

PARTNERS IN FAITH:

- ❖ Our most important mission as disciples of Jesus Christ is to pass on the faith to others. The St. Francis Church Faith Formation Program is primarily aimed at providing an opportunity for participants to grow in love with Jesus Christ, to be challenged to follow Him, to learn about the teachings of the Church, and to promote full participation in the liturgical life of the Church. We recognize that parents have the prime responsibility of sharing the faith with their children. Our program is designed to assist, not replace, parents in their role as teachers of the faith. Through a Generations of Faith learning model, the program is designed to emphasize life-long learning and offer programming for all members of the Church community, regardless of age, as we learn and grow together.
- ❖ The Rites of Christian Initiation (RCIA) process is designed to meet the needs of older children and adults converting to the Catholic Church from another faith tradition, for those preparing for baptism or for candidates preparing for sacraments when they have been baptized but have not received First Communion or Confirmation. Volunteers from the community act as catechists and sponsors who journey with the candidates in their faith development and to full completion of Christian Initiation.
- ❖ Our program is dependent on volunteers who share their gifts in designing curriculum, teaching and assisting in classrooms, and offering support in a variety of ways. We encourage anyone interested in sharing their faith with our youth or adults to contact the office. There are never enough hands and hearts to accommodate the need for catechists (teachers)!
- ❖ There are numerous ways that the program can use your support if you choose not to teach. The “Partners in Faith” form, included in the registration packet, outlines various ways that one can be of assistance.
Each family is encouraged to offer some support during the program year.

CATECHETICAL LEADERSHIP:

- Office phone is in the rectory—323-6272, ext. 2. Messages can be left in the voice mail at any time without fear of disturbing anyone in the rectory.
- ❖ Director of Faith Formation—Judy Trickey
- ❖ High School Coordinator—Deb Robinson
- ❖ Coordinator of First Reconciliation/Communion—Linda Racicot
- ❖ Secretary—Pat Antonovitch
- ❖ Parish Council Faith Development Chairpersons—Barbara Chiapetta and Marianne Abuselmi
- ❖ Young Adolescent Ministry Initiative (YAMI)---Christine Schmidt, Anne Werbicki, Lucy Nauman, Jack O’Brien, Scott Dubey

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

- ❖ **First Reconciliation and First Communion** are celebrated in the 2nd grade. Preparation for the sacraments is a *two year process* beginning in 1st grade as the children are introduced into the life of the Church community. Children who are not enrolled in the first grade will be placed in a special class to cover the first year material and will make their sacraments the following year.
- ❖ Children who are beyond 2nd grade and have not yet experienced First Reconciliation will receive private tutoring to prepare for the sacrament.
- ❖ **Confirmation** is celebrated in the Spring of the 11th grade following *three years of study*. Participation in the 9th and 10th grade program, or some equivalent, is required to participate in Confirmation Preparation in the 11th grade. All Confirmation candidates are expected to participate in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade retreats and complete a comprehensive service project.
- ❖ Parents of children who don’t meet the above requirements should contact the Religious Education office to discuss alternatives.
- ❖ Adults seeking to prepare for Confirmation should contact the office for information about preparatory classes.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- ❖ We are guests in the Chestnut Hill Community School and have full responsibility to leave our borrowed space in the same way that it was found upon our arrival.
- ❖ Students are not allowed to go into any desk or lockers (even their own!) on the weekend. Damage done to school property is strictly forbidden. Violation of this policy will result in suspension from our program. The cost of repair for any damage done to school property will be the responsibility of the student (parents) involved.
- ❖ Respect for volunteer catechists and fellow students is expected at all times. We will communicate with parents of children who are unable to control their behavior and may require that a parent join the child for class. We cannot allow one child to disrupt the learning opportunity for other students.

SNACKS

- ❖ Pre-school and elementary age students are invited to pack a snack since the session time is lengthy. Snacks will be eaten in approved locations where cleanup is possible. (***Absolutely no peanut products or foods with peanut oil are allowe, in order to protect those with severe peanut allergies Please check ingredients!***)
- ❖ No food or beverage is allowed in the classrooms unless provided by the catechist with responsibility for cleanup. We advise all catechists to keep snacks to a minimum.

SNOW CANCELLATION

- ❖ In the event of a winter storm, *some or all* of the weekend sessions may be cancelled and will take place on the arranged snowdate listed in the Program schedule. The following sources can be accessed for information: Parish web site at WWW.STFRANCISBTOWN.ORG, TV channel 22, or Radio stations, WHYN 560 AM, WHYN MIX 93.1 FM, or WHYN KIX 97.9 FM.

ATTENDANCE

- ❖ It is expected that at least one parent will be in attendance with their child, *regardless of age*. **High school students should not be attending the program alone.**
- ❖ PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE CAREFULLY. In addition to six Generation of Faith sessions, participants should be attending the scheduled Church events, scheduled grade level class and mass, and reconciliation. High school students must attend the 3 retreats. We also incorporate Child Protection lessons into our curriculum each year as mandated by the Diocese.
- ❖ The total program is comprised of approximately 24 contact hours—only one day a year of formally scheduled faith formation opportunities. It is not too much to ask that students attend ALL sessions and events. In this way they will experience the full benefit of the program.
- ❖ We advise that you **not send your child to class if they are ill**. They will not be up to participating fully in the experience and other students and the catechists deserve to be protected from exposure to illness.
- ❖ Absences in a program year will severely hamper the student's understanding of the curriculum materials. Students in sacramental programs are expected to do make-up work for ALL classes that are missed. This includes, 1st, & 2nd graders, 9th, 10th & 11th graders. These students who fail to complete the expected work **will not be promoted** to the next grade level. Of course students at other grade levels are encouraged to complete class work that is missed. It is the responsibility of the students and/or parents to pick up from the rectory porch the makeup work provided in the homekit and return it to the office for credit.
- ❖ Parents who anticipate a problem with their child's attendance are encouraged to contact the Religious Education office to discuss if alternatives are possible.

SACRAMENTS:

- ❖ We encourage any parent who is not practicing their faith due to an irregular marriage, to make an appointment with a parish priest or to contact the office for information about the annulment process. Please note that divorce without remarriage does not prohibit you from participating fully in the sacramental life of the church.
- ❖ Sunday worship and Eucharist is vital to sustaining an ongoing relationship with God and supporting and being supported by the faith community. We miss the presence and support of families who do not join us for worship. Won't you consider returning if you have been away for a while? You are missed!
- ❖ The precepts of the Church suggest that Catholics access the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year and certainly more if necessary. Receiving Holy Communion, when one is in the state of mortal sin, is the utmost offense to God and considered sacrilegious. We will offer an opportunity for all students and their families to go to confession during the year. Please check the schedule for the date and time that reconciliation is offered for your child's class.

ONGOING FORMATION:

- ❖ One of the best ways to learn is to teach. Please consider joining our catechetical team as a classroom catechist or assistant. It has been proven to be one of the best ways to learn and grow in faith!
- ❖ Use of the homekit materials is a good way to continue learning at home and will help to foster stronger faith. Try to set aside a regular time to continue learning at home. Consider sharing materials with friends, neighbors, or other family members.
- ❖ Watch the bulletin for announcements of special classes and enrichment opportunities in the parish for adults and families. We welcome volunteers who may be willing to coordinate or facilitate special opportunities through the Faith Development Commission. We also invite you to let us know about potential speakers for our program.
- ❖ Audio and video tapes and books for children and adults are available for borrowing from the office or from the Reconciliation Room in the Church. Call us if you have a special need.