

**Breakaway Discipleship Group Ministry Information  
for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade St. Michael Catholic School Students**

July 15, 2019

To the St. Michael Catholic School Incoming 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Families:

Greetings in Christ from the St. Michael Catholic Church faith formation and youth ministry team! We pray that your family has had a blessed summer so far and are looking forward to working with your child this year as they move into their 8th grade year!

8th grade is an exciting time for your child as they begin to move closer to high school, but this also marks the moment in their life where they will have the opportunity to enter into our Discipleship Group Ministry for 8<sup>th</sup> grade teens - also known as Breakaway. All teens who are enrolled and participating in their Breakaway Discipleship Group, will be invited to discern their reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation over the months of December and January.

This correspondence contains important information specific to St. Michael Catholic School 8<sup>th</sup> grade families that will help you to know what the next steps are in this important journey. We look forward to journeying together with your family.

For His Glory,

Ruth Gladitsch    Bob Swift    Jean Wold    John O'Sullivan    Gabrielle Swift

## 8th Grade Breakaway Discipleship Groups

# Belonging.

This is the #1 reason why young people in America join and leave churches. We all have a desire to be known, to belong, to be safe and to be loved. This is exactly what Discipleship Groups aim to fulfill as the foundation for a life-long journey growing and learning about what it means to be a Catholic Christian in today's crazy world.

“Breakaway” is the 8th-Grade program for new teens and new leaders who are beginning the Discipleship Group (D-Group) journey. In these D-Groups, teens explore their relationship with God, the Catholic Faith, and the Sacrament of Confirmation in a safe and affirming environment. Each D-Group is led by adult mentors who commit to guiding and supporting teens on their journey of faith through the difficult teen years. It is our hope and intention that these D-Groups will continue throughout the high school years. Please visit the website for more information and Frequently Asked Questions! [www.stmacatholicyouth.org/breakaway](http://www.stmacatholicyouth.org/breakaway)

Online Registration for Breakaway is done through the STMA Youth Ministry Website:

- Families will need to create an account with STMA Youth Ministry. Instructions on how to create an account and general registration instructions are available on the website: [www.stmacatholicyouth.org/breakaway](http://www.stmacatholicyouth.org/breakaway)

\*\*All Breakaway fees are included in your school fees. Please consider offering a free-will donation to help 8th grade families in need of financial assistance. Contact Ruth for more details.

**AT A GLANCE: Important 2019-2020 dates:**

- **Sept 18:** Mandatory *Parent Only* Breakaway Info Meeting: 7pm at the St. Albert Parish Center
- **October 9:** Breakaway Kickoff Night - 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Men at St. Michael / Women at St. Albert's) *note: parents are invited for the first 10 minutes to meet their child's leader.*
- **October 11-13:** Breakaway Retreat at Lake Beauty Bible Camp (permission form will be available on September 18)
- **October-May:** see website for full schedule of the Wednesday-night meetings.

If you have questions or want more information about Breakaway or discipleship groups specifically, please contact the Director of Youth Discipleship: Ruth Gladitsch [rgladitsch@stmacatholicyouth.org](mailto:rgladitsch@stmacatholicyouth.org)

---

## **Impact Ministry for 8<sup>th</sup> Parents**

Impact is a ministry that offers support, encouragement, and catechesis in the Catholic Faith for parents as they face the challenges of raising teens today. Impact meets on three different Wednesday evenings during the year from 6:45-8:15 p.m. in the St. Michael Catholic Church Gathering Space. **StMCS parents with teens in Breakaway are expected to participate in all three Impact sessions offered throughout the school year.** The 2019-2020 Impact dates are:

- November 20, 2019
- February 12, 2020
- April 15, 2020

\*No RSVP or registration for StMCS parents are needed to attend Impact.  
Contact Bob Swift with any questions: [bswift@stmccatholicchurch.org](mailto:bswift@stmccatholicchurch.org)

---

## What about Confirmation? Here is a Detailed Explanation of how everything fits together:

Discerning the Sacrament of Confirmation, Helping Teens Grow in Discipleship, and Striving for an Authentic, Vibrant, and Personal Faith

We believe meeting teens (and families) where they're at in their faith journey and growing together in a discipleship group model of faith formation is the best preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The parish communities of St. Albert and St. Michael, along with St. Michael Catholic School have aligned efforts to enrich the formation process and provide an opportunity for true discernment regarding Confirmation. This means the Sacrament of Confirmation will be open to all students beginning in 8th grade, *provided they are actively involved in our parishes and actively living out their faith on a personal level.* This is not something strictly limited for 8th grade; Confirmation will be available to young people during any high school grade level as the individual deems readiness.

Our “**Breakaway Ministry**” is the model for growing in discipleship and will assist teens in actively living out their faith vs. simply attending “Confirmation Preparation Classes”. **In Breakaway, teens will join a small discipleship group (D-Group) as 8<sup>th</sup> graders and they will journey with one another throughout high school supporting one another in faith before and after Confirmation.** D-Groups will be led by an adult mentor who will come alongside the students and encourage them to actively live out their faith for life. To foster trust and fellowship, D-Groups are same gender and same grade participants, ideally with 6-8 members who will stick together over the course of five years.

The **Breakaway Retreat** will be held in October for all teens entering Breakaway to help build connections among the D-Groups and foster individual growth in faith by growing in love with our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. There will be Breakaway ministry nights two-three times per month with time given at each gathering for D-Groups to meet together. After a couple of months of participating in the Breakaway ministry along with actively living out their Catholic Faith, students will be invited to discern if they would like to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the following spring. Students may freely choose to receive the Sacrament in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or wait for future years (provided they are continuing to live out their faith and are participating in a D-Group).

Teens who freely desire to be confirmed and are actively living out their faith will be asked to submit a **Letter of Intent** to be confirmed, choose a **Confirmation Saint Name**, and select a **Confirmation Sponsor**. Once the letter of intent and other information is received, candidates will be asked to attend the **Ignite Confirmation Retreat**. The Ignite

Confirmation Retreat is 3 hours in length and will be held Sunday afternoon January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at St. Michael Catholic Church. Both parents and sponsors are asked to fully participate in the Ignite Retreat. If a teen discerns that they are not ready to be confirmed, they are still invited and encouraged to remain involved in our youth ministry and in their discipleship group. If they continue with their D-Group into high school they will be invited the following year to once again discern being confirmed.

As the primary educators and evangelizers of their children, parents are the most influential people in the lives of their children. It is essential that the whole family grows in discipleship. To support parents, we provide programs to help families grow together in faith. At St. Albert's, family participation includes attending the **TLC (*Total Lifelong Catechesis*)** Family Formation Program. At St. Michael's, family participation takes the form of either the **LIFT (*Learning in Faith Together*)** Family Formation Program or attending the **Impact Ministry** for 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents. Impact is a ministry that offers support, encouragement, and catechesis in the Catholic Faith for parents as they face the challenges of raising teens today.

St. Michael Catholic School will continue, as it has in the past, to offer a classroom experience and appropriate classwork that will reflect this journey of its students towards Confirmation. Your child's religious education will complement their Discipleship Group experience outside the classroom and provide a place for them to further explore the beautiful mysteries of their faith.

While StMCS students will be receiving a special Confirmation-specific focus in many of their lessons, young people are welcome to choose to discern that 8th grade is not the right time for them to request the Sacrament and instead choose to be Confirmed in 9th grade or later on in high school. Choosing to not be confirmed is a free choice that is given to each of our young people (nobody should be "forced" to be Confirmed). It is not uncommon for an 8th grader to wait one year (or maybe more) until they are certain that they do indeed desire to be Confirmed. Over the winter following the Breakaway Retreat, please encourage your child to pray and discern what they desire their own journey towards Confirmation to be.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child this coming year! Please know that you are in our prayers!

---

## **Sacrament of Confirmation: AT A GLANCE**

Starting in December, 8th Grade teens who are *actively living out their faith* are invited to discern being confirmed. This discernment process includes:

- Active participation in a **Discipleship Group through the Breakaway Ministry** of STMA Catholic Youth Ministry
- Parental participation in **Impact Ministry for 8th Grade Parents** (3 Impact Sessions Each Year)
- Faithful participation in the **Sunday Eucharist**
- Write a **Letter of Intent to be Confirmed\*** to Fr. Richards and the Parish Staff (January 2020)
- Choose a **Confirmation Sponsor\*** and a **Confirmation Saint Name\*** (January 2020)
- Attend the **Ignite ~ Confirmation Retreat** for *parents, teens, and sponsors*. The date for the Ignite Retreat is Sunday January 26, 2020 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at St. Michael Catholic Church

*\*Teens participating in the Breakaway Discipleship Group Ministry will receive a Confirmation Discernment Packet in December, 2019. This packet will include everything needed to begin the process of moving towards the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of 2020. **Once Breakaway Registration is complete, parents and teens will not need to complete anything or submit any sort of "registration" for Confirmation prior to January, 2020.***

If you have questions or want more information about the Sacrament of Confirmation specifically, please contact Bob Swift (St. Michael) [bswift@stm catholic church.org](mailto:bswift@stm catholic church.org) or Jean Wold (St. Albert) [stalbertmnfaithformation@gmail.com](mailto:stalbertmnfaithformation@gmail.com)