

**SAINT BRIDGET OF SWEDEN PARISH
FAITH FORMATION 2024-2025
THE YEAR OF PRAYER**



Mission

We, the Family of Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish, Cheshire, Connecticut, building on our rich heritage of Catholic Faith, center ourselves in the Eucharist and honor God in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Vision

Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish Family is a spiritual home and a center of missionary outreach where all may come to be nourished in the midst of their journey. All who come are welcomed with warmth, harmony, and belonging and will know they are home.

Dear Friends:

I am so excited to WELCOME YOU to the 2024-2025 Faith Formation Year at your home parish, Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish. That word “home” is very important in our spiritual life: not only is the Catholic Church our home, but this parish-Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish-is also our home. As your Pastor, it is my pledge to you that I, Joseph Gagliardi our Director of Faith Formation, and the entire Pastoral Team of our Parish Family are here to walk with you on this journey of faith and support you in any way we can; not just in educating your children in the faith, but in any way we can help you as well. Through our Baptism we are incorporated into the life of the Church and become members of the Body of Christ. All the more reason to care for one another and to assist one another on this journey of growing in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Important Update for 2024-25

To better serve your family, especially your children, we are expanding our ministry to include families. **This year, our expectation is that ONE Faith Leader from your family-that is, one parent, grandparent, guardian, or godparent who is responsible for the spiritual growth of your child or children-will be present once a month for our Family Day Gatherings.** While the expectation is for just one person to take on this role, we say the more the merrier! Mom and dad, dad and grandma, or whoever else, is welcome to attend Family Day Gatherings to grow and walk with your children on this journey.

What will this look like?

During a Family Day Gathering, Faith Leaders from our families will drop their children with their catechists, then meet in the Parish Center for food and community, a large group teaching will be given centered on the topic the kids are learning, and then we will break into small groups to discuss the topic further. In the meantime, kids will be growing in faith in the classrooms. While the expectation is to see parents just about once a month, kids will still come approximately twice a month as they have been.

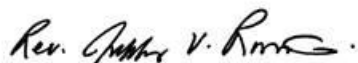
Gone are the books! I am so excited to share with you that we have decided to develop our own curriculum. As we looked to the future and heard the invitation from the Archbishop to put out into the deep and to think outside the box, we realized rather quickly that the books only serve to make it feel like school. As important as lessons are, faith formation is more about building a relationship with the Lord than following some academic program. We believe a three year cycle will help us all deepen our relationship with the Lord and our understanding of the faith. We will start by focusing on prayer for the first year, followed by a year on the Bible and Salvation History, learning about the scriptures and applying them to our daily lives, and then a third year on the moral teachings of the Church and the sacraments. I am grateful to the group of teachers from St. Bridget School and seasoned catechists from our parish who have worked so hard over the past couple of months to develop our own curriculum.

Catechists will be receiving training several times throughout the year so that they too are better equipped to bring the Gospel message to your children. **Together, catechists and parents will be like two lungs breathing air into the spiritual lives of our kids. I am so excited to see what God has in store for our families!**

The Holy Father Pope Francis has declared 2024 the “Year of Prayer.” **Prayer is the open door into relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** It is fitting, then, that in 2024-2025, we are adjusting our Faith Formation curriculum to be focused entirely on prayer.

Thank you for the excitement and enthusiasm with which you will face this new endeavor and I am confident that together we can succeed in growing in relationship with the Lord and with one another.

God’s blessings,



Father Romans

Table of Contents

Clergy, Staff, and Contact Information.....pg 5

Faith Formation Calendar.....pg 6

Program Outline.....pg 7

Sacramental Guidelines and Policies.....pg 8

Faith Formation Policies.....pg 10

Pact of Christian Living.....pg 13

Weekly Home Gospel Reflection.....pg 14

Resources for Home.....pg 15

Clergy

The Reverend Jeffrey Romans, KCHS, Pastor

The Reverend Sean Yates, Parochial Vicar

Mr. Jerry Maust, Deacon

Faith Formation Staff

Mr. Joe Gagliardi, Director of Faith Formation

Mr. Anthony Niglio, Youth Minister

Mrs. Pam Todman, Administrative Assistant Faith Formation

Mrs. Tonya Pelletier, On-Site Personnel

Parish Office Phone: (203) 272-3531

Emails: jgagliardi@cheshirecatholic.org

ptodman@cheshirecatholic.org

aniglio@cheshirecatholic.org

Faith Formation Office Phone: (203) 272-6504

Faith Formation Calendar 2024-25

Sunday Session 1	8:30-9:45
Monday Session 1	4:00-5:15
Monday Session 2	5:30-6:45
Confirmation (Sunday)	5:00-6:30

Dates	Type	Topic
9/8, 9/9	Family Day	Quiet
9/22, 9/23	Regular Class	Form Prayers
10/6, 10/7	Family Day	When to Pray
10/20, 10/21	Regular Class	Devotional Prayer
11/3, 11/4	Family Day	Lectio Divina
11/17, 11/18	Regular Class	Relationship with Jesus
12/8, 12/9	Family Day	Intercessory Prayer
12/15, 12/16, 12/17	Parish Mission Days	All Families, 6:30 PM (Choose 1 Night)
1/5, 1/6	Regular Class	The Saints
1/12, 1/13	Family Day	The Rosary
1/26, 1/27	Regular Class	Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving
2/9, 2/10	Family Day	The True Presence
Sunday 2/23	Confirmation Only	Regular Confirmation Class
Monday 2/24	<u>ALL KIDS K-8</u>	Adoration, ALL KIDS K-8 (Time TBD)
3/2, 3/3	Family Day	Relationship with Jesus
3/16, 3/17	Regular Class	What is the Mass? Why Go?
3/30, 3/31	Family Day	Teaching Mass (CHOOSE 1) (Sun: 12 pm, 4pm; Mon: 6 pm)
4/6, 4/7	Family Day	Easter/Holy Week

Special Retreat Dates

Date	Event	Time
2/1	3 rd Grade Reconciliation Retreat	1:00-4:00
4/5	10 th Grade Confirmation Retreat	10:30-5:00
4/26	3 rd Grade Communion Retreat	1:00-4:00

Program Outline 2024-2025: The Year of Prayer

The Holy Father Pope Francis has declared 2024 the “Year of Prayer.” **Prayer is the open door into relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** It is fitting then that in 2024-2025, we are adjusting our Faith Formation curriculum to be focused entirely on prayer.

Kindergarten through 8th Grade

Kids will come approximately twice per month for classroom instruction as they have the last number of years. During Family Days, they will be in class while parents/guardians develop their own spiritual strength to better share the faith with their kids.

Our faith is best passed-on through encounter with Jesus Christ and witness to him through speech and example. Because of this, we have elected to step-away from textbooks for 2024-2025 for our core program. During classroom instruction, kids will be taught using a combination of activities, video, and discussion.

Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the perfection and strengthening of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit we all receive at Baptism. It emboldens us to live out our faith in the world as Christians and gives us an openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

For Confirmation prep in 2024-25, we will be using a video series called “**The Search Begins**” (available for your viewing on Formed.org) in combination with “Experiences”, which are meant to give practical examples of living out our faith. “The Search Begins” curriculum is journal-based and focuses on developing a relationship with Jesus Christ. Each teen in the program will receive a journal.

We understand that teens are at different stages in their spiritual lives. To better serve teens at all stages, they will be placed into classes according to where they are on their journey of faith. Both parents and teens will be surveyed so that we can have the best idea of where to place them. St. Augustine said that mankind was created “in a state of journeying.” We are all seeking and journeying towards God and are each at different points in that journey. Confirmation prep will therefore be focused less on information and more on fostering relationship with Jesus Christ.

Homeschool

Recognizing that certain circumstances may make it difficult for some families to participate in the program model for 2024-25, a homeschool option will still be made available for non-Sacramental years using the Alive in Christ textbook series for grades 1-6 and the Word of Life textbook series for grades 7-8. **The expectation is that assessments be completed and turned in by each Homeschool Family Day and that your family is participating in the Sacramental life of the Church (i.e. attending Sunday Mass).**

Homeschool families will be required to come approximately once per quarter for Homeschool Family Gatherings. See the below schedule:

Date	Event	Time
6-Oct	Homeschool Family Day	2:00-3:00
8-Dec	Homeschool Family Day	2:00-3:00
9-Feb	Homeschool Family Day	2:00-3:00
3/30, 3/31	Family Day	Teaching Mass (CHOOSE 1) (Sun: 12 pm, 4pm; Mon: 6 pm)

Sacramental Guidelines and Policies

In years where kids are receiving the Sacraments, it is required that they receive in-person instruction at the parish. There is not a homeschool option during years of Sacramental preparation (3rd Grade, 9th Grade, and 10th Grade).

First Communion (3rd Grade)

Kids typically make their first Reconciliation and receive first Communion in 3rd Grade. **In Communion (the Eucharist), Jesus Christ is truly present: body, blood, soul, and divinity. The Eucharist is not a symbol of Jesus, but in a mysterious yet substantive way is actually him.**

To receive first Communion, a child must have been baptized into the Catholic faith or received Baptism from another Christian denomination. Those who may have been baptized in another denomination will need to make a Profession of Faith. Their profession welcomes them into the bounds of the one true Church founded by Jesus Christ himself, the Catholic Church. If your child was baptized in another denomination, please contact us prior to the start of the academic year to discuss.

If a child is unbaptized, he or she will need to receive Baptism before receiving the other Sacraments. Please contact the parish office at (203) 272-3531 to schedule a Baptism. If this is your first child being baptized, you will be asked to complete a 1 hour in-person baptism course prior to the Baptism.

Kids receiving their first Communion are required to participate in 2 retreats from 1 PM to 4 PM at Saint Bridget’s School. The retreat dates are February 1st, 2025 and April 26th, 2025, subject to change. Please block-off your calendars for these dates.

Confirmation

Teens typically receive Confirmation in 10th Grade. To receive Confirmation, a child must have received their first Holy Communion.

Teens preparing to receive Confirmation are required to participate in a retreat from 10:30 AM to 5 PM at Saint Bridget's School. The retreat date is April 5th, 2025, subject to change. This is a requirement which comes from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Teens preparing to receive Confirmation are required to complete 15 hours of service spread over two years at the parish or participate in the Youth Group Mission Trip over the summer. Service hours completed in 8th grade *can* be credited. The purpose of these hours is not to check-off a box, but to involve teens in the life of the parish. The following is a list of approved ways to gain service hours:

Altar Server (short training required) 1 hour

Choir (practice required) 1 hour

Lector (short training required) 1 hour

"Coffee And" 2 hours

Bingo 4 hours

Rosary Group 1 hour (from 4:30-5:00 before class. Still credit for 1 hour)

Family Day Server 1.5 hours

Faith Formation classroom aid 1.5 hours

6th-8th Youth Group Volunteer 1.5 Hours

St. Vincent de Paul (ask for details)

Mass Greeter (Serve twice per month) 1 hour

Service hours must be signed-off by an adult responsible for the service at the time of completion, and then submitted to the Faith Formation Office.

Sponsors

Your child will need to select a sponsor for their Confirmation. This is someone who your child should look-up to in faith, by whose presence on the day of Confirmation will say "This boy or girl is ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation."

The sponsor is expected to...

- support the Candidate on his/her Faith journey.
- help the Candidate to apply the teachings of Christ in daily life.
- continue to minister to the Candidate long after the ceremony of Confirmation.

The requirements for a sponsor according to the Code of Canon Law are as follows:

REQUIREMENTS: The sponsor must...

- have received the Catholic Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist
- attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation

- have attained the required minimum age of sixteen
- not be the parent of the person being confirmed
- have a manner of life that is in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken
- If married: The current marriage is canonically valid and recognized as such by the Catholic Church

We understand the desire to select a friend or family member who is of importance in your child's life, but who may not meet the above criteria. If there is someone you know who may want to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church or be fully initiated, please contact our office at any time so we can help.

Sponsor Forms/Certificates (interchangeable) are attained from the sponsor's home parish. Your child should have their sponsor contact their parish's office to attain.

Your child will need to select a Saint's name to take on the day of Confirmation. This harkens to moments in the bible where there is a fundamental change in someone and the Lord bestows them with a new name (Simon to Peter, Abram to Abraham, etc.). Your child should select a Saint who has or will have meaning in their life. **They will need to complete a poster project which will highlight why they selected this Saint. Materials will be distributed during class.**

All service hours, the Saint poster, and sponsorship forms must be completed and submitted to the Faith Formation Office by no later than February 1st, 2025. Your cooperation in this ensures our office can efficiently serve your children and family.

Faith Formation Policies

Attendance

To ensure that we are doing our job of building faith in our kids, they must be attending class. We do recognize that sometimes illness or life events may make attending class impossible or imprudent. **Because of this, we allow 4 absences for kids throughout the year. A 5th absence will mean the year must be repeated.** The director and pastor reserve the right to assess excessive absences on a case by case basis.

Behavior and Respect

The Catholic Church teaches that Justice is giving one what is due to them. In the spirit of Justice, kids are expected to treat catechists, staff members, clergy, and their fellow students with respect. Disrespectful behavior may result in a child being sent to the Faith Formation Office or the pastor, and parents being contacted. Continually disrespectful or disruptive behavior may result in removal of a child from the program. Future admittance to the Faith Formation program will be at the discretion of the program director and pastor.

We are blessed at our parish to have a school facility available for Faith Formation. The articles within the building are themselves the property of the St. Bridget School teachers and students and must be respected as such. Kids are not allowed to touch or use anything which belongs to

the school unless otherwise directed by their catechists or other Faith Formation leaders. Failure to respect school property may result in disciplinary measures and/or parents being contacted.

We recognize that some children may have challenges with their health, learning, focus, or clinically diagnosed behavioral issues. Please notify us of any such challenges prior to the start of the academic year so we can work together to overcome them.

Arrival and Dismissal

It is required for kids Kindergarten through 6th grade to be dropped-off by a parent/guardian and picked-up in the building by a parent/ guardian.

7th and 8th graders are welcome to walk into and out of the building at time of arrival and dismissal through the main entrance to the school.

9th and 10th graders are welcome to walk into the building through the drop-off entrance near the athletic fields or the office entrance, but must be dismissed through the office entrance.

Students who need an early pick-up or pick-up by an adult not on the list of approved adults must have a parent/guardian fill out the proper paperwork with the on-site staff the day of or prior to when this is to occur.

Cell Phones

The use of cell phones is not permitted during class time. Earbuds/Air Pods must be removed. If a child needs to communicate with a parent or guardian during class time, they may ask to be excused and use the phone in our office. Failure to abide by this policy will result in confiscation of the device by the catechist or staff member with return of the device at the end of the class. Notification of a parent or guardian will be done at the discretion of the catechist or Faith Formation Office. A catechist may collect devices before the start of class and distribute at class's end.

Food and Drink

Food and drink other than water are not permitted in the classrooms. Students who bring anything other than water will be asked to save them for later.

Bathrooms

The bathrooms are to be used by kids as necessary. The outside of the bathroom is monitored by staff for the safety of your children and to ensure bathroom time is not being used as social time. If it appears a child is taking a longer time than may be reasonably expected, a Faith Formation staff member or catechist may knock, announce themselves, and ask if everything is ok. Catechists have the right-at their discretion-to regulate how many students are allowed to use the bathroom at a given time. Students are expected to use the bathroom corresponding to their biological sex (male or female). A single-use bathroom is available in the school building.

Dress

Kids should come to class dressed comfortably but modestly, ready for learning, growth, and worship. Pajama bottoms are not preferred as these are not conducive to any of the fore mentioned. We ask you to refrain from sending your children in clothing with offensive

language or imagery; depicting anything contrary to our faith; anything low-cut or revealing; anything revealing the midriff; or that is tight fitting. If clothing is being worn that does not fit this criteria, we will contact parents to discuss appropriate attire moving forward. Hats are also not permitted.

Pictures

Please be aware we may from time to time take photographs of activities or learning to share with the parish, archdiocese, or other Christian organizations. Please see release form.

Weather/Cancelations

God has placed you in New England, and as such weather or other acts of God may make it unsafe to come to class. Under such conditions, we will use our best judgement whether or not to cancel class. Updates will be posted to the local news outlets and emails will be sent about the status of class under questionable weather conditions.

Fees

The fees for the 2024-25 Faith Formation year are as follows:

\$90 per 1 Child, \$165 per 2 children, \$220 per 3 or more children

In 3rd and 10th grade or in the year a Sacrament is being received, there is a \$45 fee to cover added expenses related to retreats, etc.

Fees are due upon registration. A \$10.00 late fee will be assessed after the start of the academic year.

We are here to support you. If your family is in need of assistance with fees, please contact our office and we will speak with Father Romans.

The Pact of Christian Living

The Pact of Christian Living is a promise between our parish and your family: our parish promising itself to your family, and your family promising to do 3 things to bring Jesus into your lives, whether that be praying as a family, going to Confession together once a month, or even recycling to show respect for Creation. Consider the promises the parish is making to you, what you can in turn promise, and signing as a family. You may also consider renewing your promises or making new ones at the start of every year! Perhaps print this out and hang it somewhere for the family to see.

We, Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish, promise to support your family by

- Helping to build faith in your family
- Offering reverent liturgies
- Providing the Sacraments
- Supporting you in times of sorrow
- Helping you in times of struggle
- Welcoming all to Saint Bridget of Sweden as their spiritual home

Rev. Jeffrey V. Romans

The Reverend Jeffrey V. Romans, KCHS, Pastor

We, the _____ Family, promise to live a life centered on Jesus Christ and his Church.

To do this, we as a family promise to

Please, Lord Jesus, Help Us in Our Promises!

Sincerely,

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<hr/>	<hr/>
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Weekly Gospel Reflections

Rhythm and routine is important in the spiritual life. This is not to say we must be perfect all the time, but that consistency makes entering into the spiritual easier and more natural for your family. One example of this is attending weekly Mass.

We are encouraging all families in our program to set-aside 15 minutes every week for God and to reflect on the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday Mass. The Gospels are available by Googling “Sunday Mass Reading” and the date or on the USCCB Website <https://bible.usccb.org/daily-bible-reading>. This is something our whole community can do together to bring the Word of God into our homes.

How to Run a Family Gospel Reflection

Pick a time during the week that will work for your whole family. Deciding this early on will help it become a consistent routine.

- 1) While not necessary, try to do something to physically set this time apart. Light a candle, play some Catholic music, or set-up a holy image like a picture of a Saint or a Crucifix.
- 2) Choose someone to lead your family in prayer. They can either find a prayer they like or, if they are comfortable, can make-up a prayer from their heart (1-2 minutes)
- 3) Have 1 person read next Sunday’s Gospel aloud. When they are done, take a minute or so in silence to reflect on what your family has heard. (3-5 minutes)
- 4) Each member of the family can then share 1 thing from the Gospel that stood-out to them (5-7 minutes)
- 5) Close in prayer (1-2 minutes)

See that? In 5 easy steps and 15 minutes later, you can take the words of Jesus through your week and into Mass that weekend. Not only that, but you’ll have spent a little bit of time together as a family and a little bit of time with God. Jesus tells us that where two or more are gathered in his name, he is there. Invite him into your home! If you miss a week, don’t sweat it. Jump back in!

Taking It One Step Further

After Mass, reflect on the Gospel you heard as a family. Did you receive something different from hearing it at Mass? Did the Homily give you any new inspiration? Maybe grab breakfast or donuts while you discuss.

*If your family has signed the Pact of Christian Living, this may also be a good time to discuss “Did we do the things we promised to do for God this week?”

Home Resources

Formed.org

Did you know our parish has a subscription to the best Catholic video library on the internet? It's free for you to register!

Click Formed for Parishes, Click Sign-Up, Enter Saint Bridget of Sweden and select our parish, Enter your email address, Click link that was emailed, Watch high-quality videos on the platform!

Works on your Smart TV through its web browser, your phone, or computer

For the Family

The Chosen (Formed.org, Prime, YouTube, and The Chosen App)

Word On Fire with Bishop Robert Barron (YouTube)

Great Catholic Music (App Available in App Store)

Ascension Presents YouTube Channel (YouTube)

The Catechism in a Year with Father Mike Schmitz (Podcast)

How-to Catholic (Podcast)

Vatican.va (Vatican Website)

Theveilremoved.com (website on the Eucharist)

For Male Faith Leaders

Pints with Aquinas with Matt Fradd (YouTube and Podcast)

The Catholic Man Show (Podcast)

The Catholic Talk Show (YouTube and Podcast)

For Female Faith Leaders

Catholicmom.com (Website)

Abiding Together (Podcast)

Among the Lilies (Podcast)