

Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)



What faith formation options are there for my child this year?

We are pleased to offer dynamic, engaging, in-person classes for our kiddos in grades K-8. We have a couple of family friendly options.

For those children that are on grade-level with sacraments (baptized by age 6; have received First Communion if in 3rd grade or above), parents may register their children for one of the following:

- Track A = in-person classes on Sundays from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm in the St. Mary of the Mills parish school. 2022-2023 Track A classes meet on the following dates: 9/11, 9/25, 10/9, 10/23, 11/6, 11/20, 12/11, 1/8, 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, 4/23, and 5/7.
- Track B = in-person classes on Sundays from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm in the St. Mary of the Mills parish school. 2022-2023 Track B classes meet on the following dates: 9/18, 10/2, 10/16, 10/30, 11/13, 12/4, 12/18, 1/15, 1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/12, 3/26, 4/16, 4/30, and 5/14.

In addition to these classes, all children are asked to attend additional formation events throughout the year. These events provide an experience of life as a Catholic outside the traditional classroom setting and are a very important piece to our ministry.

**Children will prepare to receive First Communion (2nd grade) and Confirmation (8th grade) in both tracks.*

If your child:

- is age of 7 or older (2nd grade or above) and has never been baptized,
- is in grade 3 or above and has not received First Holy Communion,

we welcome your child to into our ministry for Special Sacramental Preparation (SSP)!

These in-person classes meet on Sundays from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm in the St. Mary of the Mills parish school on the following 2022-2023 dates: 9/11, 9/25, 10/9, 10/23, 11/6, 11/20, 12/11, 1/8, 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, 4/23, and 5/7. There are several required events for Special Sacramental Preparation throughout the year.

**High school age children (grades 9th-12th) needing sacraments will prepare during high school youth ministry. To learn more about our high school ministry and to register, go [here](#).*

How can I register my child for faith formation and sacramental preparation?

Registration for K-8th grade faith formation is open now through Friday, August 25th.

You can sign-up online here: stmaryslaurel.org/kids.

Some registration tips:

- You will receive an email with a copy of your registration (one for each child) for you to keep for your records.
- You can make your payment online during the registration process or bring it to the parish office.
- Our required release forms are integrated right into our registration process.

- For those children preparing for First Communion or Confirmation, you will need your child's baptism certificate (or an electronic copy) to register.

What Mass should my family and I attend?

Any Mass is a great mass to attend together as a family! We recommend the 9:00 am Mass, which is specially tailored to families on Sunday morning. After Mass, children can participate in our Kids Ministry to grow together in their faith and friendship.

What if my child misses a class? Can he/she attend the class of the other track?

We are sorry he/she couldn't attend our morning of fun! Please contact your child's catechist (or look out for their weekly summary email) to find out what you missed and how you can make it up at home as a family. We ask that your child does not attend the other track. This allows us to maintain our safety protocols and to keep consistent the relationship building within each class.

How many times can my child be absent?

We hope your child has so much fun in our ministry that they never want to miss! We also understand that illnesses, trips, events, and other things may arise that will prevent your child from attending class. Please keep absences to a minimum. We love to see your child's smiling face during each class time and don't want them to miss a moment of the fun! For children preparing to receive sacraments, excellent attendance is particularly important; children should have no more than 2 absences in those programs.

What if my child cannot attend faith formation on Sunday's because I work?

We understand that everyone's situation is unique. Please contact us at kids@stmaryofthemills.org and we will work with you to find the best way to support faith formation for your family. We do have a home study option for those who cannot attend in-person.

I'd love for my kids to participate, but I cannot afford the fee at this time.

We are so glad you want to join us! No one will ever be turned away from our program for financial reasons. Simply contact Laura Doscher at kids@stmaryofthemills.org and we will share how you can easily register without the fees.

When should I keep my child home from class?

We welcome children to be present at class as much as possible; however, we recognize that there are times when a child must stay home both for the child's best interest and that of others. We ask that you keep your child home when any ONE of the following are observed within 24 hours of the start of class time:

- fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- sore throat
- cough
- difficulty breathing
- diarrhea or vomiting
- new onset of severe headache (especially with fever), or
- new loss of taste or smell

For persons with chronic conditions such as asthma, the symptoms should represent a change from baseline.

How do I find out if inclement weather causes a change to the schedule?

In the case of inclement weather or other schedule changes, look for an email and text message from our staff to the contact information you provided on your child's registration.

What do I do if I need to pick up my child early from class?

If you need to pick up your child early, please email your child's catechist at least 24 hours prior, if possible. You can check in with our Kids Ministry receptionist upon entering the building. The receptionist will assist you.

I am an adult in need of a sacrament or wanting to become a member of the church. Is there an option for me?

Absolutely! For more information about adult faith formation, sacramental preparation, or parish registration, contact Ali Poteet, Director of Faith Formation, at apoteet@stmaryofthemills.org.

Who are the volunteers working with my children?

The Catholic Church and Archdiocese of Washington have strict procedures before a volunteer can be present in any ministry with children. All volunteers have been required to participate in training through the VIRTUS program, which empowers organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the Church in addition to completing the Protecting God's Children' workshop and a background check. Volunteers have also been trained and coached by our experienced parish staff.

My child is now in high school. What's next?

All 9th-12th graders are welcome to join us for “The Eleventh Hour” - our youth group here at St. Mary’s! We meet the first 3 Sundays of the month from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. After the 5:00 pm Mass, we enjoy a meal together in the Breen Room, followed by a short talk and some time for prayer and Adoration. We always wrap up with social time in the Keesler Center Gym. For more information, go to stmaryslaurel.org/youthgroup.

Who can I contact if I have other questions?

Please email Laura Doscher, our Coordinator of Kids Ministry, at kids@stmaryofthemills.org.