

**Breakaway Discipleship Group Ministry Information
for 8th Grade St. Michael Catholic Church Families**

July 15, 2019

To the St. Michael Catholic Church Incoming 8th 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 8th 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 Church 8th 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

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
- Families will also need to register for LIFT **QR** Impact through this same account. See following pages 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 ten 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

Impact Ministry for 8th 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.

The 2019-2020 Impact dates are:

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

*Registration available online through your family portal. You will only need to choose Impact **OR** LIFT. Contact Bob Swift with any questions: bswift@stmccatholicchurch.org

LIFT Family Formation

St. Michael's core faith formation program is LIFT (Learning In Faith Together). LIFT is a parish-wide, family catechesis program focused on strengthening our relationship with God and neighbor, building the parish community, and helping parents become the primary evangelizers of their children ([CCC 2223-2229](#)). Parents and children (grades K-8th) attend LIFT once a month together from October through April on their selected LIFT Session day (Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m. / Monday or Wednesday 6:30-8:30 p.m.). LIFT follows a five year cycle based on the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and one year on Sacred Scripture.

This year at LIFT we will be covering the second pillar of the Catechism which is the Sacraments. Middle school teens in LIFT will be using the *YOUCAT* teen catechism and the *Bible* as their primary resources. Children at LIFT in K-5th grade will be using the *Family of Faith* series from Sophia Institute. Additional activities, materials and resources are sent home with families to be used throughout the rest of the month. The full Faith Formation Calendar for 2019-2020 will be available on the parish website in August.

Families with a teen in 8th grade Breakaway must participate in either LIFT or Impact.

The Scheduled LIFT Dates for 2019-2020:

LIFT Kickoff Event: Sept. 25 (6:00-8:00 p.m.) (Includes Mass & Dinner)

October LIFT: Sept. 29, 30, Oct. 2

November LIFT: Nov. 3, 4, 6

December LIFT: Dec. 2, 4, 8

January LIFT: Jan. 6, 8, 12

February LIFT: Feb. 2, 3, 5

March LIFT: 1, 2, 4

April LIFT: Mar. 30, Apr. 1, 5

*Registration is available online through your family portal. You will only need to choose Impact **OR** LIFT. Contact Bob Swift with any questions: 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 church 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 8th 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 8th 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 26th, 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 8th 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.

While participating in Breakaway, 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. Teen who elect to not be confirmed in 8th grade still participate in their D-Group as normal and continue to grow in their faith and in their relationships with their group!

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
- Participation in one of these ministries:
 - **LIFT Family Formation** (for teens and parents)
 - **Impact Ministry** (just for parents).
- 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@stmcaholicchurch.org or Jean Wold (St. Albert) stalbertmnfaithformation@gmail.com