

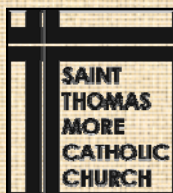
# RE.A.CH

Religious Education for Adolescents and Children

2016 - 2017

FAMILY

HANDBOOK



# 2016-2017 RE.A.CH Dates

<b>Pre-K - 12th Grade</b>
09.18.16
10.02.16
10.16.16
11.06.16
11.20.16
12.04.16
12.18.16
01.08.17
01.22.17
02.12.17
02.26.17
03.12.17
03.26.17
04.09.17
04.23.17
05.07.17
05.21.17

<b>PreK-K</b> Session	10:20 -11:45 am
-----------------------	-----------------

## **Grades 1-5**

Session A	12:30-2:00 pm
Session B	4:30-6:00 pm

## **EDGE** **(Middle School)**

Evening Session	4:30-6:00 pm
-----------------	--------------

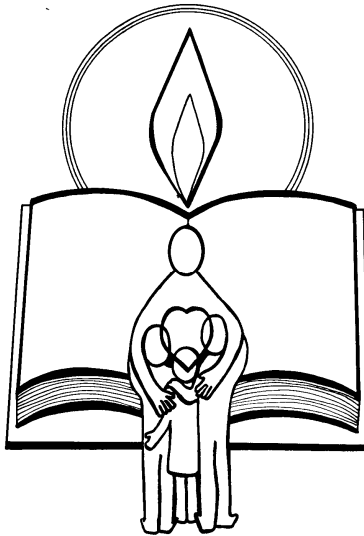
*EDGE is held EVERY Sunday  
(dates subject to change)*

## **High School**

Evening Session	6:30-8:30 pm
-----------------	--------------

## *Youth ministry seeks*

- *to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ,*
- *to draw them into responsible participation in the life and mission of the Church, and*
- *to foster their personal and spiritual growth.*



**National Directory for Catechesis, p. 11.**

## The Spirituality of RE.A.CH

Faith Formation is a lifelong process beginning from the moment of our Baptism and extending throughout our life. We never outgrow our need for spiritual nourishment and continuing growth in the understanding of our Catholic Faith.

In our Faith Formation program for children we acknowledge that parents are the first and primary educators of their children in the faith. In the Rite of Baptism the minister addresses the parents, saying:

*“On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring your child up in the practice of the faith.”*

We want to support you, the family, in fulfilling this awesome responsibility by providing a faith filled and encouraging curriculum for both home teaching and church sessions appropriate for each child’s age and development level.

The Faith Formation Program at St. Thomas More offers 17 sessions taught by your child’s classroom catechist. These sessions build on one another, so regular attendance in the classroom and continued dialogue at home are very important.

Picture these 17 sessions as a completed puzzle. Each session that is completed adds a piece to your child’s understanding of how much Jesus loves them and the importance of their faith journey.



Catechizing both at home and at church, involves an environment that is **not** “school.” The best atmosphere is one in which faith is experienced and shared. To have children read the lesson and fill out work sheet pages with no personal interaction makes it difficult for children to get excited about their faith.



Teaching by example is the most effective means of sharing the faith. If you are able to attend the Parish opportunities offered by Faith Formation for Adults, your child sees that your faith development is important to you too!

## Overview of Programs

### Pre-K, and Kindergarten: ages 3,4,5

Sunday morning GENESIS classes take place during the whole of the 10:30 Mass, twice a month on the lower level for children who are 3, 4, and 5 years of age. These classes incorporate active self-expression, discovery and inquiry, language and thinking, social relationships, music, art, prayer, and many other age appropriate activities. The classes are a fun way to create friendships and learn about Jesus.

The curriculum for the early years helps children discover God already present in their lives and in their homes and families. Children discover and value all life and all creation as God's gifts to us. They discover they can "make a difference" and change our world for the better. They can love and care for one another, forgive one another, and celebrate life as a small Christian community. Children intuitively respond to God's love for them because they are innately spiritual.

Parents personally present their child to the catechist at 10:20 AM and return for their child at the conclusion of 10:30 mass. The safety of your child is our primary concern, and that is why we require parental contact at the beginning and end of each session.



## Overview of Programs cont'd



### Levels 1 through 5

The Faith Formation program for children in these levels is offered twice a month.

Families may choose either the Sunday,

**12:30-2:00 PM session (A), OR**

**4:30-6:00 PM session (B).**

Typically the "Level" is equivalent to your child's "grade in school". Placement is made on an individual basis by the Director of Faith Formation after consultation with the family.

Our Faith Formation program is the basis for faith-sharing in Levels 1-5. It follows the same approach that Jesus did. Jesus taught us *what* to believe and then showed us how to *put those beliefs into practice*. The philosophy of this program is to learn to read and understand Scripture and practice it in our daily Christian life as taught by the Catholic Church.

The doctrines of our church have been passed down to us through the generations and are at this time gathered into the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These four pillars of the Catechism are the basis of each level of your child's personal formation.

- What we believe,
- How we worship,
- How we live, and
- How we pray

Every level celebrates our journey as Catholic Christians re-living the story of our salvation: passing through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time.

Doctrine, scripture, and the liturgical year are therefore balanced each year as an integrated whole, woven into the everyday life and experience of the children.



## Middle School Faith Formation

6th, 7th, and 8th graders participate in our middle school EDGE program on Sunday evenings, every week from 4:30–6:00 pm. EDGE combines the content of religious education with the fun and community of a youth group.

This program is designed to bring middle schoolers together into one group for a comprehensive youth ministry program based on, focused on, and directed toward Jesus Christ.

As middle school youth, our children are exposed to both positive and negative behaviors and influences. Many of the values and beliefs they have held as children are now being questioned and challenged. As young adolescents they are trying to figure out who they are and what they believe.

This program is designed to meet them right where they are and tap into the educational, spiritual, emotional, and social needs of young adolescents. This ministry draws every aspect of a tween's life into a faith connection and a journey with, and for, Jesus Christ.

## High School Faith Formation

Our High School classes meet twice a month from 6:30-8:30pm. The High School classes cover different aspects of our Catholic faith and practice. The classes are highly interactive and team-building. With our trained catechists, passionate volunteers, and small class sizes, nobody is left out or overlooked.

Classes are first and foremost for a teen's spiritual growth in the Catholic faith and an encounter with a God who loves them. The classes provide the strength to say "Yes" to God at whatever level the teen feels



that promise and dedication can be made. This process is first and foremost a labor of love.

The first year of High School Faith Formation is a catechetical journey for high school teens considering the Sacrament of Confirmation. Because catechesis is different than an academic course, the goal for our teens is to bring about a *personal encounter with Jesus Christ*. In our current programs **Chosen** and **Theology of the Body For Teens**, we use the same three-phase catechumenal model used to prepare people to enter the Catholic Church through RCIA.

• **The Way**

• **The Truth**

• **The Light**

As parents, your role is vital in the formation of your child's faith, especially as teenagers. **We invite all parents to participate in the 17 twice-a-month sessions of our program**, not only to witness the content of our program, but to bring and experience community and fellowship among the parents. We hope to provide an environment that both you and your teen will look forward to attending and participating in during the year.

Throughout this first year the teens will also be scheduled to serve as part of a Church Ministry program a minimum of 18 times per year. There are also 8 Family/Sponsor potluck events that you and your teen are asked to attend during these two years. These are a fun chance for your teen to get to know the members of our Parish community, and have an active role within the Church.

Following prayerful discernment and regular attendance to all 17 classes in the first year, your child will progress into their second year of High School Faith Formation. This year will be primarily spent preparing your teen for the Sacrament of Confirmation using the second half of the **Chosen** and **Theology of the Body For Teens** series. Again, because of the vital role a parent plays in their child's faith formation, **a parent and/or the teen's**



**Confirmation sponsor are invited to attend all 17 sessions of the second year.**

During Year 3 and 4 of our High School Faith Formation we offer to our post-confirmed teens the *T3: Teen TimeLine* series. This youth Bible study is changing the way Catholic teens learn scripture. The program is relevant, engaging, and effective and lays a foundation that lasts a lifetime. Classes are held twice a month and are for everyone in the 11th and 12th grades who have made their Sacrament of Confirmation.

## Attendance Policy

Because our Faith Formation Program is set up as a group setting, students are asked to be on time for their classes. Parents are asked to insure their children's promptness so that they participate completely in the session and are not missing key elements of the class.

If, for any reason, a child must leave class early, the parent should come to the classroom to alert the catechist. Sending a note with your child is always helpful and will allow the catechist to give your child materials that may be passed out at the end of class.

We have provided you with your child's Faith Formation dates in advance for the entire year. You can find these dates on the inside cover of this booklet. In the event that your child is absent we appreciate you contacting the Faith Formation Office in advance that your child will not be in class. You may reach us at:

**760-758-4100 x110 or  
*debbief@stmoside.org***

This allows us time to notify the catechists in advance that your child will not be in class for that day.

# Annual Fees

## FAITH FORMATION LEVELS:

**Pre-K-10th Grade:**

**Tuition for one child: \$100.00**

**+**

**Per additional child: \$50.00**

*(maximum: \$250.00/family)*

**11th and 12th Grade: \$30.00 per student**

## ADDITIONAL SACRAMENTAL FEES:

**Reconciliation/Eucharist year: \$40.00** *(materials fee)*

**Confirmation Year: \$130.00** *(materials/fall retreat)*

### Fees may be paid by:

- cash,
- check (payable to St. Thomas More),
- credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover),
- Automatic Payment Withdrawal, or  
A written payment plan

### Scholarship fund contribution:

Would you care to include a small gift (\$5 or \$10?) to help our families in need of assistance?

## Sacramental Preparation

### First Reconciliation and Eucharist

There is a two-year period of preparation for receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. This preparation typically begins in Level 1. Both sacraments are then celebrated the following year during Level 2.

There are seven Faith Formation parent meetings held throughout the Level 2 year that we ask you to attend. These meetings help to equip you as parents with the necessary theology and tools to carry out this very important role and responsibility. We at St. Thomas More are eager to share in this "partnership", and to provide you and your child with whatever they need on this faith journey. The dates for these seven meetings are as follows:

September 18, 2016,    October 16, 2016,    December 4, 2016  
January 22, 2017,    February 26, 2017    March 26, 2017,  
May 21, 2017

**First Reconciliation:**                      December 11, 2016    4:00 PM

**First Eucharist:**                              June 17, 2017    5:00 PM  
June 18, 2017    8:30 & 10:30 AM



## Confirmation

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a one-year process, provided the teen has successfully completed a full year of High School Faith Formation. This one year period of discernment to assess readiness for accepting the responsibility of the Confirmation process includes: an essay assignment, personal interview, a discernment retreat, 17 formation classes and 8 Family/Sponsor Events.

## Parish Contacts

The Director of Faith Formation is responsible for the development, coordination, administration, and evaluation of all programs designed to meet the religious education needs of the Parish community. All Parishioners, from our youngest to our oldest, deserve the opportunity to continue growing in knowledge and love of their Catholic faith.

Faith Formation Staff:

Debbie Fredette

Matt Franklin

Stacey Griffin

Director of Faith Formation

Youth Advocate

Faith Formation Office Assistant

## Discipline



Catechists use positive methods of encouraging appropriate behavior. When inappropriate behavior prevents the catechist from teaching and other students from participating, the catechist discusses the situation with the Director of Faith Formation. Parents will be contacted so that we can work together to maintain a climate of mutual respect.

## Dress Code for Middle School, HS and Post-Confirmed

Modesty in dress is expected while your child is participating in any church class or function. This means that shorts/skirts that your child wears must pass the "fingertip rule". Spaghetti straps, strapless or backless shirts/dresses and anything showing skin between the bottom of the shirt and the top of the pant line are not allowed. Necklines should always be modest and not display any sort of cleavage. Appropriate t-shirts and sweat pants will be kept in the Faith Formation office for any child who comes to class dressed immodestly. They will be asked to change prior to resuming participation in the class or event.

## Safe Environment

In compliance with Diocesan policy, all volunteers for lay church ministry who work with young people at St. Thomas More undergo a voluntary background screening to insure the safety of your children while they are in our care. Safe Environment training is required by the diocese for all our youth. Catechists begin the conversation and parents continue the conversation with age appropriate materials that are sent home.

## Special Needs

Parents are encouraged to speak with the Director of Faith Formation regarding special learning styles or particular needs of students in our program. If we are aware, we can accommodate more carefully students who might need special consideration.

Please note that the emergency card provides a place for you to indicate special needs, including academic needs.

Students with special needs are welcome in our Religious Education programs. If specialized instruction is needed we will make every effort to provide for it.

## Student Insurance

All youth participating in Parish educational ministry activities are covered under the blanket accident/medical insurance program administered through Catholic Mutual Group.

## Statement of Partnership

At the time of enrollment, each family signs a "*Statement of Partnership*". This is to remind you of our Parish's commitment to your family's ongoing religious education, and to spell out the family's responsibilities as well. Since the signed document is on the back of your enrollment card, a copy follows for your reference:

### The Catechetical Staff at St. Thomas More will:

- Share faith through class sessions on our site through the dedicated service of volunteer catechists
- Remain in good communication with families through Progress Reports and phone and email availability
- Provide a "Faith Plan" that clearly outlines the curriculum for class sessions throughout the year
- Provide quality liturgical experiences for families, including Liturgy of the Word for Children

On behalf of the Church of St. Thomas More, I enter into this covenant:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Faith Formation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### The family will:

- Provide spiritual support by attending Mass **every week** with my child
- Pray as a family
- Share faith as a family throughout the week through catechetical study and dialogue
- Remain in good communication by sharing concerns/support with the DCM and/or catechist as needed,
- Phone or email the Faith Formation Office in advance when absence is unavoidable

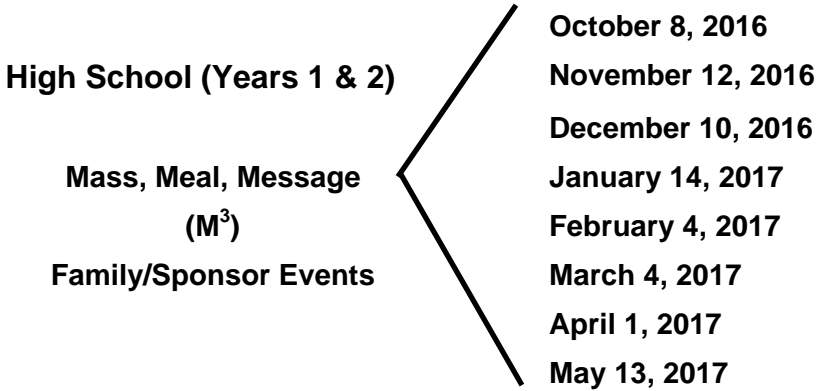
On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ family, I enter into this covenant:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

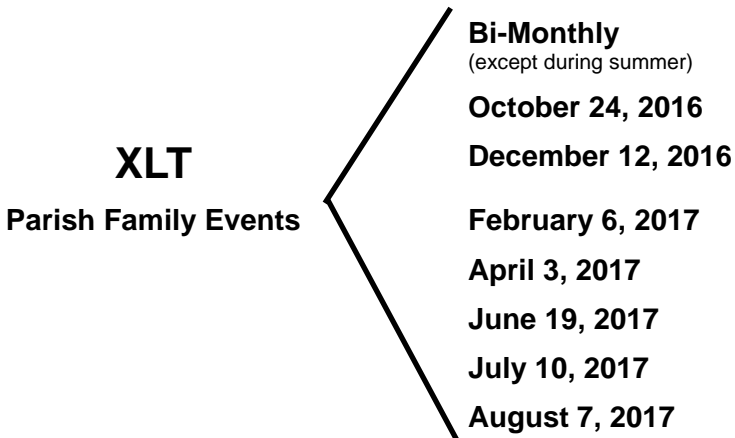


# Important Dates For High School

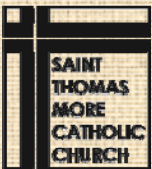


**High School (Year 2)**  
(for those receiving Confirmation in 2017)

**Confirmation Retreat:** January 27-29, 2017  
Green Oak Ranch



**Steubenville San Diego** (Catholic Conference for Teens)  
July 28-30, 2017



1450 South Melrose Drive  
Oceanside, CA 92056  
760-758-4100 • 760-758-4165 fax  
[www.stmoside.org](http://www.stmoside.org)  
[parishoffice@stmoside.org](mailto:parishoffice@stmoside.org)



*StThomasMoreRCC*





**St. Thomas More Catholic Church  
Religious Education  
Emergency Information**

**Emergency Contact and Medical Information for Students**

_____ Student Name		_____ Date of Birth		<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
				Sex	
_____ Parent/Guardian Name		_____ Parent/Guardian Name			
( ) _____ Home Phone	( ) _____ Work or Cell Phone	( ) _____ Home Phone	( ) _____ Work or Cell Phone		
_____ Address		_____ Address			
_____ City, ST ZIP Code		_____ City, ST ZIP Code			
_____ Relationship to Child		_____ Relationship to Child			

**Alternate Emergency Contacts if Parent/Guardian Cannot Be Reached**

_____ Primary Emergency Contact		_____ Secondary Emergency Contact	
( ) _____ Home Phone	( ) _____ Cell Phone	( ) _____ Home Phone	( ) _____ Cell Phone
_____ Address		_____ Address	
_____ City, ST ZIP Code		_____ City, ST ZIP Code	

**Medical Information and Allergy Alert**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital/Clinic Preference

_____ Physician's Name	_____ Phone Number
_____	_____
_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
List any conditions such as hearing or vision problems, heart conditions, seizures, Headaches, anxiety/depression, asthma, ADD/ADHD, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Medications taken

Allergies/Dietary Restrictions, e.g., peanut, shellfish, gluten, dairy, bee stings, etc. Please list. Does student carry an EpiPen? **Y** **N**

I authorize all medical and surgical treatment, X-ray, laboratory, anesthesia, and other medical and/or hospital procedures as may be performed or prescribed by the attending physician and/or paramedics for my child and waive my right to informed consent of treatment. This waiver applies only in the event that neither parent/guardian can be reached in the case of an emergency.

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature	_____ Date
------------------------------------	---------------