



SS. Isidore and Maria Parish

GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT

June 5, 2023

Dear Faith Formation Families,

Now that the 2022-2023 Faith Formation year has come to an end, it seemed appropriate to take some time to reflect on both the positive outcomes as well as areas needing improvement. As you all heard Father Mark speak at the parent meeting in September 2022, the parent is the primary catechist in a child's faith journey. In particular, he asked everyone to prayerfully discern whether the baptismal promises made on behalf of their child are being fulfilled. What a blessing to see more and more families filling the pews at Mass each week. Based on the program evaluation, below is a summary of the 2023-2024 Faith Formation Program.

Expectations:

- At least one parent from each registered family will attend the **All Grade Level Parent Meeting** this September. This is important to fully understand the expectations of the program and is essential *before* your child can begin the Faith Formation Program.
- Families are committed to practicing their faith by attending Mass weekly.
- **Faith Formation Weekends** - children of all grade levels will meet on the same two designated weekends each month.

Program Overview:

- **Children in Grades 1-3** meet twice per month, Sunday mornings beginning in October, 10:45 am - 12:00pm. Children in grade 2 will prepare for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation and children in grade 3 will prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. It is very important in the sacramental years that your child attends *every* session. *Excessive absences will require additional preparation on the part of the family in coordination with the Faith Formation Office in order for your child to celebrate the sacrament.*
- **Children in Grades 4-8** will have **two new options** to choose from - a **Family Faith Formation Program** or an **Online Self-directed Faith Formation Program**. The two programs both emphasize worshipping together at Mass, understanding and applying the Gospel message to our own lives, continuing to explore church doctrine, and providing opportunities for community gatherings. One is not better than the other but rather different approaches to faith based on what works best for your family. **For planning and scheduling ease, we ask that whichever option you choose you remain with that option for the entire Faith Formation year.**
 - The **Family Faith Formation Program** is based on building community and worshipping together. Families will meet in small groups twice per month beginning in October, on Sundays either 4:15pm - 5:30pm or 5:45pm - 7:00pm to grow in faith

together while participating in various activities and service projects. During the registration process you will have the opportunity to select either the earlier session or the later session and you will be asked to remain in that time slot for the entire Faith Formation year. *At least one adult/parent will attend their chosen session with their children in this age group.* The sessions will be facilitated by staff and volunteers yet will also be dependent on families playing a more active role in their child's faith formation.

- The **Online Self-directed Faith Formation Program** is based on parents fulfilling the role of catechist for their children. Beginning in October, each child in your family will work independently online each week with activities based on the Gospel message and fulfill the weekly submission. In addition, there will be several instances throughout the year where children accompanied by a parent/adult will attend in-person sessions, most likely liturgically based activities such as Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season, to continue to build community and provide opportunities to worship together.

- **Teens in Grades 9 & 10** will meet twice per month Sunday evenings beginning in October (4:30pm - 5:45pm for grade 9 and 6:00pm - 7:15pm for grade 10). The Confirmation Program is a two-year program and like other sacramental programs, it is very important that your teen attends every session. *Excessive absences will require additional preparation on the part of the family in coordination with the Faith Formation Office in order for your child to celebrate the sacrament.*

SS. Isidore and Maria Parish welcomes all children in grades 1-10 to participate in the Faith Formation Program. Going forward the emphasis continues to be on the Mass; a community coming together as one body of Christ and living a sacramental life. Beyond attending Mass, the program utilizes supplemental materials, the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, which provide families with clear interpretations of the Gospel message for children of all ages while also suggesting ways you might live out the Good News as disciples of Jesus Christ.

We are excited to introduce “**Faith Formation Weekends**” at the parish. Two weekends each month children of all grade levels will attend their designated sessions. This should provide consistency and ease in families' schedules however, this does not mean that faith does not exist on the other weekends of the month. Instead, the expectation is that families are working at home with their children similarly to what is done during the in-person session.

Just as everyone gave a resounding yes to your child's baptismal promises, we are asking for that same commitment as we work together to accompany them on their continued faith journey. We have learned that it is very difficult to facilitate conversations and engage children in activities when they have little or no framework in understanding the mysteries of our faith beyond attending the bi-monthly sessions. Because of this, faith has become purely academic rather than fostering a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. We need to work together to change this!

Please take some time as a family to discern the program expectations and offerings prior to the registration process which will begin in mid-July. A separate email will be sent to all families with the registration details. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at donna@isidoreandmaria.org or (860)633-9419. Thank you for your continued support of the Faith Formation program.

Best,
Donna Berger
Interim Faith Formation Director