



ST ANDREW
CATHOLIC
CHURCH

FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

We are so excited to have your child in our faith formation program. We hope we can all work together to bring your child closer to God through our Catholic faith. We are here because we care deeply about these students and about the love we have found in the Church. We want to be partners with you on this journey.

We hope that the information found in this handbook can help you throughout the year. We want to give you our expectations early so you can communicate any concerns early. We are here for your entire family and hope that St. Andrew can feel like home.

OUR STAFF



Virginia Olvera (Elementary & Spanish) –
volvera@standrewcatholic.org

Virginia and her family have been parishioners at St. Andrew since 2011. She and her husband Juan have been married for 29 years and have two adult children. After being a volunteer in the administrative area for 3 years, she was hired as a Faith Formation Administrative Assistant in August of 2020. Virginia also covers the reception area on Fridays. She is bilingual in English and Spanish and assists with translations. She is always available to parents and helps them to increase their children's faith. Virginia likes to watch movies, make jigsaw puzzles with her family, and loves to call her parents and friends in Mexico.



Christen Barrett (Middle School) –
cbarrett@standrewcatholic.org

My name is Christen Barrett, and I'm the coordinator for the Middle School Faith Formation program. I became a member of St. Andrew in 2006, and I was hired as the coordinator in March 2007. My husband, Greg and I were married at St. Andrew; we have two sons. I am a Master Catechist within the Archdiocese and I have received my Certificate in Catechesis from the University of Dayton. As of July 2023, I'm working on my Certificate in Youth Ministry from the University of Dayton.

Being Catholic is a huge part of my identity. I have a special devotion to the Virgin Mary. I love sharing our faith with young people, especially middle schoolers. Your child's faith development is very important to me. I'm here to help you and your child grow in faith. We are a team, and I look forward to working with you and your family. Thank you for your trust and support.

OUR STAFF

Loral Leach (Director of Faith Formation and High School Youth Minister) - lleach@standrewcatholic.org



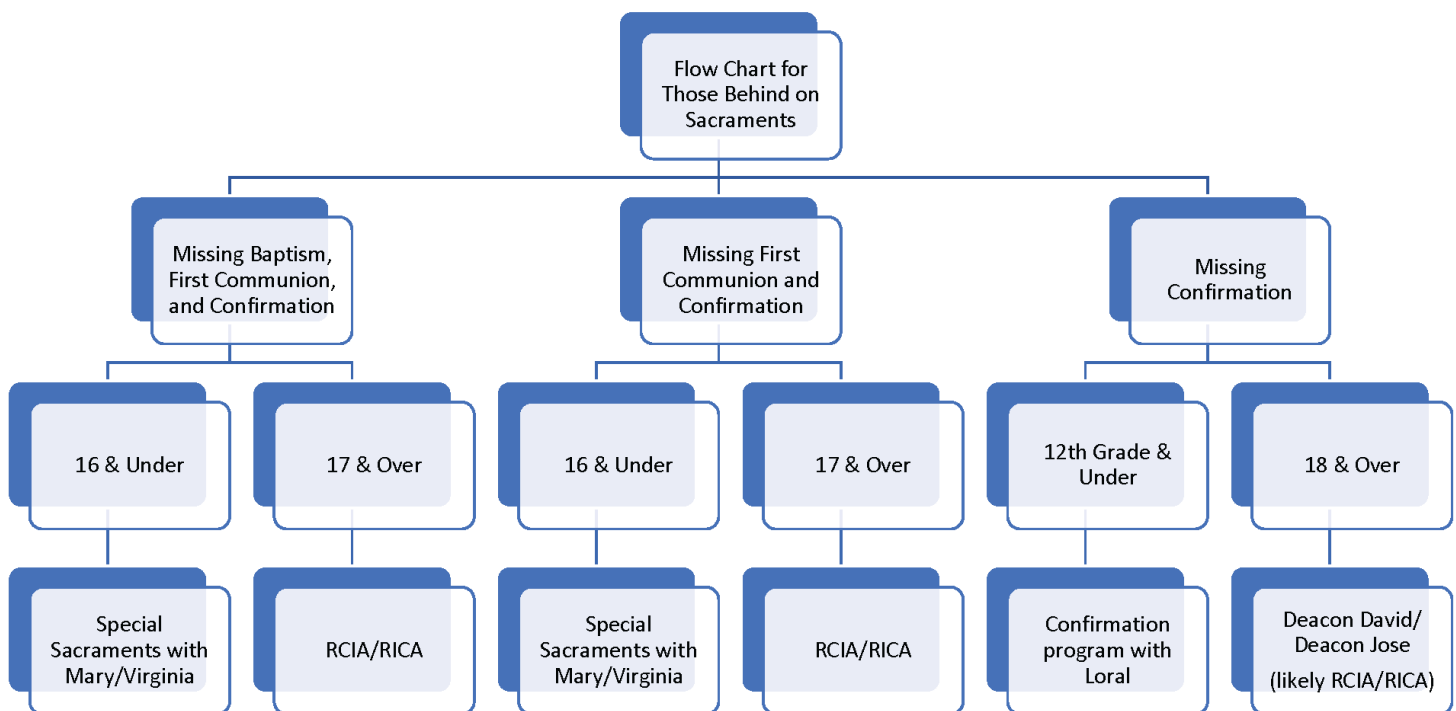
Loral Leach has been a parishioner at St. Andrew since birth. She has received all of her sacraments here including her marriage to her husband in 2017. She had her daughter in 2021 and she was baptized at St. Andrew as well. Loral graduated UGA in 2016, became the interim youth minister in October of 2016, and was officially hired January 2017. She received her Certificate in Catechesis from the University of Dayton, has almost completed her Master Catechist Certification and Certificate in Youth Ministry from the University of Steubenville, and has multiple mental health and sexual abuse trainings/certifications. She loves coffee, Disney World, St. Therese, Marvel movies, Ignatian Contemplation, and the beach.

SACRAMENTAL PREP

We have created this flow chart for students behind on their sacraments. Please utilize this to ensure your student is in the proper group.

For those who are not behind on their sacraments, sacramental preparation is a 2-year process. (Usually, 1st and 2nd grade for first communion and 9th and 10th grade for Confirmation). Your child receives the sacrament in the spring of their second year. Please contact us if you have questions about your child's class placement.

If your child is in sacramental prep, please be aware of any extra requirements / communications



*Ages based on August 27, 2023. Please reach out to the appropriate coordinator if you have any specific questions. If the student is not in high school, they are not allowed to take part (including their second year of preparation) in the high school Confirmation Program without VIRTUS certification

MASS ATTENDANCE

Throughout the years we have seen Mass attendance among our faith formation families be an issue. Due to this, our pastor and the faith formation team have decided to help hold families accountable in their Sunday obligation. Each Sunday, after Mass, your child will have their card signed by a member of the clergy. They will turn in their card at the end of each semester.

We are not doing this to add more to your plate as a family, but to help expose our faith formation children to the source and summit of our Catholic faith. "The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin" – CCC 2181. Please keep in mind that although these are not on your card, the Assumption of Mary (August 15th), All Saints Day (November 1st), the Immaculate Conception (December 8th), Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (December 25th), and Mary, Mother of God (January 1st) are also Holy Days of Obligation.

We understand that sometimes things get in the way (illness, transportation, etc.) and you may be unable to attend Mass one week. You are allowed 2 unsigned weekends before you will need to repeat the faith formation year or schedule an appointment with Fr. Juan. If you have extenuating circumstances, please let a member of the staff or clergy know. Keep in mind that these are faith formation allowances and you still may have a canonical obligation to attend Mass as a Catholic.

If you have been away for a while, no matter the reason, we want to offer our sincerest "welcome home." We are glad you are here and are excited to be a part of this journey with you. You are the primary catechist of your children and we are here to support you however we can. We believe that instilling the importance of Mass is doing just that. Please let us know if you have any questions.

St. Andrew Faith Formation | 2023-2024 Calendar

August '23							7 First Day of School for Fulton County 15 Assumption of Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31			

September '23							**4** Labor Day
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
October '23							**9** Indigenous Peoples' Day/ Columbus Day **20-22** Confirmation retreat **22** Elementary and Middle School only
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31					
November '23							**1** All Saints Day (Holy Day of Obligation) **23** Thanksgiving
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
			1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30			
December '23							**8** Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation) **15** Last Day of Fulton County Semester **25** Christmas (Holy Day of Obligation)
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31							
January '24							**1** Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation) **3** First Day of Second Semester **15** M.L. King Jr. Holiday
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				
February '24							**4** Confirmation (tentative) **11** Confirmation (tentative) **14** Ash Wednesday **16-18** Middle School Retreat (tentative) **19** Presidents' Day
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29			
March '24							**11&12** Fulton County Teacher Workday **15-17** High School Spring Retreat **17** Elementary and Middle School only **31** Easter
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31							
April '24							**1-5** Fulton County Spring Break
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30					
May '24							**5** First Communion **5** High School Only **12** Mother's Day **19** High School Only **23** Last Day of Fulton County Semester
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
			1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

Green- All Grades Meet
 Yellow- Special Date
 Red – No meeting

CLASS RULES

We ask that students

01 — Treat their catechists and fellow students with respect

This means not talking while someone else is talking, no gossip, no bullying, no cell phones during class, no bad language, etc.

02 — Bring nothing to class unless specifically told.

03 — Respect the Space

no graffiti, rough housing, abusing materials, etc. Clean up after yourself.

04 — Stay in the classroom at all times unless given permission.

05 — Refrain from bringing any inappropriate material

This includes drugs, alcohol, weapons, and clothing with drug, alcohol, pornographic, or weapon references

06 — Refrain from bringing any nut products

There are serious allergies in our preschool program. If your child brings a snack, please pay attention to the ingredients.

07 — Come to class on time

We may allow a small grace period, but being late can be a disruption to the entire class and your student will miss out on important material.

If a student breaks these rules, they may be removed from class. The parents and/or a clergy member will be contacted.

CLASS STRUCTURE

In order to make our program more engaging, your child may participate in games, crafts, etc. as well as prayer and group lessons. We utilize a small group model most weeks in middle school and high school to digest and apply the taught material.

SICK POLICY / ATTENDANCE

If there is a chance of inclement weather, please stay connected to the usual method of communication (email and/or text). This is how we will notify everyone if class must be canceled.

Please do not send your student to class if they are sick. Make up work can be provided. It is not worth getting others in the class sick, especially since we have students, catechists, and family members who have high-risk conditions.

PARKING FLOW

If you are picking up or dropping off your child, please park in a parking space. Do not pull to the side. We ask that parents sign their child in and out in Elementary and Middle School. However, if the parking lot becomes an issue, we will add High School sign in/out as well.

TOPIC SENSITIVITY / HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

Please let us know if any topics may be difficult for your child to talk about/engage with. For example, we've had lessons on God as Father that have been difficult for students whose father is deceased or absent from their life. A mental health topic may be difficult if a student has lost someone to suicide. Please let us know if you think something may come up so we can keep a special eye out for your child. Also, feel free to keep us informed throughout the year as things arise.

Please let us know of any special needs your child may have and how we can best address these needs. For example, if your child has ADD, we may be able to provide/allow a quiet fidget toy or clay. If your child has Autism, we can discuss how much to push/hold back with them in small group discussion.

We want to serve your child the best we can, so please feel free to give us any details you think could help us help them!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Parent participation

Parents are the primary teachers of their children's faith and educate by example and instruction. The Saint Andrew Faith Formation Staff and volunteers want to be a source of support and guidance to parents. Our faith formation department and adult faith formation programs have many resources available to assist you on your journey as parents to share the catholic faith with your children.

Virtus

The safety of our children is our top priority. The Archdiocese of Atlanta has programs in place to make our Church as safe as possible and give our volunteers resources to know how they can be the best eyes and ears in our community. These requirements are

- A background check every 5 years
- A one-time VIRTUS in-person class with online renewal every 5 years.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta takes a two-fold approach in the protection of children. This means that we also train all the children in our program about safety and how to spot and report abuse. This is all done at an age-appropriate level.

How to Volunteer

We need help in the form of catechists (teachers, co-teachers, small group leaders, speakers on one topic, etc.), hall monitors, substitutes, food/supplies donation, scholarship donation, reception coordinators, fundraiser supervisors, and those committed to praying for our students. If you can help out in any capacity, please email the coordinator and let us know.



PICK UP PERMISSION



School Year: _____

Child's Name: _____

Classroom #: _____

Please allow _____ Phone # _____

_____ Phone # _____

_____ Phone # _____

To pick up my child from Faith Formation Class if I/we (parents) are unable to pick him/her up.

(Por favor permita que las personas listadas anteriormente puedan recoger a mi hijo/a si yo/nosotros (padres) no podemos venir a recogerlo/a.)

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

_____ I understand that I/we, will come on time to pick up my child.

(Entiendo que yo/nosotros vendremos puntualmente a recoger a mi hijo/a).

RESOURCES FOR YOUTH AND THEIR PARENTS

PLEASE REACH OUT TO LORAL LEACH
(LLEACH@STANDREWCATHOLIC.ORG)
IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



DISCLAIMER:

The Archdiocese of Atlanta does not endorse or promote particular counselors or counseling centers, nor does inclusion on this list imply the suitability of the following professionals. This list is provided solely as a help to parish leadership ministering throughout the Archdiocese

PREGNANCY

Pregnancy Aid Clinic
Crisis/Unplanned
Pregnancy/Post abortion
healing/ abortion pill reversal
(Forest Park, Atlanta, Roswell)
Phone: 404-763-HELP (4357)

ABUSE

DFCS (Reporting child abuse): 1-855-GACHILD
Archdiocesan 24-hour Abuse
Reporting Hotline: 1-888-437-0764

OTHER

Drug Rehabilitation

www.drugrehab.com

Pornography Help

archatl.com/ministries-services/pastoral-care-ministry/pornography-help/

Teen Culture

<https://ltparentlife.com>

Cycle Charting/ GYN

<https://www.rhm gyn.com>

COUNSELING

Catholic Charities Atlanta

Spanish and English
Phone: 404-920-7725
Website: Catholiccharitiesatlanta.org

Holy Family Counseling Center

(Duluth, Roswell, Cumming, Norcross, Woodstock, Flowery Branch, Snellville, Marietta, Atlanta)
Spanish and English
Phone: 678-993-8494
Website: holyfamilycounselingcenter.com

The Summit Counseling Center

Many office locations as well as locations in schools
Phone: 678-893-5300
Website: summitcounseling.org

For The Love of Ryan

Free Parent Session, Initial Child Session, and Follow-up Parent Child Session or 3 sessions for young adults Use code STANDREW when scheduling an appointment at Summit Counseling. Contact Loral Leach (lleach@standrewcatholic.org) or a member of our clergy for additional financial resources

SUICIDE/CRISIS HOTLINES

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988
Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
Online chat service: suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat

SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves.
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing their use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings.