome Guest Speakers
- And MORE!!!

Other MS Socials & Activities...

Oct. 7 Fun Night @ SMG 7:00-9:30 pm
Nov. 4 Party Bus, starts @ QP 5:30-9:30 pm
Pizza, Bowling & Mini Golf
Dec. 2 Rocky's 6:30-9:00 pm
Feb. 6 Pizza Factory! Come help make many pizzas!
Feb. 18 Kalahari 1:00-8:00 pm
Apr. 1 Feed My Sheep Service Project @ CMC
Apr. 28 Party Bus, starts @ STA 5:30-9:30 pm

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, unless otherwise noted. Teens are assigned to small groups by grade level, with about ten teens per group.

High School Youth Ministry Sessions
SUNDAYS, 6:30 – 8:30 pm
October-April

There is not a regular pattern to when the sessions are scheduled, so please check your program calendar!

Confirmation Preparation

Sacraments are movements of God in our lives. But sacraments also presume that movement and change are 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.

At our parish, Confirmation is celebrated in the spring of sophomore year. (Unconfirmed juniors and seniors are welcome too!) However, the age of the person cannot be the main determining factor of readiness. Each individual teen is responsible to determine his or her own readiness through prayer, reflection and dialogue with their family, sponsors and small group leaders.

For Confirmation program expectations, see the next page...

The Sacrament of Confirmation

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 and 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 (**this includes all Catholic high school students**). Teens entering their sophomore year w/out the freshman 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 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.
- **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**
Teens should meet with their sponsors for prayer and discussion 6 times throughout the year. These meetings can be face-to-face or through the telephone/web cam and computer.

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.**

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 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 parish website 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 youth ministry 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 and reflection to help sophomore confirmation candidates focus on their interior spiritual life and their personal relationship with Jesus, and to help them discern their readiness to receive and live out the Sacrament of Confirmation as fully initiated members of the Church.

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 & 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 occur 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 or available on the parish website.

► 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 Youth Minister, who will call the parents to come and pick up the teen. They will not be allowed to return until the leader, Youth Minister, and the parents discuss the situation. The leader and Youth Minister will talk to the parent(s) as soon as possible (that evening if possible).
- 3) If the problem persists, or in extreme cases where drugs, alcohol, violence or vandalism are involved, the teen is escorted to the Youth Minister. Parents are called and a conference is held to determine programming alternatives.