



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
1800 Seton Drive, Crofton, MD 21114

July 12, 2018

Dear Seton Families,

May the Peace of Christ be with you!

Enclosed please find registration information for our 2018-19 High School Youth Ministry. High School Youth Ministry is open to all students in grades 9-12: those already Confirmed, those preparing for Confirmation, and those who are not.

Also included is information about our Confirmation Preparation Program. Students who are minimally entering the 9th grade are eligible to begin their preparation for Confirmation.

Of course, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. Our goal is always to work with families for maximum student success!

Wishing you peace and all good,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John".

John Russell
Director, Youth and Young Adult Ministry
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

Confirmation



"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-the Spirit of truth...The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."
JN 14:15-17; 26.

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the fullness of the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with its mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and **be prepared** to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the Church community and in the world.

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, our process of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is spread over two years, usually beginning in the 9th grade with the students receiving the sacrament near the end of the 10th grade, although we are often confirming 11th and 12th graders too, so we refer to our students as First Year students and Second Year students rather than by grade level. *Students who are preparing for Confirmation register in our High School Youth Ministry Program both their First Year AND their Second Year. Attending our Sunday Evening Gatherings and making at least one retreat is part of the Confirmation preparation process.*

Our process being two years in length is not intended to be a burden on students. On the contrary, it is meant to spread out what we ask the students to do over a longer period of time, and thus go through the process at a more relaxed pace, balancing what we ask of them with all the other commitments in their lives. And of course forming one's faith and applying it our daily lives is a lifelong process, but getting into the habit of doing that takes time. A two-year process allows the students time to develop the habit of working on their own faith on a regular basis AND time to build authentic relationships with other teens, so they are ready to say, "yes!" to the message and mission of Jesus beyond their Confirmation.

High School Youth Ministry



"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young; but set for the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching." 1 TIM 4:12-13

The Program:

The High School Youth Ministry Program at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is open to students in the 9th-12th grades, and focuses on each student's coming to a better understanding of his or her own faith. This includes centering on what it means to have a relationship with God and the Church, and how to encourage and develop those relationships.

Sunday Evening Gatherings meet at the church on (you guessed it) Sundays from 6:45-8:30 pm, beginning in September and running through April. Students seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to regularly attend the Sunday Evening Gatherings. While our Sunday Evening Gatherings are part of our Confirmation Process, they are open to all high school students; students do not need to be preparing for Confirmation in order to attend our Sunday Evening Gatherings.

Each year's Sunday Evening Gatherings are divided into three thematic sessions with a multi-week break between each session. Sessions focus on different topics, but each meeting includes scripture and how it relates personally to the lives of the students. Most of the evening is spent in smaller community groups and each group is comprised of a mixture of 9th-12th graders. At the end of our meeting, the youth journal with one of the adult leaders and then gather in large group for prayer. Friends are strongly encouraged to attend!

Retreats: We offer two weekend-long retreats each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Many of the students would say that the retreats are the best part of our program. We have fun, grow, share, are challenged, and learn on retreats. The transformation and conversion that we experience brings memories, faith, and challenges for a lifetime. Students seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation attend at least one of the retreats offered during their time of preparation, although they are encouraged to make as many as they'd like.

Parish Involvement: The students also have opportunities to participate in many areas of our parish community that don't necessarily gather them together as a "youth group." They can assist during Masses as ushers, lectors, musicians and cantors and may serve on one of the parish's numerous committees. These opportunities assist in initiating the students into our parish community on a regular basis, not just for special youth functions.

Christian Service: On the second Saturday of each month (typically), we go out into the community to spread God's love by volunteering a half-day's service at places such as shelters, soup kitchens, assisted living facilities, food banks, and the like. These are purely optional events that help the teens to connect love of God with love of their neighbor.

Invitation to All: And let's not forget...our Youth Ministry is not just for youth! Our adult leaders (catechists) receive some of the best skill building, personal support and spiritual formation available. Adults serve because they love kids and love God. They also serve because they realize how much they grow themselves. Some adults assist a couple hours a week, some much more, all depending on the amount of time they can offer. Youth Ministry gives the adult leaders an opportunity to respond to God's calling in concrete ways that really make a difference. It also offers wonderful, life-giving friendships with other adults. Please consider being a part of our team.

Registering: Students active in the High School Youth Ministry should be registered in the program, especially if they are members of the parish. However, friends are always welcome and encouraged to join us. Please contact the Youth Ministry Office for more information.

Registration is accomplished by filling out the enclosed form and returning it to the Youth Ministry Office. Registration is required for your child to be part of the Confirmation Process (you will select first or second year under "Sacrament Preparation Registration"). Be prepared to send a copy of your child's Baptismal Certificate unless he/she was Baptized or received First Eucharist (First Communion) here at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. (If you are registering for High School Youth Ministry and are already Confirmed or do not wish to be part of the Confirmation process, select "None" under the "Sacrament Registration" box.)

Registration may also be done on-line by following [this link](#).

Payments and Fees: The fee for Confirmation Preparation is \$60 per year per child up to \$120 family maximum and covers the cost of the Sunday Evening Gatherings. Retreats and extracurricular activities have their own separate fees.

There is no fee for those already Confirmed, or for those teens who wish to attend but not be part of the Confirmation process. We would ask that you still complete the registration paperwork.

Checks should be made out to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish and be included with the Registration Form. If registering on-line, you can also pay on-line through our secure GiveCentral website. [Click here](#).

As always, please do not let finances keep you from registering. Scholarships are available for families that need them. Please contact the Youth Ministry Office for details.

Next Steps:

Come to one of our Orientation Sessions offered on August 26th and September 9th, both from 6:45-8:00pm. All 1st and 2nd Year Students and a Parent should attend one of these two orientation sessions, not both.

A Special Note to Families with Children in Catholic Schools

Every year we are asked, “My child goes to Catholic School so won’t the Sunday Evening Gatherings be redundant with what my child is already getting in their religion classes?”

The short answer is, “No.” What we have heard from many students who attend various Catholic schools is that they would call what they receive in school “religious education,” and what they receive in our program “faith formation.” One does not supersede the other; on the contrary, they communicate with one another. Choosing to follow Christ and to make his mission our mission is both a head decision and a heart decision. Typically, Catholic Schools focus on theology and religious instruction – the “head stuff”, whereas our focus is primarily on the “heart stuff” – what it means to have a relationship with Christ and with an intergenerational community of other disciples...and how to develop and foster those relationships.

Also, Catholic school students are used to seeing the parish as a place where they go to Mass on weekends, but they typically identify their school as their "spiritual home." Eventually they will graduate from school and when they do, many times they feel “spiritually homeless.” As Catholic adults their spiritual home will be their parish, and parish life is so much richer than just Mass on Sunday (although Mass on Sunday is critical). Let’s start learning about that and appreciating it now, so that they will be equipped and prepared to connect with a faith community after high school.

Finally, our culture has developed a powerful sense of individualism – that my life is all about ME. This is completely contrary to the Gospel message, the teachings of Christ. We need to intentionally work on developing a sense of US. As soon as someone says, “I don’t need what Seton has to offer,” they have fallen into the individualism trap. Catholic school students have been given a great gift in having religion or theology on a weekly or even daily basis at school. We would encourage them to see what they have as a gift that needs to be shared with other teens - to ask themselves, "How can I share what I am learning at school with my peers?" What a great way to Evangelize!

Yes, our approach is intentionally different what is offered elsewhere but the results speak for themselves, and Catholic School Families who have been through our program are our best reference. We’d encourage you to ask around!

Of course we are always at your service to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. Please contact the Youth Ministry Office at 410-721-5770, ext 229.