St. Matthew Catholic Church
Ignite Conference 2019

What: St. Matthew Catholic Church - Ignite Conference
Includes: Conference, lodging, meals, t-shirt, and transportation

When: March 1-3, 2019
Youth will need to arrive to St. Matthew Catholic Church at 4pm or 5pm depending on which school you attend to check-in at the Parish Center-Gym. The conference will begin at 7:30pm on Friday in the God’s Special Place meeting space and end on Sunday at 1:00pm. We will arrive back to St. Matthew at 3:30pm.

Where: Awanita Valley Christian Retreat Center
600 Gap Creek Rd., Marietta, SC 29661
864-836-3956
Visit the website for more information about the retreat center: www.awanita.org
St. Matthew Catholic Church will have exclusivity of the retreat center for the weekend.

Who: 8th Grade Students preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation (EDGE & MACS)

Why: St. Matthew parish desires to ignite a passion for Jesus and encourage youth to live their Catholic faith boldly in everyday life through the Holy Spirit. Our experience as a youth ministry team and current landscape of the Catholic Church reveal the need for us to reach out and engage youth through retreat experiences. Over time they have proven success, 89% of self-motivated Catholics describe an event or experience that triggered their new spiritual commitment. 80% of young people stop practicing the Catholic faith by age 23. We know that the Catholic Church is in decline and for every 1 new Catholic, 6 leave the Church. St. Matthew Catholic Church strives to fight against this reality through prayer and evangelization, we hope our young people will be free and alive in their Catholic faith. We are here to support parents in leading their teens to Christ.

How: 8th grade youth who are preparing for the sacrament of confirmation are required to attend the Ignite Conference. The conference is an opportunity for the youth to encounter Jesus Christ in a new way and deepen their personal relationship with Him. We need to encounter Jesus Christ because it is through this encounter that conversion takes place. What’s conversion? It is when hearts are awakened to the presence of God in their life and desire to grow in discipleship. Through this “mountain-top” experience, our youth will have an amazing time, there will be high energy speakers, dynamic worship, skits, entertainment, small groups, fellowship, Mass and Eucharistic Adoration.

Theme: “Chosen for Greatness – The Real Superheroes”
We will take time to reflect on the extraordinary call that young people have to be SAINTS! We are CHOSEN in the sacrament of confirmation for GREATNESS! Confirmation is a gift that deepens our relationship with God, the Church, and helps us to be missionary disciples - to be saints in the world today. The weekend will focus on the following talks:

- Mask – “Identity”
- Villain – “Sin”
- Superpower – “Grace”
- Superhero – “Jesus”
- Mission – “Holy Spirit”

Through the talks and the many other experiences at the conference, the youth will connect, be challenged, deepen their faith and be inspired to be a SAINT!
**Keynote Speakers: APeX Ministries**

APeX Ministries (aka Gene and Brad) is an internationally known comedy duo based out of Brooklyn, NY and Aurora, CO. Since 1996 they have traveled North America using a style they define as Christian Vaudeville. This includes death defying juggling, sketch comedy, and personal testimony. In other words, they are evangelists, they throw things at each other, and they are funny. Gene hopes one day to compete in the Olympics as a solo synchronized swimmer. Brad is very strong! Brad and Gene will break open the talks to make them relevant and personal to the teens through personal testimony and stories of the Saints.

**Registration:** Each youth participant must have a complete Liability and Medical Matters Form on file with the youth ministry office. All adults attending the conference must have a completed Adult Volunteer Form and Adult Liability Form on file with our youth ministry office. These forms are available on the website. Please make sure that all forms are completely filled out before submitting them. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

**Registration Completion Deadline:** Submit forms online by Friday, February 1, 2019
- Participant Liability and Medical Matters Form *(Online Form)*
- Adult Volunteer Form *(Online Form)*
- Adult Liability Form for all Chaperones/Volunteers

**Check-in and Departure:** Youth will need to arrive to St. Matthew Catholic Church at 4pm to check-in at the Parish Center-Gym. Youth will be assigned to a school bus operated by Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools. The buses will depart for the retreat center once all youth have checked in with the faith formation staff. It is important that everyone arrive on time in order for the conference to begin on schedule. We recommend carpooling from schools to the church if possible. The bus ride will be approximately 2 hours to Awanita Valley Christian Retreat Center. We ask that everyone bring a bagged dinner for the bus ride.

**Chaperones:** The catechists for 8th Grade EDGE and MACS are asked to attend the conference to assist in leading small groups for the weekend. This is one of the best opportunities for small group leaders to connect, deepen the trust of the small group and witness the openness and growth of the youth. For the safety of the youth and to foster productive small group times, the ratio of adult to youth is 1 adult per 7 youth in each small group. All chaperones attending must meet the diocesan safe environment training requirements for youth protection.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** We need you! Volunteer opportunities include: chaperones, medical personnel, hospitality, security/safety, set-up crew, prayer ministry, stage crew, A/V crew, etc. All volunteers attending must meet the diocesan safe environment training requirements for youth protection. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity during the weekend, please contact Adrian Quintero at aquintero@stmatthewcatholic.org by February 1, 2019.

**Lodging:** Boys and girls will be assigned to separate lodges with adult chaperones at each lodge. We will assign rooms based on sessions and small groups. Lodges are Chateau, Tudor, and Williamsburg. Each lodge is just a walk away from the main meeting space (God’s Special Place) and dining hall (Grandmother’s Place). Lodges have bunk rooms that have multiple sets of bunk beds to accommodate up to 16 with a bathroom.

**Packing List:** Sleeping bag, pillow, some type of outdoor shoes, outdoor jacket, hat and gloves, pajamas, water bottle marked with name (to avoid dehydration), rosary, bible, journal, any medications (in original bottle and marked with name and dosage), towel, personal toiletries and of course, change of clothing for the weekend. **Please label all luggage/bags.** Phones are allowed but will not be allowed during sessions or small group times. Snacks are allowed, please bring enough to share with your small group/bunk mates. We ask that no snacks with nuts be brought to ensure the safety of those who may have a severe allergy to nuts. For the safety of all, please DO NOT bring: Drugs, alcohol, weapons or anything else that would jeopardize the experience for yourself or others.

**Overnight Anxiety:** Many young people may not have spent a night or two away from home or may not have ever gone overnight a great distance from home. Suggestions for homesickness or anxiety are: during non-session times they will be allowed to contact you to check in. If you are interested in volunteering for the weekend, let us know as this might help them feel more comfortable. There is no cell phone service but Wi-Fi is available to all adults during the weekend or the office phone will be available in the case that your child needs to call home.