

To our St. Bernard and Ascension Faith Formation Parents and Parishioners,

As you know, we combined our faith formation programs a few years ago to strengthen and revitalize it. By combining the programs, we were able to create a single program that has been blessed with many students and families and a larger volunteer base from which we draw teachers, kitchen help, and other support volunteers. I would say it is flourishing with the graces that God is pouring forth on it.

Because of the combined program between the two parishes, we have been trying to share time with the program on both church campuses to provide a presence at both parishes during the year. For the last couple of years, we have spent the fall at St. Bernard's and the spring at Ascension. This required a move in the summer and then again at Christmas break. Recently, the JMT was asked to decide whether we should continue the practice of the mid-year move. It has become a burden on the catechists to pack, help move, unpack, and rearrange the atriums during the Christmas break. It takes an estimated 15-20 hours for each lead catechist in each atrium to fully prepare for and complete each move (that is a 30-40 hr commitment annually for each lead catechist). The mid-year move happens during the busy Christmas holiday season when they would rather be spending time with family on the few days they have off from work. As the husband of one of the catechists, I am personally aware of the sacrifice they make. Additionally, the repeated moving of the atrium materials is taking its toll in lost and damaged items. As a result, the JMT decided that we will no longer do the mid-year move. Faith formation will reside at the St. Bernard campus for the entire 2019/2020 school year. The current plan is to move the faith formation program back to the Ascension campus next summer. We understand this may place a burden on some, but I hope that you understand we also need to think of our catechists and the burdens we place on them.

On August 17, the summer move from Ascension to St Bernard was completed. In the past, the bulk of the labor for this move has come from the catechist's and parish staff's families. The JMT decided this year that

the receiving parish was responsible for the summer move. It was fantastic to see the support from St. Bernard parishioners in this move. THANK YOU!!! from the JMT, the catechists, and directors of religious education for all those that participated in making this move happen.

We continue to evolve the faith formation program that assists parents and families in your obligation to instruct your children in the Catholic faith. We are doing this by adding teaching methods and programs that align more with the youth of today. The Chosen program for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes focuses on video lessons from dynamic Catholic media personalities and group discussion with an adult leader. The Edge program for 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> uses the powerful teaching method of witness. There is a core lesson each week, but one volunteer will lead this lesson focusing on how it applies to themselves and the students. Then small groups are broken out with a volunteer to lead discussion and work with what ever materials are chosen by the leader that week. Students in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades are using the "The Great Adventure Storybook" which is the youth version of Jeff Cavin's "Great Adventure Bible Timeline". It tracks the story of salvation through the bible and relates it to our Catholic faith.

For pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we are using the Catechesis of the Good Shephard program. It is a Montessori based program that leads a child through salvation history. It ties the life of Jesus in the gospels to our faith and introduces the concept of the Mass comprised of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There are many materials in the atriums that the children work with to help them learn in a hands-on manner. The teacher is there to help guide the students and ask them question on which they ponder and work out the answers. Currently we have two of three levels implemented in the program. Because of its connection and introduction to the Mass, it is vital that the students attend Sunday Mass to help complete the connections with their class work.

Thank You,

Steve Lemmer - JMT Chairperson



# Experience Renewal

*You are invited to Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP #8)*

During the weekend you will find fellowship and laughter, great food and friendship, and a renewed sense of belonging to this parish.

St. Joseph Education Center

MEN'S WEEKEND:

Sept. 28-29, 2019

WOMEN'S WEEKEND:

Oct. 5-6, 2019

Interested? Online sign up at  
[www.stjosephwaconia.org](http://www.stjosephwaconia.org)  
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