

Dear St. Mary's Parents,

I am pleased to share the plan for the 2020-2021 religious education year. Taking information from our school districts, implementing guidelines we have been given from our diocese, and what we are able to accommodate here at church, we have decided on a hybrid year for religious education.

One of my goals for the year is to get the kids back into the church in person for at least some Wednesdays. Another is to make curriculum available to families so that on other weeks, or if a family decides to home-school, everyone has the resources needed to do it. And finally, I hope to comply with distancing guidelines that allow for mask-less instruction in the classroom (with teachers still wearing masks).

For the students to be without masks in class, I will divide some of our larger grades in half. By doing so, we can maintain a six-foot distance in the classroom. This also means I need several more teachers. I am currently recruiting teachers for several of the elementary grades, eighth grade, and confirmation.

St. Mary's will use "Family of Faith", a curriculum for students up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This curriculum is from Sophia Press. Each family will be given a teacher/parent guide and a student book, which includes instruction for all grade levels. The theme for the year is "Life in Christ". By design it fosters religious education primarily within the family with the support of the parish. It is new to us but is being used at many parishes within our diocese with great success. Whole family catechesis encourages connectedness at home and at the church.

Confirmation students and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will have a different curriculum. Juniors and seniors will meet on Sundays.

The schedule will consist of in-person classroom meetings about twice a month for all grades up to 10<sup>th</sup>, in-church family meetings once a month, and one meeting a month at home. Families choosing to home school entirely will be able to use the books as a resource every week. All families will have on-line resources, live streaming of sessions here at church and the books to support faith learning the whole year.

### **Next Step**

Please take a few minutes to go to our parish website and register your family for religious education. All families wishing to participate, whether from home or in person, must register. Please take a moment to do this. You will find the form at [stmarysspiritlake.org](http://stmarysspiritlake.org). Go to the "STUDY" tab and click on "YOUTH".

### **Schedule**

We will start classes mid-September. An official start date will be published as soon as possible. Take a look at the second page to get an idea for what a typical month will look like.

### **Volunteers**

I need several more volunteers. If we are unable to get enough help, students will have to wear masks when they come for class.

Questions or Suggestions?

Call or email me! 712-260-8065 or [youth@stmarysspiritlake.org](mailto:youth@stmarysspiritlake.org)

Sample schedule month for the “Family of Faith” Curriculum:

- Week 1: Whole families meet at church. We will accept reservations by table and meet in the parish hall. We will have presentations, talks, and instruction during that time. Families will have access to this via live stream from home if they want or if all tables are full and there is a waiting list. Parents will be instructed on lessons
- Week 2: Students meet in person in class with a catechist. Parents reinforce teaching from home throughout the week.
- Week 3: Students meet in person in class with a catechist. Parents reinforce teaching from home throughout the week.
- Week 4: Families meet at home using the curriculum, online resources, or topics of their choosing.