



Family Faith FAQs

Do the Family Faith offerings for 2024-2025 replace PRP/PSR/CCD/Sunday School classes, or are they in addition to?

The new Family Faith offerings replace the programs that had been run for religious education. We are diversifying offerings and encouraging families to attend the program that's right for them. We hope Family Faith offerings spark new friendships between families across Stella Maris.

What is required by Stella Maris for my children to receive the Sacraments?

The Sacraments are a gift offered freely by God, to which we freely respond. A child's parents and the pastor bear responsibility for ensuring that children are well-prepared and disposed to fruitfully receive the Sacraments (cf. Can. 890, 914). Therefore, we offer Sacramental formation programs through St. Bernadette and St. Thomas More schools (for students enrolled in them) or through Stella Maris for families whose children do not attend either parochial school. This year, we are offering Mend (First Reconciliation Prep) in the Fall and Nourish (First Communion Prep) in the Spring. Both programs include an initial parent meeting, at-home lessons to work through as a family, and a retreat. These should not be viewed as a series of hoops to jump through, but as a simple and life-giving way for your whole family to grow in faith, while your 2nd grader becomes more and more disposed in mind and heart to receive the Sacraments. Of course, families whose children attend St. Bernadette or St. Thomas More Schools are welcome to engage in this whole family formation process.

Is anything required by Stella Maris prior to second grade Sacrament prep, or between second and eighth grade when they would do the Confirmation Prep?

We are moving away from language or models based upon "requirements." Catholic Christianity is fundamentally about a living relationship with God. He invites us into a relationship with Him and into a life of discipleship. Therefore, we are taking a more relational and invitational approach to formation at Stella Maris. Families can opt-in to the offerings that best suit their journey with the Lord and foster a deeper faith-life in their homes. Faith formation is a gift, not a burden, and we're trying to reflect this in our offerings.

What can I do to best prepare my children for the reception of the Sacraments?

The best way to prepare children for the reception of the Sacraments is to live a sacramental life at home. This includes regular Sunday Mass attendance, frequenting the Sacrament of reconciliation, praying at home together as a family, and being involved in the life of the Parish. These are the best ways for your children to experience and see what living a sacramental life is like. During their 2nd & 8th grade years there is special formation that takes place with their peers to prepare them for the reception of the Sacraments of First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation.

Is First Communion based on age or grade level? (Asking because my child is home-schooled and has a summer birthday.)

At this point, we are still utilizing a grade-level approach. Children in the second grade who wish to come forward to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are encouraged to participate in the formation program. In the case of a home-schooled child with a summer birthday, we leave this up to the discretion of the parents who know their child best (so long as the child has reached age 7).

How do I know what to sign my child up for?

You know your child and your family's needs better than anyone. We encourage all families to attend at least two Encounter Nights during the year. These are going to be fun, engaging, and foundational. Families with children in 2nd and/or 8th grade should consider Sacramental Formation opportunities. Families looking for personalized support can be paired with one of our trained catechists for family discipleship. It should be noted that you're not only signing up your child, you'll be signing up your family.

Why are you asking parents to attend programming?

In the past, many of our programs did not offer parents the opportunity to be a part of the religious education of their child at the parish. However, with simplified programming, a low time commitment and more opportunities for parents to directly engage their children with regard to the faith, we are finding that a "family-based" approach significantly impacts the formation experience of the child for the better.



Stella Maris

stellamarisfamily.org/family-faith

