

St. Joseph Parish

& St. Vincent de Paul Mission

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Catholic Faith Formation 2011-2012

At the Baptism of our children, we as parents promised to raise our children in the Catholic faith and received the light of Christ from the Easter candle, which was entrusted to us "...to be kept burning brightly." (*Rites of the Catholic Church, 180*)

In an effort to promote parent participation in the faith formation of each child, we are implementing several new components and processes this catechetical year for all levels of faith formation, in grade level as well as sacrament preparation sessions.

Often times we hear that parents are the primary educators of the faith...but we would like to update that phrase to primary "facilitator" or "connector" to the faith! By bringing our children in contact with faith-filled individuals and experiences, we serve not only to form them in the faith but also to connect them to the larger Body of Christ! If we only equate faith as a cognitive experience, we miss two very important dimensions: relationships and behaviors. As a means to an end, we have incorporated opportunities for parents and/or guardians of each child to be involved throughout the year through gatherings that serve as some of those experiences, in the hope that personal relationships are formed and nurtured.

For all families:

This catechetical year we invite all our parents to one of our Summer Gatherings, to be held on September 19 and 22, at 6:30pm, in the Sts. Catherine/Juan Diego room. Please select which evening would be more convenient for you. These gatherings offer a chance for fellowship within our parish faith formation community, a more in-depth explanation of some of the changes in faith formation sessions, and an opportunity to browse and purchase resources for your family to use at home. Also, we will have a monthly group session in the church for all our children in faith formation as we pray through the liturgical calendar. We ask at least one parent or guardian to join us for a minimum of two (2) of the five (5) offered this year during regular session day and time.

Sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation

A sacrament is not a one-time event but a process, a way of living our lives to become more like Christ. In every celebration of the sacraments we are gifted with God's grace, a gift that has no limits! Sacraments express our beliefs as Catholic Christians and puts those beliefs into tangible symbols and rituals to help us understand more fully the profoundness of this gift. Therefore, the preparation for celebration of the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation is a developmental process that

includes:

- ✠ Ongoing reflections and discussions at home of the lived faith of the family;
- ✠ Active participation in the weekly faith formation sessions for two school years before the sacrament is celebrated;
- ✠ Weekly celebration of the liturgy;
- ✠ Attendance by children and parents in parish-wide, sacramental preparation sessions.

The sacramental experience continues to be nurtured through further faith formation opportunities at the parish and diocesan level in which families are encouraged to participate.

Reconciliation and Holy Communion

Preparation for these two sacraments is done at the same time. Children will be actively participating in weekly formation in first and second grades, either through CFF sessions or the parish school, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. In addition to these weekly sessions, parents and children will be asked to participate in several weekend sessions, guided by staff and volunteer catechists, where parents work through a lesson with their child on the sacrament.

In order to help cover the cost of the resources used, we will be asking for a \$10 First Sacraments Fee. (This fee will be in addition to the annual family financial commitment per family which helps to cover: text books, catechist guides, building and maintenance costs, speaker stipends, consumables, materials and resources made available to our volunteer catechists).

Confirmation

Preparation for Confirmation is offered per diocesan mandate during junior high. Children must be actively participating in weekly formation in the seventh and eighth grades, either through weekly evening CFF sessions or the parish school, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. In addition to these weekly sessions, parents and children will be asked to participate in several weekend sessions, guided by staff and volunteer catechists, where parents work with their child on fundamentals of our Catholic faith.

In order to help cover the cost of two components in the second year of sacrament preparation for Confirmation, we will be asking for a \$70 Confirmation Sacrament fee. (This fee will be in addition to the annual family financial commitment per family which helps to cover: text books, catechist guides, building and maintenance costs, speaker stipends, consumables, materials and resources made available to our volunteer catechists.) This sacrament fee covers the costs per child associated with two of the components of our parish process in which all second-year teens participate as candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation, namely:

- FIRED UP! Diocesan Confirmation conference, St. Francis, Mar 3 or 4
- Confirmation Retreat at the Mareello Youth Center in Loomis, April 14-15

We look forward to working with all families this year in faith formation! May God bless us and keep us safe throughout the year!