

SAINT BRIDGET OF SWEDEN PARISH
FAITH FORMATION 2026-2027
THE YEAR OF THE CREED



Coronation of the Virgin Mary, by Blessed Fra Angelico

Saint Bridget of Sweden, Pray for Us

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 Parents:

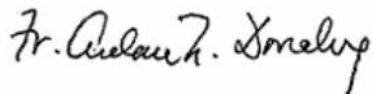
This is my first letter to all the families in our faith formation program as the new pastor of St. Bridget of Sweden Parish. I warmly welcome all who are returning for a new year of faith formation and I also welcome those who are new to the program.

The Order of Baptism for Children makes an important statement to the parents who present their child for baptism. The parents, as the Church teaches, are the "first teachers of their children in the ways of faith." The parish community, among others, such as the godparents and the wider family, are what I like to call the "supporting cast." We cannot take the place of parents in the formation of their children in their faith, but we can offer support to them. Our parish, under the capable and enthusiastic leadership of Joseph Gagliardi, the Director of Faith Formation, offers what I have come to know to be a program of great quality. I urge all parents to take full advantage of what the parish offers. We are here to assist you in your important role.

The theme for the year is centered on the Nicene Creed. This creed is a statement of what we believe as Catholic Christians. It is quite ancient, dating from the fourth century and it is used at Sunday Mass. It is my hope that your child will come to know this statement of faith by heart, and not just for purposes of reciting it. It is my hope that every child will understand the Creed and what it says we believe about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as what we believe about ourselves as the Church.

I thank you for your willingness to entrust your child to us for faith formation. It is a sacred trust, and a great honor. It is my hope that you will make every effort to participate at Sunday Mass each weekend, and even more, that you will, as parents, try to make your home what the Second Vatican Council calls a "domestic church," where Christ is at the center and where through family prayer and a sincere effort to live the message of Jesus, your child will come to know Jesus in a personal way as Lord, as Savior, and as a constant Friend.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at (203) 272-3531, or by email at cheshirecatholic.org. May God bless you all!



The Reverend Aidan N. Donahue

Pastor

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Adoration of the Trinity, by Albrecht Durer

Clergy

The Reverend Aiden Donahue, Pastor

The Reverend Jorge Castro, Parochial Vicar

Mr. Jerry Maust, Deacon

Faith Formation Staff

Mr. Joe Gagliardi, Director of Faith Formation

Mr. Joe Luchene, Youth Minister

Mrs. Pam Todman, Administrative Assistant Faith Formation

Ms. Tonya Baril, On-Site Personnel

Faith Formation Office Phone: (203) 272-6504

Parish Office Phone: (203) 272-3531

Emails: jgagliardi@cheshirecatholic.org

ptodman@cheshirecatholic.org

jluchene@cheshirecatholic.org

Faith Formation Calendar 2026-27

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type of Class</u>	<u>Notes</u>
9/13	Outdoor Mass @ Parish Picnic, 10:30	All Families Attend
9/27, 9/28	Family Day	
10/4, 10/5	Regular Class	
10/18, 10/19	Regular Class	
11/1, 11/2	Family Day	
11/15, 11/16	Regular Class	
11/22, 11/23	Family Day	
12/6, 12/7	Family Day	*Both Monday classes at 6 PM
12/20, 12/21	Regular Class	
1/10, 1/11	Family Day	*Special Event to Be Announced
1/24	Confirmation Candidates Only	As normally scheduled
1/25	Adoration 4:30-5:30	All Kids K-6, Details to Follow
2/7, 2/8	Family Day	
2/21, 2/22	Family Day	
2/28, 3/1	Snow Day	Used as Make-Up if Needed
3/7, 3/8	Regular Class	
3/21, 3/22	Family Day	
4/4, 4/5	Regular Class	
4/25, 4/26	Family Day	
5/2	Confirmation, 8th Grade	8th Grade Only
5/30	Confirmation, 8th Grade	8th Grade Only

Special Events, 3rd and 9th Grade

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Notes</u>
3/13	Retreat: Reconciliation, 9-Noon	3rd Grade Only
3/19	First Reconciliation	3rd Grade Only
Spring 2027	Confirmation Retreat	9th Grade Only
4/24	Retreat: First Communion, 9-Noon	3rd Grade Only
4/29	Rehearsal: First Communion	Times TBD
5/1	First Communion	Times TBD

Program Outline 2026-2027: The Year of The Creed

Kindergarten through 6th 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.

This year, our studies will be focused on the Nicene Creed. This ancient text which we recite each Sunday at Mass is a summation of what we believe as Catholics. The Creed keeps us grounded in the realities that have been revealed to us by God.

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 our core program. During classroom instruction, kids will be taught using a combination of activities, video, and discussion. **Students in 4th grade will receive their own Bibles.**

Kids K-6 should bring with them to class scissors, a glue stick, crayons, and a pencil. They should also bring their prayer journals which will be distributed the first week of class. 4th-6th graders should bring their Bibles.

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.

Because of the dynamic nature of the life we as Christians are called to in the Holy Spirit, our preparation for Confirmation should match. 7th graders will use a video/journal program called The Search Begins by the Augustine Institute, and they will also produce a play on a bible story of their choice as a class. 8th and 9th graders will spend 1 class a month in the classroom learning the Sacramental theology of Confirmation. In the other class they will participate in the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. These two groups speak directly to their identity as sons and daughters of God and how that identity is lived out.

Homeschool

Distribution of homeschool books will take place within the first few weeks of our year. Students will, with a faith leader from their family, read through their textbooks and fill in all relevant blanks (reflections, quizzes, etc). in their books to receive credit for the year. The completion date for homeschool families is **April 30th 2027**. More information to follow.

Sacramental Guidelines and Policies

In years which 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 at St. Bridget School.

Confirmation

This year's 9th graders will be Confirmed in the spring of 2027. 8th graders will be Confirmed in the fall of 2027 (as 9th graders). Teens will receive Confirmation as 8th graders effective spring of 2028.

Teens preparing to receive Confirmation are required to participate in a retreat prior to receiving the Sacrament. The retreat date will be announced along with our Confirmation date. The retreat is a requirement which comes from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Teens preparing to receive Confirmation are required to complete 10 hours of service spread over two years at the parish or participate in the Youth Group Mission Trip over the summer. 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)
Faith Formation classroom aid 1 hour
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, 2026. 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.

The expectation is that an adult representing your family attend all Family Days. A family should not miss more than 2 Family Days to complete the year. If your family has extenuating circumstances, please contact the Faith Formation office so we can find a solution together.

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. Students 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

Students are expected to attend all of a class to receive credit for attending. In the event a child must be picked up early, an early pick-up form must be filled-out prior to the start of class.

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 form with the on-site staff the day of or prior to when this is to occur.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are collected by catechists or the on-site staff at the start of class. If you need to contact your child in the case of an emergency or otherwise, please call the Faith Formation office number. 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 any 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 will distribute devices 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 students 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. This year's calendar includes make-up dates in the event a class must be canceled for weather-related reason.

Fees

The fees for the 2026-27 Faith Formation year are as follows:

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

In 3rd and 9th 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 \$30.00 late fee will be assessed at the discretion of the Faith Formation Office.

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 Donahue.