

ST. FRANCIS CHURCH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM INFORMATION AND POLICIES
“GENERATIONS OF FAITH”

What is “Generations of Faith?”

A new approach to faith formation that is lifelong and inter-generational. It is intended to serve the whole parish, (not just school age children!) as everyone learns and grows together. Parishioners grow in faith as they learn about events of Church life and participate together.

The program will prepare parishioners for meaningful participation in Church events, engage everyone in the event, guide people in reflecting on the significance and meaning of the events and encourage them to apply the learning to their daily lives as Catholics.

Who can attend?

We hope to see *all* members of the community participating !! — **school age children accompanied by a parent(s)**, couples, singles, elders, college students, etc. We welcome non-Catholic spouses or interested non-Catholic friends or relatives to join us.

What do you mean, “school age children accompanied by parents?”

Children and teens in a family must attend with *at least one* parent, or a “sponsoring” adult if a parent is unable to participate. We do encourage both parents to join us if possible.

As families learn and grow in faith together, they become more comfortable expressing and living faith at home and in the community.

PLEASE NOTE: Children are not always in the presence of an adult. There may be some portions of the G of F experience where age groups will be separated from one another, while everyone is learning about the session topic at age-appropriate levels.

Communication with the office is necessary to make special arrangements for a child whose parents or a surrogate cannot be in attendance, in order to arrange for a parish sponsor to accompany the child.

Who can be a “sponsoring adult”?

A sponsoring adult can be a Catholic grandparent, godparent, relative, neighbor, or friend who not only will bring the child to sessions and the Church event when the parent cannot, but be involved in supporting the child in their faith formation.

Any parishioner or family willing to be a sponsor to a child interested in attending Generations of Faith is encouraged to communicate with the Religious Ed office, or indicate your willingness in the section on the registration form found in the registration packet.

How can we all learn together when our levels of interest, experience, and abilities vary so much with age?

The program will begin with all participants attending an Opening Introduction/prayer experience, which introduces the theme for the day. This is followed by the 1 ½ hour Classroom experience. Groups will be separated in the following way: pre-school age children (P3, P4 and K), elementary age children *accompanied by a parent* (1, 3, 4 & 5), middle school age children (6,7&8 grades), teens (9,10 grade), and adults (12th graders, college students & adults without a student in 1st, 3rd, 4th or 5th grade). 2nd grade and 11th grade will meet separately to provide opportunity for immediate sacramental preparation.

All participants will gather again for a Closing Experience to reinforce and share the lessons learned and prepare for the upcoming event. The sessions will be varied with many creative ways to learn and grow together.

What does the program involve?

The program has 3 components: Preparation Sessions, scheduled Events, and Home Kits

The program has 6 scheduled 2 ½ hour “**Preparation Sessions**” that are focused on preparing the community for 6 special **Events** that will take place within the month that follows the session. Each registered household will also receive a “**Home kit**” at each session, which will contain thematic materials to support each individual and family with continued learning at home.

We anticipate approximately 24 contact hours for Our Religious Ed season, which complies with the Diocesan guidelines—only one day a year to devote to active learning and faith formation!

Where does the Program take place?

We are grateful for the use of the Chestnut Hill Community School for our 6 Preparation Sessions. All sessions will begin in the auditorium. The Events are likely to take place in the church.

What happens for students preparing for sacraments—First Reconciliation and Eucharist, and Confirmation?

Students will be required to participate in Generations of Faith and **additional sessions** that will be necessary as supplements to prepare the students for their sacraments. A schedule of extra classes will be made available by the coordinators of the two sacramental programs.

Preparation for First Eucharist requires two years of attendance in 1st & 2nd grade.

Preparation for Confirmation requires three years of attendance in 9th, 10th & 11th grade.

Will there be requirements for school age students beyond participation in Generations of Faith?

Yes. We sometimes schedule special grade level classes or events. Check the full Schedule. The 9th, 10th and 11th grade students will each be required to attend a retreat and complete a major service project. When possible we will attempt to promote service and justice projects throughout the season.

When does the program begin?

The program begins in September or October (depending on the season) and continues through the early Spring.

What is being studied?

This year our theme is Prayer.

In our first year, the program was oriented to learning about places in our new church. Our theme in 2005 was Following Jesus on the Path to Holiness. In 2006 the theme was the Ten Commandments & Precepts of the Church. The 2007 focus was on the Sacraments & in 2008 on the Creed.

How is this Program Addressing the Child Protection mandate by our National Bishops?

To comply with Diocesan Policy, programs will be conducted on Protecting Children from Abuse. These will either be incorporated into the GofF lessons or as separate grade level class experiences. We also offer The "Called to Protect" workshop by our trained Team for 8th and 10th grade students each year.

How do we register?

Registration packets are mailed to every registered household in the parish in mid summer. Contact the Faith Formation office if it was not received or if you are new to the Parish—323-6272, ext. 2.

Please note that the number of registrants for each of the 4 weekend sessions is limited in order to manage the size of learning groups. We will assign session preferences on a first-come-first-serve basis. Register early if you want to insure placement in your 1st choice.

Will there be open registration?

The Religious Education office has always accommodated families who do not register at the beginning of the season. We welcome any registrant, even if we are midway through the year. Makeup work will be provided for sessions missed.

We also will accommodate those interested in attending single sessions. Arrangements can be made by calling the office.

What does the program cost?

In order to provide quality programs and home kits, the cost for the six sessions is \$95 (\$70 if before Sept.) per household regardless of the number of participants from your family. This fee includes the rates for special guest speakers and events. We offer a discount of \$45.00 (\$35 if before Sept.) for Senior Citizens. The cost for attendance at a single session will be \$12.00, or \$6.00 for Seniors.

Of course waivers or reduced rates will be provided upon request to those who cannot afford the cost of registration—call the office. Please note on the registration form that 1st Communion candidates and 9th, 10th & 11th grade students have additional fees related to their programs.

How can we accommodate everyone who wants to participate?

Each Preparation session will be repeated four times on a weekend—Sat. AM, Sat. PM, Sun. AM, Sun. PM. Participants will be placed in a designated time slot based on registration requests for 1st and 2nd choice. Placement will be on a first come, first served basis. *Please note that 11th grade students must attend sessions designated for them. (Check the registration form.)*

Will there be flexibility in the schedule?

We ask that families make every effort to attend the session time to which they are assigned for planning purposes and to accommodate everyone in limited space. A registration confirmation letter and Session time assignments will arrive in a mailing before the 1st session. We remind you again that students in Sacramental Prep Programs can only attend the sessions earmarked for them.

If a conflict in the family schedule, illness, or other unforeseen circumstance requires a change to another time, a call to the Faith Formation office is requested in order to alert the catechist of a visiting student and have the family homekit available.

Who is responsible for implementing this program?

WE ALL ARE!!! It takes lots of hands to plan, design, prepare, and implement the program. There are numerous behind the scene tasks, a need for folks to assist in designing the sessions, prayer leaders and musicians, computer technicians, actors, and folks to facilitate the learning sessions for special age groups. Please complete the "Partners in Faith" form enclosed in the registration packet to let us know how you might be able to help us out. You are also encouraged to contact the Faith Formation office at 323-6272, X 2.

Will there be opportunity to express concerns, offer comment, ask questions etc.?

We provide opportunity to evaluate our program year and take to heart the comments and suggestions offered.

Check out the Parish website for the results of our end-of-year evaluation at www.STFRANCISBTOWN.org. in the Religious Education section. Feel free to contact anyone in the Faith Formation Office or Father Vern with your concerns.

What can I do to help?

See the "*Partners in Faith Form*" in the registration packet for ways that you can offer your services. This program belongs to the Parish community and needs the services and resources of everyone to be successful. Please consider sharing your time and talents with us.

Thank you, Judy Trickey- Director Linda Racicot-2nd grade Coordinator

-High School Coordinator