BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT
Mt 5:3

YOUTH FORMATION
2014 - 2015 CATECHETICAL YEAR
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Corpus Christi, Texas
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Dear Friends,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” (Mt. 5:3). This is the theme for this year’s World Youth Day taken from the Beatitudes Jesus preached in his Sermon on the Mount. What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”? It is a radical way of living; it is the way of Christ. It means to avoid the trappings of the culture that teach young people that the key to life, to path way to happiness and fulfillment is to gain as much as you possibly can, wealth, possessions, honor, prestige, titles. This message is imposed onto them from an early age. Yet the Lord Jesus wants to reverse our way of thinking. The key to life is not to gain everything or many things but to “go, sell all your possessions and give it to the poor.” (Mt. 19:21). How different would our lives truly be, how we would experience true joy, a joy that detaches us from those things the Lord says the “moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.” (Mt. 6:19).

The formation of young Christians necessarily includes instruction and practice in the way of living that is detached from the enticements of the world (computers, IPods, cell phones, cars, etc…). It is a movement toward living a life of sacrificial love, generosity, compassion and gratitude. As we begin our new Youth Formation year, we want to focus our attention this year in answering the Holy Father’s call for all of us to learn to be “poor in spirit”, building up treasures in heaven, not on earth. This begins with true encounter with Jesus Christ who became poor for our sake that we might become rich. (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). This encounter with the “Jesus of the Poor” is facilitated through a life of prayer and a growth in faith. Young people need training not only to embrace their encounter with the Lord, but also to develop within themselves faith and prayer in order to embrace the radical Christian Way of being “poor in spirit”.

At the start of the new Youth Formation year, I urge you as parents to encourage this growth in your children by fostering an active participation not only in our program, but also in their faith life, which has as its source and summit; the Sunday Mass. We ask for your help in cooperating with our program that seeks to train in the Christian discipline, not set up useless hurdles or obstacles to climb over. The standards we set are for their good, not to make life difficult or burdensome. We ask you to assist us, not seeking loopholes or exemptions, but helping your children reach for great heights. The Lord called us to greatness, not mediocrity.

I am confident, that every year as our program develops and grows, that we are making the adjustments to not only be reasonable and serve your needs in light of our circumstances, but also to give your children access to learning what it truly means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. For Christ alone can teach your children, sacrifice, generosity, gratitude and service to all our brothers and sisters in need. Thank you for you patience, your understanding and your constant support. May our Our Lady, Mother of the Poor, embrace us with her warmth so that in her love we can truly become like Jesus himself, “poor in spirit”.

Fr. Vásquez
"Young people need to be helped to discern the path that leads to true freedom: the path of a sincere and generous imitation of Christ, the path of commitment justice and peace. Much progress has been made in developing solid program of catechesis, yet so much more remains to be done in forming the hearts and minds of the young in knowledge and love of the Lord. The challenges confronting us require a comprehensive and sound instruction in the truth of the faith. But they also call for cultivating a mindset, an intellectual "culture", which is genuinely Catholic, confident in the profound harmony of faith and reason and prepared to bring the richness of faith's vision to bear on the urgent issues which affect the future of American society."

(Homily of Pope Benedict XVI, Nationals Stadium, Washington, D.C. April 17, 2008)

St. John’s is excited to present a new approach to handing on the faith to the new generation of young Catholics. Established during the Year of Faith (2012-2013), our new Youth Formation Program integrates a comprehensive formation program that not only involves catechetical instruction, but also a total human, spiritual and pastoral formation. It is a more holistic approach to meeting the challenges of the New Evangelization in the modern world.

The approach of our formation program moves beyond the classroom instruction of past programs such as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) or traditional Religious Education models. It also moves into a contemporary ministry for young people utilizing the LifeTeen and Edge programs that present a greater emphasis on Catechesis and Ministry unlike the traditional Catholic Youth Organizations (CYO) or recent "youth groups”. St. John’s Youth Formation Program implements new, modern, educational and cognitive learning techniques by implementing a hand-on-learning through training in prayer, sacraments, using group learning and activities, and a more personal approach to the overall development of young people and their growth in faith.
Patron Saints

Our Lady of Hope, St. Joseph, St. John Paul II

ARK Bl. Jose Sanchez del Rio, St. Maria Goretti, & St. Dominic Savio

EDGE St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Bernadette of Lourdes & Bl. Jacinta Marto

LIFE TEEN Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, St. Gemma Galgani & St. John Bosco

Curriculum Fidelity

All resources, programs, methods and curricula are carefully selected to be at the service of the content which is none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Our goal is always to use resources that are faithful to the magisterium of the Catholic Church, age appropriate, and truly is a proclamation of the Good News that has been handed onto us by the Apostles.

All resources used for Sacramental Preparation are in conformity with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. We will also implement in age appropriate ways the Theology of the Body according to the teachings of St. Pope John Paul II into all grade levels ranging from topics of friendship to searching for the meaning in relationships and saying yes to the gift of a vocation to marriage, priesthood, and religious life.

Youth Formation Vision

The Youth Formation program at St. John the Baptist aims to spiritually form and educate our children and young people to be equipped to make a response of faith to the God who calls them to holiness. We seek to form our children and young people to live an authentic Christian life in the communion of the Catholic Church, to lead them to a deeper participation in the life of the Church, especially in Word and Sacrament, and provide opportunities for ongoing conversion and spiritual growth.

Through the intercession of our patron saints, our hope is that we will reach the lives of the young people with the dynamism of the Gospel that will call them “out of darkness and into His wonderful light” and help bring about a conversion and communion with Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9).
The Ark is a Catholic based catechetical and evangelization ministry for children grades PreK3 through 5th grade in the parish setting. This new program is both Scripture and Catechism Based which means that all lessons will be based on the outline of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with a strong Scriptural foundation.

The vision is a holistic formation program that incorporates both catechetical (doctrine) and spiritual formation. Children will be presented a weekly lesson extracting age appropriate study of the Church’s teaching as well as exploring and learning methods of prayer, liturgical formation, and application of their lessons to Catholic/Christian living.

While the Ark includes Sacramental Preparation for those children making their First Holy Communion and First Confession, it is by no means limited to this. The Ark seeks to initiate Catholic formation in children that carries on through their middle school years as well as into high school.

The Ark sessions run from 9:07 am through 10:07 am on Sunday mornings. Following the sessions children are then invited to join us at Mass at 10:15 am.

***If your child has a disability that may require additional aides or supports, please contact Elizabeth so that a course of action that will effectively serve you and your child can be discussed.***
Attendance
Regular attendance and active participation in the Ark classes are important factors in deepening your child’s understanding of the Faith. We encourage everyone to arrive on time so teachers can make full use of the time to help lead our children to Christ. Out of courtesy and for planning purposes, please inform Elizabeth of any absences prior to the day of class (if possible).

All children enrolled in Ark should be attending Sunday Mass every week with their parents (or spiritual guardians). At Mass, parents should model piety and proper participation in the Mass, including, following the readings and Gospel in the missal, singing with the assembly, and (when properly disposed) receiving Communion.

Behavior
All children and volunteers are expected to act charitably and in good behavior at all times. If your child has a disability or other circumstances that effect behavior please contact us so we can prepare accordingly with teachers to ensure the best experience for everyone. Parents will be called with consistent behavioral issues. If not resolved, there will be a meeting with the pastor, teacher, Elizabeth and parent to discuss the situation further.

Drop off/Pick up
Students MUST be dropped off on time. The Church parking lot and grounds are an extremely busy area during the Ark because of the two morning Masses. Please review with your children safety measures around cars. Students should be picked up on time. Please step into your child’s room and then walk your child to Mass for safety reasons. We will not dismiss your child from the room unescorted.

Prayer Requirements
Students will be required to learn prayers set aside specifically for their grade level. Catechists will review them during class, but it is your responsibility to ensure that they have their prayers learned. Students will be tested over them during the course of the year. For a list of prayers for each grade level, please see pages 9-10.
**1st Grade**

**Sign of the Cross**
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**The Our Father**
Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen

**Hail Mary**
Hail Mary, Full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed are thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

**Act of Contrition**
O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

**2nd Grade**

**Guardian Angel**
Angel of God, my guardian dear, To whom God’s love commits me here, Ever this day, be at my side, To light and guard, Rule and guide. Amen.

**Doxology (Glory Be)**
Glory be to the Father, And to the Son, And to the Holy Spirit As it was in the beginning Is now and ever shall be World without end Amen.

**Prayer of St. Michael the Archangel**
St. Michael the Archangel
Defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do Thou, O prince of Heavenly Host By the power of God, thrust into Hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.
3rd Grade

Memorare  
Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
that never was it known that anyone who fled  
to thy protection, implored thy help,  
or sought thine intercession was left unaided.  
Inspired by this confidence,  
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my  
mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand,  
sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word  
Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy  
mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Prayer of Reparation  
O Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy  
Spirit, I adore thee profoundly.  
I offer thee the most precious Body, Blood,  
Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in  
all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation  
for the outrages, sacrileges and indifferences  
by which He is offended. By the infinite  
merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the  
Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of thee the  
conversion of poor sinners. Amen.

4th Grade

Come Holy Spirit  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy  
faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy  
love. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be  
created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the  
earth.  
Let us pray. O God, Who didst instruct the  
hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy  
Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly  
wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hail Holy Queen  
Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy!  
Our life, our sweetness, and our  
hope!  
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of  
Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this valley, of tears.  
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,  
thine eyes of mercy toward us;  
and after this our exile  
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb  
Jesus; O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin  
Mary.  
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of  
Christ.

5th Grade

Apostle's Creed  
I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus  
Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was  
conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the  
Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried. He  
descended into Hell; the third day He rose  
again from the dead; He ascended into  
Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of  
God, the Father almighty; from thence He  
shall come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic  
Church, the communion of saints, the  
forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body  
and life everlasting. Amen.

Anima Christi  
Soul of Christ, sanctify me Body of Christ, save  
me Blood of Christ, inebriate me Water from  
Christ’s side, wash me Passion of Christ,  
strengthen me O good Jesus, hear me. Within  
Thy wounds hide me Suffer me not to be  
separated from Thee from the malicious enemy  
defend me In the hour of my death call me And  
bid me come unto Thee that I may praise Thee  
with Thy saints and with Thy angels  
Forever and ever. Amen.
**CHILDREN IN NEED OF SACRAMENTS**

**Baptism**

Children under the age of 6
- Baptismal preparation classes at St. John’s are held in the Church on the First Sunday of every month after the 12:15 Mass. Both parents who wish to have their child baptized, as well as the godparents, are asked to attend a baptismal preparation class. Please contact the parish office to **register by noon of the first Thursday of the month.**
- **Only** the parent(s) or legal guardians(s) may present children for baptism. Grandparents and other relatives cannot present children for baptism without expressed written permission from parents who are otherwise not able to do so. Contact the Church Office for registration.
- An official state Birth Certificate is required with registration. Parents must also present valid identification (Driver’s License).
- Baptisms are normally celebrated on the second Sunday of each month at the 12:15 pm Mass in the Church.

**Baptism of Children after Age 6**
If your child has not been baptized and is entering into the Youth Formation Program to begin religious education, they may be baptized after **one complete year** of catechetical formation with no more than 3 absences a semester. Parents and godparents must also attend the baptism preparation classes. Please inform the Youth Formation Office at the start of the year that your child is in need of Baptism so that we may aide you in preparation and registration.

**Requirements for Godparents**
- Godparents **are to be Catholic.** A child may have one Godparent (male or female) or two Godparents (one male and one female). Godparents may be as young as 16 years old. **NO** Non-Catholics (especially non-Christians) or those who object to the faith by claiming to be Agnostic or Atheist may serve as Godparents.
- **Must be attending Mass on Sundays** and be registered in a parish.
- **Must have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Eucharist.**
- **If married,** Godparents must be married in the Catholic Church and not practice contraception. Marriage Certificate from the church must be presented when registering for baptismal class.
- **If single,** must not be living with someone outside the state of matrimony (heterosexual or homosexual relationship). Sacrament certificates must be presented when registering for baptismal class.
- **Must be in good standing with the Church.**
- Must not be involved in behaviors or in careers contrary to Catholic Morality (working at Planned Parenthood, worker or owner of an immoral establishment, an abortion practitioner, etc.)
- **Must attend baptismal instruction class prior to the baptism.**
- If from another parish, godparents should bring a letter from their pastor verifying their suitability to serve as godparents.
First Penance & First Communion Preparation

As required by the Diocese of Corpus Christi, sacramental preparation is a two year preparation program before receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. If there are extenuating circumstances such as moving or family issues, please notify Elizabeth so that we can work with you to assist your child in receiving the Sacraments in a timely manner.

Attendance
Attendance and participation in the Ark classes during sacramental preparation is vital to the full knowledge for reception of the Sacrament. Therefore, we are requiring that there be no more than 3 excused absences in a semester for those who are not in Catholic Schools. Absences will be excused only for serious situations like sickness or a death in the family. Please inform Elizabeth by email or phone call when your child is out for any of these reasons.

If you are transferring from another parish, a letter from the previous parish documenting the formation received and any sacramental classes completed is required and should be turned in no later than December 1st. This helps us assess their preparedness for future Sacraments and ensure they receive the best formation.

Catholic School students attending private school are required to attend The Ark sessions in order to grow in community within the parish. Because First Communion is a parish community celebration uniting all persons who seek sacraments with the other members of the parish, children should go through some part of the catechesis together. The diocese of Corpus Christi has set the minimum requirements for each parish and from there it is up to each parish to increase the requirement per the digression of the pastor.

Baptismal Certificates
Baptismal certificates for all children who are preparing to receive their sacraments are to be turned into the Youth Formation Office before their First Confession Date. Without this certificate, your child cannot receive the Sacrament of Penance.

Parent Meetings
All parents are required to attend the first meeting of the year to ensure that all information necessary for reception of the Sacraments is gathered. There will be two (2) mandatory meetings for parents whose child(ren) will be receiving the Sacraments of First Holy Communion. Please make every effort to attend these meetings. Dates for these meetings are listed in the calendar.
First Penance

At least one parent is to attend all scheduled Confessions with their child. The Sacrament of Penance will be done in the first year of sacramental formation, normally First Grade. Each child will be required to attend **Four Penances** each year of sacramental formation here at St. John the Baptist. The goal will be to form the habit of regular Sacramental Penance rather than portraying it as a one-time event. Our prayer is that with regular Confession they will grow to see the beauty of God’s mercy and forgiveness given to us through the Sacrament. (Make up sessions will only be permitted if Elizabeth is notified and documentation is provided. See calendar for dates.

First Holy Communion

Students will receive their First Communion at the end of their second year of formation, normally in Second Grade. If you are transferring from another parish, a letter from the previous parish documenting the formation received and any sacramental classes completed is required and should be turned **in no later than December 1, 2014.**

Children and parents are required to participate in the practice session scheduled for their First Communion.

Assessment Policies

In compliance with the Diocese of Corpus Christi, those undergoing Sacramental Preparation for First Holy Eucharist will be assessed on their knowledge of basic fundamentals of the Faith to determine their readiness for the reception of the Sacrament. The assessment interview will be administered by the Coordinator of the program and will take place in March of their second year of formation. During the interview process, students will be asked to discuss content learned throughout both years of formation.

Concepts can include but are not limited to:
- Sin
- Confession
- The Eucharist
- The Most Holy Mass
- The required prayers for 1st & 2nd Grade

If clear understanding is portrayed concerning right and wrong, as well as the necessity of Confession, the true meaning of the Eucharist, and their prayers are learned, students will be deemed ready to receive the Sacrament. If not, a make-up test will be given in the beginning of May before the scheduled First Holy Communions. Letters will be sent home with the final decisions after the Pastor has reviewed and approved the student’s records.

Pastor Review and Approval

Each student’s records preparing for the Sacrament of the Eucharist will be reviewed and approved by Father before the child is permitted to receive the Sacrament. These records will include: Ark session attendance records, attendance records of all scheduled Confessions, and the interview results. Letters will be sent home with the final decisions after the Pastor has reviewed and approved the student’s records.
Sacramental Preparation Outside of 1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Grade
If your child is in need of First Penance or First Holy Communion and have passed the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade, please contact the Coordinator of your child’s program. You child will be required to adhere to the standards set forth for Sacramental Preparation and in addition, will be sent home with supplemental material; to be covered at home. This will ensure that your youth is equipped with all the information that he or she will need to successfully pass the assessment process as well as be adequately prepared to receive the Sacraments.
The Edge program seeks to provide an “engaging and interactive setting for comprehensive catechesis” where youth have the opportunity to hear the Word of God, make a response of Faith, and grow deeper in community. Under the guidance and leadership of the Assistant Director of Youth Formation and a Core Team of adult and high school volunteers, the youth will meet weekly and also have opportunities for service projects, spiritual retreats, monthly bible studies and social events.

** Edge Curriculum Schedule **

- Scripture
- Creed
- Church
- Sacraments
- Prayer
- Social Justice

** For more information on Edge Youth Ministry please visit: catholicyouthministry.com **

**Youth in Need of Sacraments**

Students who are still in need of the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance and/or Communion will receive their formation through Edge and extra resources as supplied by the Assistant Director. You MUST speak with the Jessica as soon as your son/daughter is registered for the program to discuss further details.
Attendance
Regular attendance and active participation in Edge are important factors in deepening your child’s understanding of the Faith. Out of courtesy, please let Jessica know in advance if your son/daughter will not be attending an Edge night.

All children enrolled in Edge should be attending Sunday Mass every week with their parents (or spiritual guardians). At Mass, parents should demonstrate how to genuflect and bow before the Blessed Sacrament, and should teach their children the reason that we do these things. Parents should also model piety and (to the degree they are able) proper participation in the Mass, including, following the readings and Gospel in the missal, singing with the assembly, and (when properly disposed) receiving Communion.

Behavior
All youth and volunteers are expected to act charitably and in good behavior at all times. If there are learning disabilities or other circumstances that affect behavior in your child(ren), please contact us so we can prepare accordingly with Core Members to ensure the best experience for everyone. Parents will be called with consistent behavioral issues. If not resolved, there will be a meeting with the pastor and Jessica, and parent to discuss the situation further.

Drop Off/Pick Up
Students MUST be dropped off/picked up on time. If your son/daughter needs to arrive late/ be picked up early, please let Jessica know in advance. Also, if your son/daughter will be walking or biking home, please notify us in advance so we know they have permission to leave without a parent.

Moving From another Parish
Families coming from another parish will be asked to submit a letter from the previous parish documenting the formation received and any sacramental classes completed. This helps us assess their preparedness for future Sacraments and ensure they receive the best formation.

JESSICA UNDERBRINK,
JUNDERBRINK@SJBCTX.ORG
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF YOUTH FORMATION EDGE
COORDINATOR
Life Teen is a youth ministry program designed to provide a systematic catechesis that is “engaging and relevant.” Youth have ongoing opportunities to learn more about their Catholic Faith, grow deeper in their relationship with Christ and commitment to the Church, and in community with each other and the parish. Through a variety of methods such as spiritual retreats, Life Nights, social events, Christian solidarity projects, and serving in liturgical ministries, youth have the opportunity to make a mature response of Faith.

Life Teen Curriculum Schedule

- Sacred Scripture
- Person of Christ
- Paschal Mystery
- Church
- Sacraments
- Morality
- Social Justice
- Vocations

**For more information on Life Teen please visit: lifeteen.com or catholycyouthministry.com**

**Mike Cleary, mcleary@sjbcctx.org**

**Director of Youth Formation Life Teen Coordinator**
Attendance
Regular attendance and active participation in Life Teen are important factors in deepening your child’s understanding of the Faith. Out of courtesy, please let Mike know in advance if your son/daughter will not be attending a Life Night. Prior to the Life Nights, we strongly encourage youth and their families to attend the 5:30pm Mass together. Life Nights begin promptly following the conclusion of the 5:30pm Mass. Once a Life Night begins, a Student will not be allowed to leave until the conclusion of a Life Night unless a parent or legal guardian has contacted Mike prior to the Life Night.

Behavior
All youth and volunteers are expected to act charitably and in good behavior at all times. If there are learning disabilities or other circumstances that effect behavior in your child(ren), please contact Mike so we can prepare accordingly with Core Members to ensure the best experience for everyone. Parents will be called with consistent behavioral issues. If not resolved, there will be a meeting with the pastor and Mike, and parent to discuss the situation further.

Moving From Another Parish
Families coming from another parish will be asked to submit a letter from the previous parish documenting the formation received and any sacramental classes completed. This helps us assess their preparedness for future Sacraments and ensure they receive the best formation.

Youth In Need of Sacraments
Students who are still in need of the Sacrament of Baptism, Penance and/or Communion will receive their formation during the two years of Confirmation preparation. You must speak with the Director as soon as possible to discuss further details.

Dress Code
All pants, jeans, shorts, and skirts must be worn at the waist. Shorts and skirts may not exceed six (6) inches above the knees. Tights, leggings, or spandex may only be worn under shorts, skirts, or dresses that meet the requirements listed above.
Shirts and tops that are not allowed include anything “low cut, a muscle, tank, strapless, halter, off the shoulder, spaghetti straps, baggy, oversized, exposure of the midriff or undergarments, revealing, displaying vulgar, obscene, unpatriotic, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, drugs, violence, culturally biased, gang related, satanic or sexually suggestive.” (Mary Carroll High School Dress Code, 2014-1015)
Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation is a two year preparation program before receiving the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. Please inform Youth Formation Office if child(ren) have special (moving, family issues, etc.) and we will work with you to assist you in receiving the Sacraments in a timely manner.

Preparing For the Sacrament of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation takes place during the spring of the 2nd year of formation as long as all requirements are fulfilled.

In order for a high school student at St. John the Baptist to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation they must:

- Be registered for the Life Teen Program by October 5th and consistently attend Sunday evening Life Nights. (See below for attendance policies.)
  
  - All Sunday Life Nights begin once the 5:30 pm Mass has concluded and end at 8:15 pm.
  
  - Must be enrolled two complete years

- Select which Confirmation Session the student must attend outside of Sunday Life Nights.
  
  - Transformative Tuesday Sessions meet two Tuesdays a month from 6:45-8:15 pm (The Tuesday night option is only available for those in their first year of preparation)

  or

  - Super Saturday sessions meet one Saturday a month from 9:00 am-12:00 pm.

  - Must be attending consistently during the two complete years of formation. A student may not switch between the Tuesday and Saturday Sessions after the first session of the year. No exceptions will be made.

- At least one parent must attend required parent meetings listed on the calendar

- Turn in all paperwork listed below by the correct due date

- Register for Life Teen Retreat by October 27th, 2014 and attend the entire weekend of December 5-7, 2014

- Choose a sponsor and saint/biblical name and submit the correct forms for those

- Complete saint/biblical name interview during the 2nd semester of their final year of preparation

- Take part in at least one Solidarity project a semester for a total of four during the two years of preparation.
Weekly Mass

It is imperative for your spiritual wellbeing that you regularly attend Sunday Mass. The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324)

Attendance Policies

Due to the intensity of this Sacramental preparation, we have implemented a strict attendance policy. Students are required to attend all Super Saturday or Transformative Tuesday confirmation sessions (Super Saturdays- one excused absence is allowed each school year; Transformative Tuesdays- Two excused absences are allowed each school year) and at least three (3) Life Nights on Sunday evenings each month, although it is encouraged that they attend all Confirmation Sessions and Life Nights. If a child is currently attending catholic school they are required to attend at least two (2) Life Nights each month, although they are encouraged to attend all Life Nights. The above requirements regarding the Super Saturdays still apply to all catholic high school students. **Exceptions will not be made for extra-curricular activities.**

If students are absent or have special circumstances, they must contact Mike, within two weeks of the absence. The dates of these sessions are listed in the calendar on page 31. If make-up work is assigned by the Confirmation instructor, the most amount of Confirmation sessions a student can make-up is two (2) Super Saturdays and four (4) Transformative Tuesdays.

Parent Meetings

There will be two (2) mandatory meetings for parents whose youth will be receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Please make every effort to attend these meetings. Dates for these meetings are August 31, 2014 or September 9, 2014 and March 28, 2015. (March 28th will only be for parents of 2nd year students.)

Life Teen Retreat

In order to receive any of the Sacraments of Initiation (which includes the Sacrament of Confirmation), the Diocese of Corpus Christi requires that all candidates attend a retreat. To fulfill the diocesan requirement, students must attend the Life Teen retreat each fall of both the first and second year of Preparation to fulfill the Confirmation retreat requirement. No exceptions will be made. School retreats or other retreats in the Diocese will not fulfill the retreat requirement. **The fall life teen retreat for this year is scheduled December 5th-7th, 2014, and there is not a make up for this retreat.** If there is an existing circumstance, Mike must be notified prior to the first Confirmation Session of the School Year in September. If an extenuating circumstance arises (such as family wedding, funeral) please communicate this to Mike as soon as possible. The retreat will be a separate fee from the Faith Formation program. It is the responsibility of the student to sign up for the retreat and to set aside these dates in advance. Absence from this retreat will result in the youth failing to complete a full year of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation that year.
Every high school youth preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation will choose one sponsor. “…sponsors bring the candidates to receive the sacrament, present them to the minister for the anointing, and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received” –Rite of Confirmation, 5

It is considered an honor and privilege to be chosen as a Confirmation Sponsor. The role of a sponsor is to “see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.” (Code of Canon Law, 892) This should also be someone that the candidate trusts in seeking out faith advice and direction. While the popular choice is a family member or family friend, we also recommend one of the Candidate’s sponsors as well as any of our Catechists and formation leaders. This is a choice up to the candidate.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY IN YOUR SELECTION OF A SPONSOR

- The sponsor must be designated (chosen) by the candidate or parents and have the intention of the role
- The sponsor must be at least sixteen (16) years old and “have sufficient maturity to fulfill their function”
- Cannot be the father or the mother of the one to be confirmed. (Code of Canon Law, 892)
- The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation, and lives a life of harmony with the moral teachings of the Catholic Faith which includes attending Sunday Mass weekly at the parish they are registered at.
- If married, the Sponsor must be married in the Catholic Church and not practice contraception. Marriage Certificate from the church must be presented when submitting any required paperwork.
- If single, must not be living with someone outside the state of matrimony (heterosexual or homosexual relationship). Sacrament certificates must be presented when submitting any required paperwork.
- The sponsor must be in good standing with the Church and not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared
- Must not be involved in behaviors or in careers contrary to Catholic Morality (working at Planned Parenthood, worker or owner of an immoral establishment, an abortion practitioner, etc.)
- No Non-Catholics (especially non-Christians) or those who object to the faith by claiming to be Agnostic or Atheist may take the roll of a Sponsor.
- Must attend the Confirmation session on December 13, 2014 with the Confirmation Candidate.

THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR

- The sponsor is to be a role model of Christian living for the person you have sponsored, through daily prayer, virtue and active participation in parish life and liturgy
- The sponsor will nurture a close personal and spiritual relationship with the candidate
• during the Confirmation preparation year and throughout their lifetime
• The sponsor will listen to and share in the candidates maturing struggles and triumphs in living a Christian life, and keep his/herself informed on Catholic doctrine and values to be able to answer questions when they arise
• The sponsor must complete and return all required paperwork, along with their Sacrament Certificates, by November 23, 2014.
• Sponsors for second year students should make every effort to be at the Confirmation session with the candidate on December 13, 2014 from 9:30 am-11:30 am.

SAINT/BIBLICAL NAMES AND INTERVIEW
As a candidate for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the High School Youth must choose a Confirmation Name. The purpose is for the Confirmation candidate to have the opportunity to examine the lives of the Saints and to have a saint that they can relate to in their own life and struggles. They will be encouraged to build a relationship with this saint by asking him/her to pray for them throughout their life.

Students have two (2) options concerning the choice of Confirmation name
1. Choose your present, baptismal name (your first or middle name as long as it is the name of a Saint/ Biblical name)
2. Choose a Saint’s name that symbolizes a new beginning in your faith life and a connection to that particular Saint or biblical character.

It is important to invest time in discovering a Saint who demonstrated qualities during his/her life that you admire and would like to emulate in your own life. The Saint should represent the direction you feel your faith life is taking or a strength or attribute you feel you need.

All Confirmation Candidates will need to sign up for an interview about their saint with the Director of Youth Formation. These sign ups will take place during their second year of formation at one of the Super Saturday Confirmation Sessions.

During their interview with the Director of Youth Formation (Mike), High School Candidates will be asked the following questions.
Candidates should be ready to explain the following as honestly as they can:
• How would you describe your past two years of formation? What were some of the high lights? What were most challenging? What are the areas where you have grown? How have relationships in your life changed, especially your relationship with Christ?
• What are some of your favorite parts of being Catholic? What are some questions or struggles you still have?
• What are the seven Sacraments? What role have these played in your daily life?
• What is the Eucharist? What has your experience of Mass been?
• What is sin? What are ways to avoid sin?
• What is Confirmation? Who is the Holy Spirit? Why do you want to receive this Sacrament?
• What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit? What are the 12 fruits of the Spirit? How are the gifts and fruits related?
LIFETEEN

- What is Scripture? What role does the Bible play in your life and in your prayer?
- What is prayer? How do you pray? How did the Saint you have chosen pray?
- Why did you choose this Saint?
- What the life of the saint look like, including important events in their life
- How they lived out their Primary Vocation (Priest, Religious, Consecrated, or Married)
- What is one quote that they said that you like? Why do you like this quote?
- What examples from this saint will you follow to be a better disciple of Jesus Christ?
- What gifts and talents has God given you to achieve this?
- What steps will you take to achieve this? (becoming a better disciple of Jesus Christ)
- Who is your Confirmation Sponsor? How will they help you achieve this?
- What are the four primary Vocations? What do you think God is calling you to when you are done with high school? How can you begin discerning God’s will for your life?

Information on Saints:
www.lifeteen.com (search under “Blog” then “Learn About Your Faith” then “Saints & Mary”)
www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexesnt.htm
www.csn.net/advent/
www.catholic.org
www.christusrex.org
www.ewtn.com (search under “Faith” tab)
www.catholic.org (search “Saint Index”)
http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/index.htm

Books about the Saints’ lives also are available in the St. John the Baptist Youth Formation Office. Once you have selected a Saint name, complete the Saint Name Form and return it to the Youth Formation Office no later than January 24, 2015.

All interviews must be completed no later than March 7, 2015.

Christian Solidarity Projects

Christian Solidarity is associated with friendship or social charity; it is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood. Solidarity is a Christian virtue that implies the sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones. Derived from the dignity of the human person, the key principle underlining solidarity is that “everyone should look upon his neighbor (without exception) as ‘another self’, above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity.”

In keeping with the message of the Gospel to “serve and not be served,” all students are required to complete a specified number of Christian Solidarity Projects year. Students will offer their services to the community and learn to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” Christian Solidarity Projects are considered an integral part of the Youth Formation Program. These projects are held at various times throughout the year in each of the three programs.
CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Confirmation students must complete two (2) Christian Solidarity Projects per year – some projects will be provided by the parish and students must sign up as spots for certain projects may be limited.
- Failure to sign up for a project with the Life Teen program does not excuse anyone from completing their Christian Solidarity Projects.
- Service opportunities will be announced at the beginning of the school year and as new projects come up – please be attentive to all emails and announcements regarding Confirmation coming from the parish.
- It is your (student and parent) responsibility to read and act on all information provided.
- No outside hours or projects will be accepted unless prior approval from the Director of Youth Formation is made. Special circumstances must be requested before the end semester. Make sure to check with the director of Youth Formation before you work on the project.
- This is a requirement and must be fulfilled each year of both Confirmation preparation years so totaling at least four (4) service projects.

Dates of Christian Solidarity Projects Students may choose from:
Monday September 22nd- Corpus Christi Food Bank from 6pm-8pm
Tuesday October 21st- Ronald McDonald House of Corpus Christi 5pm-8pm
Monday November 24th- Mother Theresa Shelter 10am-1pm
Monday December 15th- Christmas Caroling 6:30pm (Meet at St. John the Baptist)
Tuesday January 10th- Ronald McDonald House of Corpus Christi 5pm-8pm
Saturday February 21st- Corpus Christi Food Bank 12noon-2pm
Monday March 16th- Making Color packets for Children’s Hospital 12noon-2pm

DUE DATES FOR CONFIRMATION PAPERWORK
**Even first year students should begin going through the paperwork and begin discerning a sponsor and saint name.**

Copy of Baptismal Certificate and Sacramental Information Form (First and Second Year Students): Must be returned to Youth Formation Office no later than October 11th, 2014. All candidates must provide a copy of their Baptismal Certificate with their information form. If the candidate did not receive First Eucharist at St. John the Baptist, please provide a copy of the First Eucharist Certificate, or be sure the copy of their Baptismal Certificate has notations.

Sponsor Form (page 10) (second year Students only): Return no later than November 15th, 2014. ***To be completed by High School Student***

Sponsor Verification Form (Page 12) (Second year Students Only): Return no later than November 23rd, 2014. ***To be completed by sponsor***

Saint Name Form (Page 11) (Second Year Students only): Return no later than January 24th, 2015.

Saint in-person interview (Second Year Students): Sign-up and Complete no later than March 7th, 2014.
The Parent Booster Club is a tool to encourage parent participation in the events and programs for Youth Formation. Parent participation is vital not only for the logistical success of our program, but for the ongoing formation of their children.

The Parent Booster Club serves as a committee of support for the three levels of our program: Ark, Edge, and Life Teen.

Parents are encouraged to sign up for the various support committees of the Booster Club.

If you are interested please attend the Parent Booster Club meeting on September 16, 2014 from 7:00 pm-8:00 pm or contact Mike Cleary, Youth Formation Director at mcleary@sjbcctx.org

**Retreats**

**Ark (pre-k 3 – 5th grade)** – One “Little Flock” half day retreat will be held in the Spring semester (see calendar for dates). For more information or to register for this retreat please contact Elizabeth in the Youth Formation Office (egriss@sjbcctx.org).

**Edge (6th – 8th grade)** – Two retreats will take place each year for all middle school youth. There will be a half day retreat in the fall and a full day retreat in the spring. Please check the calendar for specific dates. For more information or to register for this retreat please contact Jessica in the Youth Formation Office (junderbrink@sjbcctx.org).

**Life Teen (9th – 12th grade)** – A weekend long retreat will take place during the Fall semester (see calendar for dates), open to all high school youth. For more information or to register for this retreat please contact Mike in the Youth Formation Office (mcleary@sjbcctx.org)
SUMMER PROGRAMS

Though all levels of our program do not meet weekly during the summer, each program offers a variety of opportunities for spiritual growth, community and Christian Solidarity.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) – Open to all elementary age children, VBS is a week long, half day summer program. Dates are TBA. Contact Elizabeth in the Youth Formation Office for more information.

Edge Work Camp – Open to middle school aged youth; it is a life changing week of faith, fun, and Christian Solidarity. More details to come soon. Contact Jessica in the Youth Formation Office for more information.

Steubenville Youth Conference – Open to incoming freshmen through outgoing seniors, a weekend to grow in faith and your relationship with Jesus. Dates and more information to come in January 2015. Contact Mike in the Youth Formation Office for more information.

Life Teen Work Camp- Open to high school aged youth; it is a life changing week of faith, fun, and Christian Solidarity. More details to come soon. Contact Mike in the Youth Formation Office for more information.
Dear Parent,

Out of concern for all God’s people and in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, we have a program for the safe environment education of children and young people supported and mandated by Diocese/eparchies will establish ‘safe environment’ programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses/eparchies will make clear to clergy and members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.

Article 12 – Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

This program is called Circle of Grace. It is meant to supplement and be integrated into the excellent programs and curricula for the formation of children and young people in our schools and religious education programs. Circle of Grace aims to equip our children and young people by arming them with essential knowledge and skills grounded in the richness of our faith. This program helps children and young people to understand their own (and other’s) dignity in mind, body, and spirit.

What is a Circle of Grace?

The Catholic Church teaches that God has created each of us as unique and special. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created “male and female in God’s image” and that God saw this as “very good.” In that goodness, we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God. Adults assist children and young people to recognize God’s love by helping them to understand that each of us lives and moves in a Circle of Grace. You can imagine your own Circle of Grace by putting your arms above your head then circle down in front of your body including side to side. This circle, front to back, holds who you are in your body and through your senses. It holds your very essence in mind, heart, soul, and sexuality.

Why is it important to help our children understand the Circle of Grace?

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help children and young people understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others. Adults, especially parents, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help children and young people understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children and young people...
recognize when they are safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

**How is the Circle of Grace Program different from other protection programs?**

According to research, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen. Many protection programs focus on “stranger danger”; however, up to ninety percent (90%) of the time the perpetrator of abuse is known to the child or young person such as a relative or family friend. **Circle of Grace** goes beyond just protection by helping children and young people understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. Please feel free to contact your school or parish office if you have questions or want more information.

www.usccb.org or http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov
2014-2015 Youth Formation Calendar

The Ark (prek3-prek4) every Sunday during the school year @ 11:20-12:20 pm
   Unless noted in the calendar
The Ark (kinder-5th) every Sunday during the school year @ 9:07-10:07 am
   Unless noted in the calendar
Edge (grades 6-8) every Wednesday during the school year @ 6:30-8:00 pm
   Unless noted in the calendar
Life Teen (grades 9-12) every Sunday during the school year @ 6:30-8:15 pm
The Way (Ages 18-24) every other Thursday @ 7:00-8:00 pm

August 2014
8/21  The Way Kickoff
8/31  Life Teen Parent Meeting (Option 1)
      @ 6:30-8:45pm

September 2014
9/7   Ark Kickoff/Parent Meeting
9/9   Life Teen Kickoff
9/9   Life Teen Parent Meeting (Option 2)
      @ 6:30-8:45pm
9/10  Edge Parent Meeting
9/11  The Way @ 7pm
9/13  Confirmation Super Saturday
9/16  Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
9/17  Edge Kickoff
9/21  Edge Bible Study @ 4:30-5:15pm
9/23  Catholic Movie Night @ 6pm
9/25  The Way Meeting
9/30  Confirmation Transformative Tuesday

October 2014
10/4  Confirmation Super Saturday
10/5  Edge Bible Study @ 4:30
10/9  The Way Meeting
10/13 Catholic Movie Night @ 6pm
10/14 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
10/18  Edge Fall Retreat
10/19  Edge Bible Study @ 4:30
10/21  First Confession @ 5:30
10/28  Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
10/31  Halloween Carnival @ 7

November 2014
11/2  Edge Bible Study @ 4:30-5:15pm
11/4  Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
11/6  The Way off
11/8  Parish Festival
11/9  Ark/ Life Teen off
11/12  Edge off
11/14  Edge Bowling
11/15  Confirmation Super Saturday
11/16  Edge Bible Study @ 4:30
11/18  Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
11/26  No Edge
11/30  Ark/ Life Teen off
**December 2014**
12/2 Confirmation Transformative Tues.
12/5-7 Life Teen Retreat
12/8 Catholic Movie Night @ 6pm
12/9 Second Confessions @ 5:30
 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
12/13 Confirmation Super Saturday
12/14 Last Day of Ark
  Edge Bible Study @ 4:30
12/16 Ark Posadas @ 7 pm
12/19 Advent Program
12/21 No Ark/Life Teen
12/24 No Edge
12/28 No Ark/Life Teen
12/31 No Edge

**January 2015**
1/7 Edge Kickoff
1/8 The Way Kickoff
1/11 Ark Kickoff
1/13 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
1/18 Life Teen Kickoff
1/24 Confirmation Super Saturday
1/27 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
1/28 No Edge
  Catholic Movie Night @ 6

**February 2015**
2/1 Edge Bible Study @ 4:30
2/7 Little Flock Retreat 8-12pm
2/10 Third Confessions @ 5:30
  Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
2/14 Confirmation Super Saturday
2/18 Ash Wednesday
2/24 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday

**March 2015**
3/1 Edge Bible Study @ 4:30pm
3/7 Confirmation Super Saturday
3/10 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
3/11 Youth Holy Hour @ 7pm
3/15 No Ark/Life Teen
3/18 No Edge
3/21 Life Teen Carwash
3/22 Edge Bible Study
3/24 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
3/29 No Ark

**April 2015**
4/1 No Edge
4/3 No Edge
4/5 Live Stations @ 6pm
4/11 Confirmation Super Saturday
4/12 Family Fun Day
4/14 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
  Catholic Movie Night @ 6
4/18 Edge Retreat
4/21 Fourth Confessions @ 5:30
4/26 Edge Bible Study
4/28 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday

**May 2015**
5/3 Final Ark
  5th Grade Transition
5/5 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
5/6 Final Edge
5/10 No Life Teen
5/13 8th Grade Transitum @ 6:30 pm
5/16 First Communion Practice @ 9:30 am
5/17 First Communion @ 12:15 pm
5/19 Confirmation Transformative Tuesday
5/31 Graduation Mass @ 5:30

**June 1, 2015**
Summer schedule begins