

The EDGE @ Home
Parent/Catechist Handbook



2011 – 2012

Student's Name

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Program Overview

The EDGE is a dynamic youth faith formation program offered by the St. Michael Middle School Youth Ministry to support parents in the Christian formation of their middle school age youth. The program offers middle school youth the opportunity for human and spiritual growth in a fun and safe environment.

Our program is known as "The EDGE" because the youth in this age range are on the edge of their teen years where they are changing physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Our mission at The EDGE is to help parents train boys and girls in the practice of the Catholic faith by keeping God's commandments, celebrating the sacraments, developing a prayer life and by loving God and our neighbors.

The "**EDGE@Home**" program is a more flexible option for those who are not able to meet every Monday night at the parish. It also allows us to deal with the sheer magnitude of our parish community while working with a limited number of volunteer resources.

The program follows the same curriculum as the Monday Night program and students in the home program are encouraged to participate in the social, service and special event activities like retreats and special outings. We don't just hand parents a set of books and say see you at the end of the school year, rather we strive to build up our community of youth and their parents by journeying along with them throughout the year.

Definitions

In the enclosed calendar you will notice a number of special dates that we would like to clarify for you:

SPD Session	Student, Parent, Director session. This is a quarterly meeting where parents, student and the program director conduct a progress check on the material covered. It is important that the quarterly survey is completed before scheduling this meeting.
Retreat	There are two EDGE retreats – one in the Fall and one in the Spring. These retreats focus on a key theme within our Catholic faith. During the weekend our youth build community and deepen their faith. There is also one Diocesan retreat – Jamboree. This is a one day retreat held in the Spring and is planned by teens throughout the diocese and the diocese department of Youth Ministry.
Service Project	There are normally four major service projects throughout the year. Our method is to teach EDGERS about servicing in the parish, in the community, internationally and intergenerational. This means we help with a parish based service project like the Thanksgiving Basket, an event within our local community such as Miracle League, a project overseas such as the Honduras Sister Parish mission and a project that crosses generational lines like visiting a retirement home.
Social	We will conduct a number of social activities as well so that our youth get to know each other better and forge a huge number of friendships. Therefore, when they are at mass, at school or out in the broader community they may recognize friends who support them in living out their catholic way of life.

The EDGE Two Year Cycle

We follow a two year cycle at The EDGE. What this means is all youth whether 7th or 8th grade are exposed to the same content and after two years of The EDGE we have studied all the major topics of the Catholic Faith – The Mystery of God in the Holy Trinity, Christian Morality, Church History, The Sacraments, Prayer and Sacred Scripture. Our EDGERS are then prepared, if they actively participate, to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the 9th grade.

EDGE Rules To Live By

Before setting off on any journey we should always understand the rules of the road so we get to our final destination safe and secure. Therefore, we are providing our standard ministry rules for you to consult. We know most of your classroom work will be done at home, but there will be times that we are together as a ministry and want to ensure everybody is working from the same play book.

Full, Conscience and Active Participation:

Parents are the primary educators in the faith and The EDGE program is one tool utilized in assisting parents with faith formation for their youth. Attendance is important to success in learning the content. If you have selected any of The EDGE programs as the primary method of faith formation for your youth, then they are expected to attend regularly and participate fully.

We will offer 31 hours of class instruction. If the youth is absent two consecutive EDGE Nights or miss an entire quarter of at home study, you will be contacted. If two additional unexcused absences are documented or another quarter is missed, your youth will be dropped from the program without refund. Absences for sporting activities are not considered excusable absences and make-up assignments are given based on the missed lessons. We understand that our youth are busy these days and it is our job as responsible parents to help them prioritize the important things in life. Our relationship with God is one of those very important things that should hold higher priority. If you don't agree with this then The EDGE program may not be the appropriate choice for your youth's faith formation.

Also, in the Diocese of Raleigh, preparation for Confirmation requires two consecutive years of faith formation which means if your youth is going to be confirmed in 9th grade, two years of full participation in The EDGE or EDGE@Home program will qualify, otherwise your youth will need to make up the missing faith formation prerequisites in the High School Youth Ministry program.

There's Nothing Worse Than Christians Behaving Poorly:

All youth and adults participating in The EDGE are responsible for their own conduct. Participants in The EDGE programs are expected to:

1. Be courteous and respect other EDGers and ministry guests.
2. Respect the property of others.
3. Respect the authority of adult volunteers and others in leadership roles.
4. Use appropriate language at activities and events.
5. Show kindness to others and give assistance when needed.
6. Be honest and honor commitments.
7. Strive for personal best and keep trying to improve.
8. Accept responsibility for personal choices.

Classy Not Trashy:

The EDGE enforces a strict dress code. This is a program where the ultimate focus is on Christ and building solid catholic virtues. Therefore, students are expected and encouraged to adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with their Christian dignity and an effective learning environment. Presenting a bodily appearance or wearing clothing which is disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive or obscene, or which endangers the health and safety of the student or others is prohibited. Examples of prohibited dress or appearance include, but are not limited to, exposed undergarments; sagging pants; mini skirts; excessively short or tight garments; shorts which do not reach at least the wearer's fingertips when standing up straight; bare midriff shirts; strapless shirts; attire with messages or illustrations that are lewd, indecent, anti-Christian or vulgar or that advertise any product or service not permitted by law to minors; see-through clothing; attire that exposes cleavage; any adornment such as chains or spikes that reasonably could be perceived as or used as a weapon; and any symbols, styles or attire frequently associated with intimidation, violence or violent groups. Such garments are not consistent with our life in Christ.

If a student's dress or appearance is such that it constitutes a threat to the health or safety of others, distracts the attention of other students or staff from their work or otherwise violates this dress code, the Youth Minister or the Youth Minister's designee may require the student to change his or her dress or appearance. A second or repeated violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the activity.

Don't Be A Dope:

If any youth or adult volunteer is found in possession or under the influence of drugs or alcohol at any youth event sponsored by EDGE, St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, or the Diocese of Raleigh the following actions will take place:

- 1) The parents of the youth and or the local authorities will be contacted.
- 2) Parents are expected to come to the event immediately.
- 3) Next steps will be discussed when the parents arrive on site.

Is There A Doctor In The House? Somebody Call 911!

If your child(ren) suffer(s) from any medical complications or illnesses, it is important to document those on this registration form. This information will be kept strictly confidential, but is necessary so that we may avoid any potential health risk or complications and to better serve the instructional needs of the student(s).

Assignments and Key Dates

Dates	Topics	Chapters
Monday, September 19, 2011	Parents' Night	Parents' Night
Tuesday, September 20, 2011	At Home Material Distribution (Mult-Purp. Rm.)	
Wednesday, September 21, 2011	At Home Material Distribution (Mult-Purp. Rm.)	
Thursday, September 22, 2011	At Home Material Distribution (Mult-Purp. Rm.)	
Friday, September 23, 2011	At Home Material Distribution (Mult-Purp. Rm.)	
Monday, September 26, 2011	Opening Night	Chapter 1
Monday, October 03, 2011	Unit 1 - Lesson 1: The Gift of Faith	Chapter 2
Saturday, October 08, 2011	Fall Retreat Lock-In: "Mystery" (Parish Ctr.) 5PM - Midnight	
Monday, October 10, 2011	Unit 1 - Lesson 2: The Holy Trinity	Chapter 3
Monday, October 17, 2011	Unit 1 - Lesson 3: God the Father	Chapter 4
Monday, October 24, 2011	Unit 1 - Lesson 4: God the Son	Chapter 5
Monday, October 31, 2011	***Halloween***	
Tuesday, November 01, 2011	***All Saints Day***	
Wednesday, November 02, 2011	***All Souls Day***	
Monday, November 07, 2011	Unit 1 - Lesson 5: God the Holy Spirit	Chapter 6
Monday, November 14, 2011	Thanksgiving Baskets	Thanksgiving Baskets
Sunday, November 20, 2011	MASS Day (New Liturgical Norms)	
Monday, November 21, 2011	Advent Night (New Liturgical Norms)	Advent Night Online
Monday, November 28, 2011	Unit 2 - Lesson 1: The Promised Messiah	Chapter 7, 8 & 9
Monday, December 05, 2011	Unit 2 - Lesson 2: Mary	Chapter 10, 11 & 12
Monday, December 12, 2011	Rejoice Dance and Games Night	
Sunday, December 18, 2011	MASS Day	
SPD		
SPD		

Dates	Topics	Chapters
Monday, January 09, 2012	Unit 3 - Lesson 1: Welcome to The Party	Chapter 13
Monday, January 30, 2012	Unit 3 - Lesson 2: Marked By God	Chapter 14
Monday, February 06, 2012	Unit 3 - Lesson 3: Not By Bread Alone	Chapter 15
Monday, February 13, 2012	Unit 3 - Lesson 4: Wait, Didn't I Graduate	Chapter 16
Monday, February 20, 2012	Lundi Gras Dance and Games	
Wednesday, February 22, 2012	***Ash Wednesday***	
Monday, February 27, 2012	Lent Night	Lent pp. 285-288
Monday, March 05, 2012	Unit 3 - Lesson 5: The Return	Chapter 17
Monday, March 12, 2012	Unit 3 - Lesson 6: Comfort & Joy	Chapter 18
Monday, March 19, 2012	Unit 4 - Lesson 1: Called By God	Chapter 19
Saturday, March 24, 2012	Spring Retreat Lock-In: "Fish" (Parish Ctr.) 5PM - Midnight	
Sunday, March 25, 2012	MASS Day	
Monday, March 26, 2012	Unit 4 - Lesson 2: Two Become One	Chapter 20
Sunday, April 01, 2012	***Palm Sunday***	
Thursday, April 05, 2012	***Holy Thursday***	
Friday, April 06, 2012	***Good Friday***	
Saturday, April 07, 2012	***Holy Saturday*** (Easter Vigil)	
Sunday, April 08, 2012	***Easter Sunday***	
Monday, April 16, 2012	Unit 4 - Lesson 3: The Final Four	Chapter 21
Monday, April 23, 2012	Unit 4 - Lesson 4: Now Hiring	Chapter 22
Monday, April 30, 2012	Unit 4 - Lesson 5: The House That Christ Built	Chapter 23
Monday, May 07, 2012	6th Grade Visit to EDGE	Chapter 24
Monday, May 14, 2012	Unit 4 - Lesson 6: Mission: Possible	
Friday, May 18, 2012	St. Bosco Festival	
Friday, May 25, 2012	EDGE@Home Closes at Midnight	
Sunday, May 27, 2012	***Pentecost***	

SPD

SPD

SPD Sessions and Quarterly Surveys

Each quarter students in the at home program are required to complete an online survey which reviews the material studied in that quarter. It is meant to measure the student's feedback and understanding of the material. Once the survey is completed, it is important to schedule the SPD Session. In this meeting we will review any areas of difficulty and conduct an overall progress check because we are committed to our youth and their faith growth.

Below, you will find the web address where the surveys are located and your username and password. Please keep them in a safe place so that you can utilize them as needed.

Survey Web Address	<u>http://www.classmarker.com/professional/</u>
User Name	_____
Password	_____

Parent Communications

We use a number of tools to communicate with you about the program, so we would like to take this opportunity to point those out to you.

- **Parent Newsletter:** The newsletter is sent via email, so it is important that you ensure tevans@stmmary.org is on your safe sender list to avoid getting caught in your spam folder. If you have not received any emails from us in two weeks, please check your junk mail folder. Sometimes email security systems are very picky and that's a good thing, but we'd hate for you to be out of the loop.
- **Church Bulletin:** We post a bulletin announcement each week so be sure to grab it on you way in or out of mass. It will include most of the same information, but due to limited space some information might be truncated. It is nonetheless a good fallback if you miss the email newsletter.
- **Email:** If all else fails, shoot us an email.
- **Phone:** Good luck with this option! But if you decide to use the phone, you will most likely get voicemail so please leave clear, concise messages so we are able to respond as efficiently as possible to your requests.

Youth Spirituality

Retreats

You will notice there are two major EDGE Retreats scheduled this year. The goal of these retreats are to open our youth up to a broader knowledge of the catholic faith in a fun, prayerful and safe environment. The theme of the Fall retreat is “**Mystery?**” and the Spring retreat theme is “**Fish**”.

As with anything we do, it is important that we have certified catechists and chaperones to help us make these events a success. If, you feel called to spend a powerful weekend with our ministry, please contact us at tevans@stmccary.org.

We depart the parish around 4:30 PM on Friday afternoon and return on Sunday evening in time to attend the 6 PM Mass. The retreat experience does not end until mass has completed. The parish rejoices with the returning EDGers.

The price of the retreats are \$145/student and chaperones are free because their service is payment enough. The fee covers transportation, supplies, meals and lodging. We hope you and your youth join us for a great time!

Sacraments

We enjoy seeing our youth attending Mass with their parents. This is one of the best examples of living the faith that we as adults can model for our youth. However, the reality is that some children aren't given this opportunity or example. Throughout the year we will encourage our parents and youth to attend Mass and we have set four special dates aside that will be punctuated as EDGE Mass Nights. We want to take time each quarter to celebrate together as a ministry so, please marks these dates on your calendar.

Reconciliation is a very important sacrament that allows us to experience the Lord's love and forgiveness. We will announce days throughout the year where we will celebrate as a ministry and as a parish. In the meantime, it is important that parents again set good example for their youth.

Prayer

A good idea is to pray with your youth often. We are supplying you with ample material to help you teach your how to converse with the Lord. Take a prayer a month and explain and pray it. You'll be amazed at what we'll accomplish by the end of the year.

Media Rating Systems

Music

Recording Industry Association of America

<http://www.riaa.com>

Rating: “Parental Advisory” Explicit Content

Offensive Content Types:

- sexually explicit themes,
- violence
- strong language

Movies

Motion Picture Association of America

<http://www.mpa.org>

Rating: “G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17”

Offensive Content Types:

- theme
- aberrational (inordinate) behavior
- intense or persistent violence
- nudity and sexually oriented nudity
- sensuality and adult activities
- strong or harsh language
- drug use and drug abuse

Video Games

Entertainment Software Rating Board

<http://www.esrb.org>

Rating: EC, Everyone, Everyone 10+, Teen, Mature, Adults Only, RP

Offensive Content Types:

- mild or prolonged scenes of intense violence
- graphic sexual content
- mild or strong language
- suggestive themes
- crude humor
- mild blood and gore
- simulated gambling
- nudity

Internet

The Family Online Safety Institute

<http://www.fosi.org>

Rating: Use web “Parental Control” tools on your computer to filter web content

Offensive Content Types:

- Nudity
- Sexual content
- Depiction of violence
- Strong Language
- User-generated content and whether this is moderated
- Depiction of other potentially harmful content such as gambling, drugs and alcohol

Television

Federal Communications Commission

<http://www.fcc.gov>

Ratings: TV-Y, TV-Y7, TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14, TV-MA

Offensive Content Types:

- intense or graphic violence
- strong, coarse, crude and/or indecent language
- intensely suggestive sexual dialogue
- intense and/or explicit sexual situations/activity

Radio

Federal Communications Commission

<http://www.fcc.gov>

Ratings: Probable the same as Music

Offensive Content Types:

- suggestive language
- Censors most content with bleep outs or cuts the call

Course Material Checklist

Do you have the following?

	The New American Bible
	The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism
	We Live Our Faith As Members of the Church II

Replacement Costs

One set of course materials are included in your registration fees. Should we need to reissue any of the standard material the following prices will apply to you.

Text	Cost
The Catholic Youth Bible	\$35.00
YOUCAT	\$24.00
We Live Our Faith Volume I	\$35.00

Thank you for being part of The EDGE and we look forward to a joyful year of learning about our Lord, His Church and our Family in faith.

Peace and Blessings,

Mr. Tristan L. Evans
Assoc. Director – Youth Faith Formation