

ST. MARK FAITH FORMATION

August 2020

Summer seems to be flying by faster than ever before. I know that so much up in the air as far as how to move forward with planning. Most people have strong feelings in regard to the proper way to proceed with gatherings. We wanted to take everyone's thoughts and concerns into consideration as we prepared for the 2020-2021 Academic Year for Faith Formation at St. Mark. I appreciate all the parents that took the time to reply to our survey.

Along with the Faith Formation Commission, I reviewed all responses and formulated a plan. All students regardless of which option they choose (attending virtual/gathered sessions or homeschool) MUST register, and the fees will be the same for both options. While we know that not everyone may agree with our decision, I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

We will begin the year with a mixture of home-school and virtual learning.

For grades Pre-K through Grade 8:

- There will be lessons for students to do at home each week, with part of the lesson catering to families with more than one grade level. These lessons will focus on the Mass readings for the following weekends and should take less than 20 minutes for each child.
- Classes with catechists will be held typically once per month. These classes will be abbreviated in time, and we ask that students have their own devices and are available for the full 45 minutes. We will use the Zoom platform and begin our gatherings as a large group before breaking into grade level classes. We have tried to take into account families with children in more than one grade. If having devices available is a problem please let me know ASAP. (Out of respect, we ask that students are not eating while connected to their call.)
- Once a month we will hold virtual family activities. All students and at least one parent is expected to attend these events.

For Grades 9-12:

- Please watch your email for instructions to connect to a Zoom Meeting to discuss the high school RE and Confirmation prep sessions.

Homeschool Only:

- If you would prefer to not participate in the virtual RE offering and would rather teach your children yourself is also an option. I will put together a curriculum for you to teach at home and check in with you throughout the year.

A schedule for the first half of the year is attached to this email, please put pertinent dates on your calendars. Note that we will be starting later than we have in the past. As we have all learned these past few months, schedules/calendars are often subject to change. For those that like Google calendars, below is the link for our St. Mark Faith

Formation calendar. This will be the best resource as to when events will be happening in our parish (for all ages) as it is updated daily. Please let me know if you have any trouble seeing the calendar.

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar?cid=ZGJxYXJjaC5vcmdfMW51Y3VkaGJxdDFjdjA2MTg5aDdiOG12anNAZ3JvdXAuY2FsZW5kYXluZ29vZ2xlLmNvbQ>

Grades Kindergarten thru 6

- **Registration will be open soon!** RE registration will be online again this year. The link and password to register. If you have any difficulties, please let me know. I hope to have registration information sent out next week.
- **MaginifKid...** These Mass tools are still available and can be picked up in the chapel entrance daily (8:00am-5:00pm). These are a great way to help your children, and maybe yourself, keep focused and follow along during Mass especially when participating via live stream. These materials and others on display may be helpful during prayer time and other times of conversation during the week as well.
- **Class Schedule...**
 - Wednesday, September 30 – FIRST RE CLASS for Grades PreK-3 (6:30-7:15pm)
 - Wednesday, October 7 – FIRST RE CLASS for Grades 4-8 (6:30-7:15pm)
 - Wednesday, October 14 – Family Activity Night (6:30-7:15pm)
- **Youth Led Ministries...** As of now, we are not scheduling youth to lead the ministries at any of the Masses. We are hopeful that we will be able to resume them with the academic year.

Grades 7 through 8

- **Registration will be open soon!** RE registration will be online again this year. The link and password to register. If you have any difficulties, please let me know. I hope to have registration information sent out next week.
- **Class Schedule...**
 - Wednesday, October 7 – FIRST RE CLASS for Grades 4-8 (6:30-7:15pm)
 - Wednesday, October 14 – Family Activity Night (6:30-7:15pm)
- **Youth Led Ministries...** As of now, we are not scheduling youth to lead the ministries at any of the Masses. We are hopeful that we will be able to resume them with the academic year.
- **Youth Ministry...** We have been meeting via Zoom on Sunday nights to talk, play games, and pray together. We have no plans to cease these gatherings. Below is the connection information for our gatherings. This is set as a recurring meeting so this will be the link unless we change.
 - Brenda Strayer is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
 - Topic: St. Mark Youth Ministry
 - Time: Sundays – beginning July 12 (7:00-8:30pm, link will open at 6:45pm)
 - Contact Brenda for the Zoom meeting information.*
- **NCYC...** I have received some questions in regard to NCYC 2021. Here is what I can tell you... we do not know anything at this point. Our leadership at the Pastoral Center in Dubuque are in contact with NFCYM (who puts on NCYC) and will make a decision in February.

Grades 9 thru 12

- **Registration will be open soon!** RE registration will be online again this year. The link and password to register. If you have any difficulties, please let me know. I hope to have registration information sent out next week.
- **Class Schedule...**
 - Sunday, September 13 – FIRST RE & CONFIRMATION SESSION (TBD)
 - Sunday, September 20 – RE & Confirmation Session (TBD)
- **Youth Led Ministries...** As of now, we are not scheduling youth to lead the ministries at any of the Masses. We are hopeful that we will be able to resume them with the academic year.
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Family (and Adult) Faith Formation...

We will continue to offer some fun opportunities throughout the year for all of our families to enjoy together. We hope you will be able to join us occasionally for these events.

- **Mass**

While the dispensation of Mass attendance has not been lifted we do still encourage you to participate in Mass each week. We are now live-streaming Mass from St. Mark every weekend (currently Sunday at 8:00am). The connection to watch live or watch it later can be found on our linkage website: <http://franklinhardincatholic.org>
- **Bible Study**

We are offering a virtual Bible Study for anyone interested. This would work for adults or older youth. Virtual gatherings will be set up depending on participants' availability. Please let me know if you are interested.

 - **Christ Our Life Conference**

The Conference is happening!!!! This year there will be options to attend physically or virtually by livestream (\$25 adult or \$15 youth). Social spacing procedures will be implemented to ensure safety for all attending in person. You can purchase a ticket online for in person or live-streaming: www.christourlifeiowa.com/tickets To view our planned Covid Precautions visit: www.christourlifeiowa.com/covid-precautions Switching from an in-person to livestream ticket is possible if done by Monday, Sept. 21, 2020. More info on how this will work later. Please let me know if you have any questions or are interested in attending his wonderful opportunity.

- **FORMED**

Did you know that our linkage is subscribed to FORMED? We have purchased access for all parishioners, so it is FREE for you! Choose from a wide variety of entertaining movies, enlightening programs, inspiring talks, and a great selection of popular ebooks—all just a click away! It's EASY and FREE to Register, and there is even an app for your digital devices.

Go to www.franklinhardincatholic.formed.org

Click "Register"

Enter your name, email address, and desired password

You're all ready to access the inspiring and engaging content on FORMED!

Sacramental Prep

- **Eucharist**

- We have a couple more students that will be celebrating the sacrament for the first time. Please remember to keep all these young parishioners in your prayers.
- Updated celebration information and pictures can be found on our Faith Formation Facebook page.

- **Confirmation**

- Sacramental preparatory sessions will begin soon.
- More details coming in our Zoom meeting next week.
- Grades 9-10. Older students also welcome to join us for sessions.

I apologize for the length of this email, but hope that it helps answer questions. Do not hesitate to reach out if you would like more information or have any questions. While this year will look quite different than it has in the past I am still looking forward to another great year!!

Brenda Strayer
St. Mark Director of Faith Formation