



St. Joseph Catholic Church

Office of Faith Formation

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As a new Faith Formation year approaches, I wanted to take the time to thank you for making the commitment to raise your child(ren) in the Church and prioritizing religious education in your lives. As parents, we are the first and primary educators of our children. In fact, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* recognizes just how important our role is, declaring “it is nearly impossible to provide an adequate substitute” (2221). However, we are blessed to have a great source of support and assistance in our family, friends, and especially, the Church. As the new Director of Faith Formation at St. Joseph Church, I am honored to be a part of the education of your child(ren) and I am pleased to have a wonderful group of volunteers to serve as teachers and aides to work hand-in-hand with our children and families.

There is a lot to look forward to this year in our program and I am confident we will have a wonderful and successful year if we work together. I will make every effort possible to communicate early and effectively. I also intend to provide a variety of opportunities for our families to gather for fellowship and fun - beginning with the Summer Party on **August 25 at 3:30 p.m.** in the church parking lot. This will be a good opportunity to get to know your child(ren)’s teachers, aides, classmates, fellow church families, and other parishioners. I hope you and your family will be able to join us!

Here is a brief overview of the levels of our Faith Formation program this year:

- For the elementary (grades K-5) Faith Formation program, we will be utilizing a new series, published by Sadlier, called “We Believe: Living Your Catholic Identity.” Your child(ren) will be instructed in the Four Pillars of the Catechism - the Creed (what we profess to believe), Worship (the Sacraments; how we celebrate our faith), Morality (living a life in Christ), and Prayer. With the new series and the availability of new technology to our program, the classes will be enriched with some great digital resources.
- The middle school (grades 6,7,8) program is called Edge. We initiated this program at St. Joseph for the ‘23-’24 Faith Formation year, and it got off to a great start. Edge follows a youth ministry model that utilizes both large and small group formats to engage our young people in an exploration of their faith. Each session begins in a large group as we GATHER (this usually includes a fun game or ice breaker) and PROCLAIM (the central teaching). Then we BREAK into small groups in which the middle-schoolers and adult leaders discuss the teaching in their own words and ask/answer questions to deepen their understanding. Finally, we SEND them forth for the week with a challenge that corresponds to the theme of the week.

- This year, we will be introducing Purpose for the 9th graders preparing for Confirmation. Purpose follows the same format as the Edge program. Both programs will have access to a wealth of resources from Lifeteen and also will be able to utilize our new technology to enhance these sessions with the media our teens are accustomed to using.
- Finally, we invite those students in grades 10, 11, and 12 who have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation to participate in Small Groups. Each group will ideally have five to eight teens and two adult mentors and meet two to four times a month (time and location can be determined by the group). The intention of these groups is to learn to pray by praying together, to learn what discipleship is by discipling one another, and to learn from adult mentors who will journey together with them in exploring what it means to live our Catholic faith.

Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with questions, concerns or ideas for the program. I look forward to building relationships with all of you and your children in the years to come.

“Faith is the golden thread which binds us to the Lord, the pure joy of being with Him, united to Him; it is a gift that lasts our whole life, but bears fruit only if we play our part.”

~Pope Francis

Peace in Christ,

Melissa Joseph

Director of Faith Formation