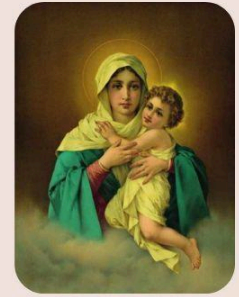




# St. Matthew & Shepherd of the Hills Religious Education Program

2025-2026  
Program Theme:

M.O.M.S.  
Mother of my Merciful Savior



## SMC/SOTH Religious Education Family Handbook

Welcome to St. Matthew and Shepherd of the Hills Religious Education program! Within our program, staff and volunteers work together with parents to increase and deepen each child’s connection with God. In addition, we strive to bring faith-centered family activities, including service opportunities, to make growing together in faith easier at home.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Dawn Doll Director of Religious Education Email: <a href="mailto:ddoll@sothparish.org">ddoll@sothparish.org</a> Cell Phone: (920)322-5066		Anna Kraus Youth Minister/ High School Coordinator Email: <a href="mailto:akraus@sothparish.org">akraus@sothparish.org</a> Cell Phone: (920) 375-1920	
Coordinates	Grades 1-8 1 <sup>st</sup> Reconciliation 1 <sup>st</sup> Communion Becoming Fully Catholic (OCIA) Safe Environment Certification Religious Ed Registrations & Payments	Coordinates	Grades 9-11 High School Confirmation Youth Group Mission Trip Service Hour Tracking & Opportunities Religious Education Fundraisers

### Mission Statement:

The St. Matthew & Shepherd of the Hills Religious Education Program will strive to nourish parishioners through human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. Our goal is to effectively engage people of all ages to foster thriving relationships with Jesus Christ and to be boldly Catholic, rooted in the Sacraments, witnessing to the power of Jesus through radically leading lives of service, prayer, study, and community.

### Goals:

- To foster students’ spiritual growth in their Catholic faith.
- To provide students with an enduring understanding of the Scriptures, creed, justice & morality, prayer and the history of our Catholic Church.
- To offer youth the tools needed for integrating faith into everyday life throughout their journeys.
- To offer your child another faithful adult connection in the Church.

## Parents' Role

- **You have the most important role in your child's life! We *cannot* do this without you!**
- **You are the primary educator** for your child(ren) in all areas of faith formation
  - Weekly Mass attendance with your child(ren)
  - Frequently receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist
  - Attend Family Nights with your children
  - Attend Parish Events as a family
- Come alongside the staff and volunteer catechists to **be partners in your child's faith formation**
- **Read and reply to communications** that come from the SMC/SOTH Religious Ed program
- **Engage your own faith** as a model for your child(ren)
  - Ask staff questions or request support for areas of interest that you have as a parent
  - Register to help our religious education program at class, at an event, in the Shepherd of the Hills Coffee Shop, or other Religious Education fundraising events

## Registration and Fees

Payment for the 2025-2026 program year is \$120/child *plus* sacrament fees.

There is a maximum base fee (before sacramental costs) of \$360 per family for members of either parish.

1 student = \$120      2 students = \$240      3+ students = \$360

Non-members have a per child fee of \$130; not to exceed \$390 per family.

**New this year: Mail your payment for religious education before July 4 and you only pay \$100 per student (maximum per family of \$300, plus sacramental fees).**

**How early payment works:**

- 1) **Complete the family and child registrations online.**
- 2) **Mail a check to SOTH/SMC Religious Education for the amount due, postmarked before July 4.**
- 3) **All checks will be held and deposited on July 5, 2025.**
- 4) **You saved \$20 per child for early registration and you helped Religious Education order the correct amount of textbooks and materials. Thank you!**

On the registration, please choose some ways your family can commit to helping:

- Religious Ed Teacher, Aide, Hallway Monitor or Substitute Catechist
- Work in the Coffee Shop at SOTH on Sundays (8-Noon) with your child
- Help plan & execute Fundraising at each Parish St. Matthew (SMC) or Shepherd of the Hills (SOTH)
- Supervise Night Drop-offs and Pick-ups on Mondays/Wednesdays

- Help with Family Nights or Youth Group Nights
- Sponsor Treats for Family Nights (2-3 times/year on M/W)
- Sponsor High School Snacks (Typically 2 Sundays a month following SOTH's 8:15AM Mass or SMC's 9AM Mass)

**Payments should be made in the form of a check or cash.**

Checks can be mailed to your parish office marked "Attn: Rel Ed fees" or sent with the child on the first night of class.

\*Catechists, full time aides and hall monitors get 1 child free (-\$100 from your total)

Payment plans are available. Financial aid is available. No family will be turned away due to inability to pay. Any financial assistance will be kept confidential. Please contact Dawn Doll with requests for assistance.

Scrip profits from July 2024-June 2025 can be applied towards a family's account. Use Scrip at SOTH/SMC to apply your proceeds to the next Rel Ed Program Year.

**In Case of Inclement Weather:**

*Please note - there will no longer be phone calls in the event of a cancellation.*

In-person gatherings will be cancelled at least 2 hours in advance.

Families will be notified through Constant Contact, our communication system. **Event cancellations will always include a text and email notification.**

- With Constant Contact, it is essential that everyone who needs to be notified of a cancellation signs up to receive texts/emails individually. You can do so at [www.myreligioused.com](http://www.myreligioused.com).
- Please be sure all necessary phone numbers are receiving text messages for cancellations; if a caregiver's number needs to be added, please sign them up on the website and contact Dawn Doll for verification.

If the Campbellsport School District calls off school or has an early release due to weather, there will be no Religious Education events that evening.

Note: There may be Religious Education events on nights when public schools have no scheduled classes; in that case, Religious Education events will still be held.



**Days & Locations:** Mondays at Shepherd of the Hills OR Wednesday at St. Matthew

**Time:** 6:15 – 7:30 pm on scheduled Religious Education class nights

**Program Goals:**

- Engage families in their faith so they might grow closer to God together
- Provide faith-centered activities to families to make growing together in faith easier
- Create strategies so that this Word can be communicated to & encountered by the participants
- Proclaim the Gospel in an effective way to participants
- Help participants come to a deeper personal understanding and assimilation of the faith message
- Help participants apply their faith to everyday life
- Celebrate with prayerful gratitude and praise to God for His Word and each other

**Curriculum:**

Grades (1-8) will have access to **Family Faith Points**, where children will win prizes for completing activities at home each week and month.

**Family Nights** will take place 2-3 times per academic year; parents are expected to attend these nights with all children birth-18+. There will be activities for the whole family, plus activities for each age group during those nights.

**Grade 2:** Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion

In class, we will use *Reconciliation: Pardon & Peace* and *Eucharist: We Give Thanks and Praise*.

At home, *Making Things Right* and *Called to His Supper* will be used to supplement sacramental learning in the classroom and encourage parental participation. (More details will be provided at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Parent Meeting in September)

**Grades 1, 3-8:** We will utilize Word of Life curriculum, which includes both print and digital editions of the student text, along with parent and family faith formation.

The focus of each grade is as follows.

- Grade 1: God's Promise of a Savior
- Grade 3: Holy Spirit and Life of Grace
- Grade 4: The Creed: Truth and our Response of Faith
- Grade 5: Liturgy and Worship
- Grade 6: The Word of God: Jesus Christ and Sacred Scripture
- Grade 7: The Moral Life in Christ
- Grade 8: The Saints and Doctors of the Church; plus start logging Service Hours for Confirmation



**Goals:**

- Teens feel encouraged to deepen and develop a personal relationship with Jesus, and the Catholic Church by asking questions, learning church teachings etc. Evident with evaluations and feedback gathered from High School Sessions.
- Teens are joyfully sharing their time and talents as they witness to the parish communities of St. Matthew & Shepherd of the Hills Evident with teens actively at Masses and parish events.
- Teens and families are invested and involved in parish events visible with volunteer positions filled for various events.
- Have a larger number of Adult Small Group Leaders on Sunday High School Sessions who genuinely care about teens and know the teen’s jobs, hobbies, worries, dreams, and questions about the faith.

**Curriculum for General High School Formation and St. Mary’s Springs (SMSA) Formation:**

General High School Formation	SMSA Formation
Grade 9: Venture Bible Study & FORMED enrichment Grade 10: Start Decision Point & FORMED enrichment Grade 11: Finish Chosen Series & Supplemental Confirmation Preparation, attend a retreat day and rehearsal day	Grade 9: Start Decision Point book Grade 10: Decision Point book Grade 11: Finish Decision Point Book & Confirmation Preparation with retreat day and rehearsal day
Focused High School Formation time on service events, reconciliation, adoration, and prayer experiences such as NEW: Hosting a Youth Mass, running teen small group studies and various teen inspired youth events this year.	

**Family Nights** will take place 2 times per academic year offered at each Parish St. Matthew (Wednesday Nights 6:15pm-7:30pm) and Shepherd of the Hills (Monday Nights 6:15pm-7:30pm); parents are expected to attend with all children birth-18+. There will be activities for the whole family, plus activities for each age group during those nights.

## High School Sunday Sessions run as follows:

**1st Semester hosted at St. Matthew following the 9AM Mass from 10am-12pm**

**2nd Semester hosted at Shepherd of the Hills following 8:15AM Mass from 9:15am-11:30am**

### If you must miss a High School Session:

1. Know that you are missed! You are needed in the small group conversations.
2. We want to help hold you accountable as you prioritize your faith life thus...
3. We ask that the following is completed if a session is missed.
  - o Let Anna know of a known absence in advance or ASAP. Please text or email Anna Kraus: youth ministry at 920-375-1920 or akraus@sothparish.org
  - o The make-up assignment is a reflection paper of 300+ words on something from our FORMED platform (filled with great Catholic content).
  - o Make-up papers are due by the next Sunday of class.
  - o Make-Up Assignments can be submitted via:  
<https://www.myreligioused.com/make-up-assignments.html>
  - o WHAT TO REFLECT ON: In AT LEAST 300 words make-up assignments should address at least two of the points below about some podcast, movie, audio file, episode, talk, or other Formed content related to faith.
    - Why did this media from FORMED stand out to you?
    - Is this FORMED media something you have heard of before about the Catholic faith?
    - How is this media from FORMED related to something from your class bookwork?
    - Why is this media from FORMED something people should listen to or not listen to?

### High School Annual Events:

- Each public school 9th-11th grader is to attend the, approximately twice a month, High School Sessions immediately following *1st Semester St. Matthew's 9AM Mass or 2nd Semester Shepherd of the Hills' 8:15 AM Mass*
- One Adoration & Reconciliation Session
- One Safe Environment Education Session
- Attendance of as many of the Family Nights hosted on Mondays (SOTH) or Wednesdays (SMC) in a year during the 1st-8th grade RE Class times (6:15pm-7:30pm) with as much of your family as possible. More details in the Elementary/ Middle School Section of the handbook if desired.
- MUST help with Religious Education Department fundraising events, which include:
  - Faris Popcorn: all checks go to St. Matthew & popcorn will be picked up at St. Matthew Fall typically Oct. Nov.
  - TBD in-person event at St. Matthew (no longer Santa Brunch thinking NEW idea!)
  - Mardi Gras/ Valentine Dinner on the Sat. before Ash Wednesday at Shepherd of the Hills Feb 14, 2025

- Coffee House: Most Sundays 8am-12pm at Shepherd of the Hills
- When in your Confirmation year (typically 11th grade) there is more expected. See details on the following page.
- We HIGHLY encourage teens to attend or participate in these events:
  - Summer Mission Trip Link: <https://www.myreligioused.com/summer-mission-trips.html>
  - The Monthly Youth Group or (NEW! High School Study) events Link: <https://www.myreligioused.com/click-here-for-youth-ministry-events.html>
  - Parish/School Fundraising/Service Events to name a few: Fall Fest, Kermis, Cabin Fever, Chili Cookoff, Bunny Brunch, Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, Picnics, Dinner Auction...  
<https://www.myreligioused.com/click-here-for-service-hours--events-opportunity.html>

**Also Annually:** ALL 9th, 10th, and 11th graders will focus on the following areas and be responsible for independently tracking/submitting the following:

- Complete at least 2 service experiences (Community or Parish) in the Summer/Fall of each year of high school (this is to help you not feel overwhelmed by the time you are in 11th grade)
- Write a service reflection essay about their Summer/Fall serving that is due in December of the current year. (This is to help you evaluate your experiences)
- High School teens are required to do 15 parish & 15 community services hours by Confirmation (30 total hours over the course of three years).
  - Since these hours should be served within the parish and within the community. Reach out to your school guidance office for service opportunities in your community,
  - Parish & Community Hours are *recommended* to be spread out throughout Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior Year (approx. 10 hours/year)
  - A standard rule of thumb is that service is helping others without compensation (being paid) for an action that you are not otherwise expected to do.
  - Common Examples of Service
    - Serving, greeting, or being a lector at Mass
    - Helping an elderly neighbor
    - Assisting in a parish or parish school brunch/dinner/ festival/picnic
    - Serving on a Mission trip
    - Assisting with yard work for someone outside your immediate family
    - Babysitting for a friend unpaid (not your immediate family)
    - Coaching, assisting coaching, or working concessions.
- The Service Hour E-Form on myreligioused.com must be used to track the service hours.
  - No physical paperwork or form will be accepted.
  - E-Form helps us track efficiently as it auto populates into an excel document
  - Link: <https://www.myreligioused.com/23-24-submit-service-hours.html>
- See website for more service opportunities - Link: <https://www.myreligioused.com/click-here-for-service-hours--events-opportunity.html>

### **Confirmation Year Information typically 11th grade:**

- Attend High School Sessions 2/month (if attending a Catholic School see section below)
- PRIOR to receiving the Sacrament, parents contact the child's baptismal parish & request an official copy of their Baptismal Certificate

- o Must be sent to Shepherd of the Hills Religious Ed office.
- o Copy must contain the Parish Seal.
- o If baptized at St. Matthew or Shepherd, no copy needed – only give the date of the baptism.
- Choose a Saint Name
- Choose a Sponsor
- Attend the Confirmation Retreat (typically in the Fall).
- Pre-confirmation interview with confirmation candidate buddy, parent, or sponsor, and Anna Kraus the Youth Minister and High School Formation Coordinator
- Teens schedule an interview with either a parent's written approval for location/date & time, or the presence of a parent, their sponsor, or a co-teen preparing for Confirmation (this allows us to meet according to Safe Environment Guidelines) and Youth Minister, Anna Kraus, via *video call or in-person*
- Required paperwork and event for confirmation year:
  - Parent Only meeting typically in August see High School Calendar for details
  - Confirmation form with sponsor information
  - Interview with sponsor sheet
  - Confirmation Retreat (A retreat must be attended within this school year prior to Confirmation.)
  - Service paper (due in December)
  - Letter/Short Answer Form for the Bishop (due in January)
  - Pre-Confirmation interview with Anna & Sponsor (due in March)

For more Confirmation information about Saint names and Sponsors and requirements of sponsors, etc., see website link: <https://www.myreligioused.com/confirmation-year-grade-11.html>

## **SMSA Confirmation Preparation:**

- Parents, please, register with us all years 9th-11th
- **Parents and teens attend the yearly SMSA 9th-11th Meeting (typically in August; see High School Calendar for details & Bulletins)**
- Confirmation form with sponsor information (due early Fall of 11th grade)
- **Please, attend 1 of the Family Nights hosted Mondays (SOTH) or Wednesdays (SMC) a year during the 1st-8th grade RE Class times (6:15pm-7:30pm) with a parent.**
- SMSA Grade 9 - Dec. Service paper help serve parish/ Religious Education events & Independently, start the Decision Point book
- SMSA Grade 10
  - o Independently, start the Decision Point book
  - o NEW! Start meeting with Anna a few times this year for discussions and accountability with going through the Decision Point book. (Likely will be after school at SMSA in the Campus Ministry Room, but TBD and will be shared on an annual basis via High School Calendar & Bulletins)
  - o Dec. Service Paper
  - o Email Anna thoughts about a Confirmation Saint Name & your Sponsor
- SMSA Grade 11
  - o Finish Decision Point book

- o Meet for discussions with Anna about the Decision Point book accountability and Confirmation Preparation. (Likely will be after school at SMSA in the Campus Ministry Room, but TBD and will be shared on an annual basis via High School Calendar & Bulletins)
  - Same as above required Confirmation section, but SMSA are not required to attend the 2 Sundays a month general formation sessions due to these meetings with Anna.
- o For most current information see SMSA page on website link: <https://www.myreligioused.com/smsa-re-9th-11th-info.html>



**Why Youth Ministry? “Youth Group” “Teen Study” “Mission Trip” “Parish Service Opportunities”**

Optional Youth Ministry activities and evenings gives your teen the chance to dive deeper into their faith because they want to, not because they are "required to" attend formation classes. The Youth Ministry events help grow the Body of Christ by preparing future leaders.

**Parent Expectations** Encourage your son or daughter to participate in Youth Ministry activities but please do not force them to do so. Respect your son or daughter if they say no when you ask them to go- but know that a "no" one week might turn into a "yes" the next session. What makes Youth Ministry fun for teens is that everyone that attends wants to be there.

**Activities** Some optional activities for teens of SMC and SOTH. Some of these activities may include: Flannel Night, Hawaiian Night, Video Game Night, Summer Mission Trip, Trivia Night, Movie Night, Board Game Night, Open Gym, Mission Trip fundraising service activities, and much more.

**Typical Middle School Youth Group or High School Teen Study schedule is:**

6:00-6:15 - Hangout in usually the St. Matthew's gym/Cafeteria for Middle School students and due to the nature of High School Studies that location is TBD various locations for High School Students

- Wait for people to arrive
- Enter via the Mill St. Gym Doors
- If hosted at Shepherd or King Pin Lanes etc. then the month's flier will explain

6:15 - Eat a sweet treat or dinner depending on the plan that month (monthly flier will explain)

6:45 - Table activity (could be card games, service activity, new prayer etc.)

7:00 - Bible Study of the Gospel for upcoming weekend OR a faith filled discussion about the current liturgical season etc.

7:15-8:15 - Gym Time/ GAMES / Teen Lead activity (ie make craft or have a theological chat)

8:15-8:30 - Closing Prayer & Pick Up Time

**RSVP to ANNA at least 48 hours before please! (The Tuesday before the Middle School Youth Group Thursday)**

Contact Anna Kraus, Youth Minister if you have more youth ministry ideas you would like to see happen.

See Calendar for monthly scheduled Youth Group events

Watch the Bulletin & use this link for most current Youth Group Events:

<https://www.myreligioused.com/click-here-for-youth-ministry-events.html>

### **Youth Ministry Summer Mission Trips**

- The best thing is for your teen to talk to other teens about their experiences with attending the Alive in You or Love Begins Here Mission Trips.
- Alive in You is typically out of state; we were in Nashville, TN in 2025
- Love Begins Here is within the Archdiocese of Milwaukee sometimes within 2 hours from home, or closer depending on host sites.
- Some teen words from the 2025 Summer Trip include: life changing, peaceful, fun, adventurous, hard work, faith filled, silly, calm, challenging, inspiring, surprising, impactful, too fast, educational, revealing, mesmerizing.

For more details, please use the link below to see website mission trip details, videos, quotes, and links then consider a life changing service filled event!

<https://www.myreligioused.com/summer-mission-trips.html>