

Saint Mary Parish
Office of Faith Formation
May 19, 2017

Hello to all Religious Education Parents!

Beginning this September, we will begin to explore ways of bringing more effective programs to our families and our children.

2017-2018 Registration is open!

You will see that we have put our registration and payment process online. We hope that this will be an easier way to accomplish the task of planning for the next school year.

We have taken a new look at the way that we share faith with the children and their families! And you may notice that the structure of our classes have changed. This is simply because we need to make the best use of the space available for providing the environment and atmosphere essential to every person we meet!

Family Formation Program

This year, you may want to register in the **Family Formation program!** This will involve a once a month – 2 hour commitment of coming as a family to faith formation. It is on Sunday from 1 to 3 PM. You will be able to share the faith of the Church at home and also all of your children will be studying the same topic of faith! When you come once a month, your children will go to their grade level class with a Catechist, and you will receive a teaching and a packet of what to do at home for the rest of the month. There will also be an online component which will provide feedback and assessment as we go! This is available for parents and children, grades 1 to 5.

Traditional Religious Formation Grades 1 to 5

We will also continue to have **weekly classes in the classroom for Grades 1 to 5 on Sunday mornings, 9 to 10:15 OR 10:30 to 11:45 and Monday afternoon, 4:30 to 5:45.**

Grades 6, 7 and 8

We have recognized that the middle school children do not enjoy the atmosphere of being behind a desk. This is also not the way Jesus would have desired to share Himself! And the Catechists have longed for a better way to share faith with them. We will now have the middle school children gathering **on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons for grades 6 and 7** and on **Tuesday or Wednesday evenings for Grade 8** children. We will meet in the School Hall, share a snack, and listen to a teaching. Then they will move to small groups with their Catechist for a chat and then also build in opportunities for service, prayer and community.

Confirmation (Grade 9)

Confirmation classes will gather once a month on Sunday afternoon **OR** Monday evening. We will also have the same style of format for them. We ask the Confirmation candidates to join the Life Teen youth group! We believe the teens will have a more fulfilling experience of their faith and in Jesus as they prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation and their future!

How we have gotten from there to here!

You might know that the Diocese of Bridgeport underwent a Diocesan Synod in 2014 and 15. At that time, the needs of all Parishioners were voiced and our Bishop took seriously the issues and desires of the people of our Church. So much so, that each and every Parish in the Diocese also underwent the same scrutiny, thereby identifying the needs and issues in their own Parish.

One of the areas identified by the families of St Mary was the need to improve the Catechesis of young children and the need to help families have a personal relationship with Jesus.

The questions we need to answer are :

Are we cultivating an environment that can bring about true discipleship?

Are we not just teaching and delivering information, but are we forming disciples of Jesus Christ?

The blessings of St Mary Parish are the people who teach our children. They are also those who bring about the wonderful adult ministries and those who serve the needs of the poor. There are so many wonderful members of St Mary Parish!

In looking at the needs that have been voiced by you, we must recognize the great good that has come because of these beautiful and gifted people! And we must remember how much time and talent they share with us in the ministry of Catechesis!

We are now called to reimagine faith formation. Our diocese has been working hard to provide easy and accessible ways for the Catechetical ministries of every Parish to be given as many resources as possible to help their ministry become more successful! With the founding of www.formationreimagined.org, every parishioner of the Diocese can find resources for continued learning in the Faith of the Church. Every ministry will have access to ongoing faith development in their ministry of choice and also personally.

We desire for you to know Jesus and for your children to see faith, not as a subject in a book, but Jesus as their God and Savior!

I pray you will all have a happy and blessed summer! I look forward to seeing you in September! And God's blessing be on you and your family!

Pat Postiglione

Director of Faith Formation