

Dear 7th & 8th Grade Families,

Welcome to youth ministry. I am Makenzie Conner. I oversee 7th - 12th grade as well as the Young Adult Ministry at St. Patrick - St. Anthony Parish. We are excited to be able to offer our Confirmation Discipleship Small Groups to your 7th or 8th grade student(s).

**Here is what the Catholic Church is currently facing:**

- 13 is the median age when someone has chosen to leave the faith
- by age 17, 85% of students have left the church
- 52% of youth have little to no trust in organized religion

**Here is what we know about teenagers:**

- they are seeking to be understood
- they are looking for a place to belong
- they are looking for guidance
- they need a place to be transparent
- they long to engage in critical thinking regarding faith and life

Knowing what we are facing and to meet these needs the parish is striving to form disciples in the faith. A disciple is someone who intentionally lives their faith daily and brings others alongside. We offer YDisciple small groups for confirmation preparation. Starting students in 7th grade gets them used to small groups for 8th grade where all the Confirmation preparation takes place. Knowledge of the faith is part of the program, but we know a student needs to belong and believe first in order to be able to learn. We also create small group environments where teens are known, loved, and cared for by their leaders and other students. Middle schoolers are unique and the small group topics and discussions are designed for students ages 11 to 14.

Parents are the primary educators of the faith and studies show that no one has more influence on a teenager than their parents. We involve parents in what their student is learning with weekly letters and communication. We also seek parent involvement through volunteering. Based on feedback, this year registration will be one form for your entire family grades K-12. We invite you to register your student for 7-8 grade youth ministry.

Please know I am available if you have any questions or concerns about the upcoming year. I am excited to serve and walk alongside you and your family in this journey of faith. If you

would like to discuss what is required of a student in Confirmation in more detail prior to signing up, please let me know so we can set a time to meet.

**Registration for this year's 7th and 8th grade YDisciple small groups are now open. Below is more information. Please register by September 6th using the QR code below or online at [stpatsgh.org/faith-learning/middle-school/](http://stpatsgh.org/faith-learning/middle-school/)**

- 7th & 8th grade small groups will meet on Tuesday nights from 7:00 - 8:30 PM starting on October 1
- We will meet in the youth center.
- There will also be monthly Family Faith Formation Sundays after the 11:00 AM Mass.
- Please plan to attend one mandatory parent meeting for 7th & 8th grade: either September 22 or September 25.
- Keep an eye out for our fun kickoff event for 7-12 grade on Sunday, September 29.
- 8th grade students are required to attend small groups, as well as attend the Confirmation Retreat, and Sponsor Day of Reflection (which includes an interview with Fr. Dan to prepare for the sacrament).

**If you are receiving this letter in error please let us know by completing the Parish Database Form via the QR Code below or [stpatsgh.org/faith-learning/middle-school/](http://stpatsgh.org/faith-learning/middle-school/)**

- you have moved parishes
- have left the Catholic Church
- received the letter but your student isn't in 7th or 8th grade
- your student is receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation elsewhere
- your student isn't ready for Confirmation yet
- or another reason. If you would like to speak with someone please email Makenzie at [mconner@stpatsgh.org](mailto:mconner@stpatsgh.org)

**QR Code for Faith Formation  
Registration**



**QR Code to update Parish Database  
Form**



Blessings,  
Makenzie Conner  
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