

April 2021

Dear Friends,

As we look to the future of our faith formation and religious education efforts for children and adults, I want to thank Kathy Hansen, all of the catechists, parents, and young people for all that they did in this pandemic to try and keep some manner of community and continuity with what and who have gone before us.

Going forward, we have to accept, I believe, that there are still unknowns that will continue to challenge us, and I believe that in a manner of speaking we will have to work patiently and serenely together to try and create religious education and faith formation efforts that revolve around shared food, personal presence, and lots of good experiences.

I really remember virtually nothing that I was taught when I was a child, but I do remember what I felt both good and bad from various teachers.

My goal has been to make sure we give these kids and you, their parents and catechists, good and happy memories.

I know there are those who would strongly disagree with me and insist that the content and the books and the facts are the essentials, but I think the relationships that are formed ever so briefly are what is important, as we believe in and teach that God is a living, loving person that lures us into a kind of dance with life that reveals our truest and deepest and most honest self.

A growing majority of young people in our country have no connection to church, synagogue, or mosque, and while the reasons are manifold and complex, I would bet a lack of joy, hospitality, and acceptance is one very formidable factor.

That being said, please carefully look over my concerns as we plan for in person faith formation and religious education experiences beginning in the late summer of 2021.

Peace,
Father Niblick

1. As we anticipate in-person only faith formation experiences next year, it is very likely that our capacity for “classroom” sessions will be limited to ensure proper social distancing and circulation of air in those CFP spaces.
2. So, as an upfront option to Monday evening/Saturday morning “classes” that families may choose at registration, would be regular participation in Sunday Mass instead of participation in a CFP class session. Regular Sunday Mass attendance means at least three out of any four weeks of Sunday Mass attendance year-round and some form of active participation in the Sunday Liturgy in an age-appropriate manner, such as Mass server, Eucharistic minister, music ministry, Liturgy of the Word for children, greeters, and other ways to be discovered. This will require registration and acceptance and is an option that a few families have taken in the past. It is serious, and you will be held accountable for attendance just as you would be in the class session model.
3. We will need more volunteer catechists than we now have, and the number of catechists will have a direct effect on the number of children accepted into the class session model.
4. Registration packets will be available in early May, must be picked up and hand delivered back no later than close of business on June 1, 2021. We need to see what numbers we have in order to begin to plan, so there will be no requests for participation in our CFP class sessions model considered after June 1, 2021.

In any case, you need to be a registered member of the parish before you will be considered for acceptance in our faith formation efforts, and you have to have a certificate of your child’s baptism or a facsimile at the time of your registration to be considered.

We will do the best that we can to accept all current and participating second graders for First Communion next year and all current and participating 8th graders for Confirmation next year.

New registration for First Communion will enter this year at the 2nd grade level, with First Communion celebrated in the 3rd grade, and new Confirmation candidates will enter at the 7th grade level, with the sacrament celebrated in the 9th grade.

Families who have children that they want in our CFP Programs that are not baptized must speak to the pastor and arrange an appointment with the pastor (865.8956) to ensure that the child is cared for sensitively and without any confusion or unnecessary conflicts. These arrangements need to be made before June 1, 2021.

We are going to try the best that we can to make our religious education faith formation programs and experiences, especially Sunday Masses, all that they have been in the past, but that will require the good will and patience of all concerned.