

ST. MARK FAITH FORMATION

September 2020

While this year looks different, we are excited to begin a new year of Faith Formation programming at St. Mark. Thank you to parents that picked up materials the past two weeks. I will be contacting those who have not picked them up soon to set up at time.

Home lessons begin for Pre-K through Grade 8 this week (September 16). High school students began meeting virtually last Sunday (September 13) and will meet again this Sunday (September 20). Please see the grade break-down below for details for your child.

Once per month we will have **virtual family activities**. These are for parents and students (Kindergarten-Grade 10) together. You can be on the same device, but out of respect the same rules apply as far as sharing your screen and showing faces. Contact me for the connection information for these events (the same connection will be used each month):

Topic: St. Mark Family Events

Time: once per month on Wednesdays (6:30-7:15pm)

I encourage you to check out some special offerings for adults below. We have some fabulous events coming up the next two weekends that we are excited about!

We are beginning the year with a mixture of home lessons and virtual learning.

Registration:

- RE registration is online again this year.
- Here is the link to register: <https://www.myschoolsystems.com/ArchDBQ/DBQ108/registration.php?who=student>
- Use your username and password from previous years. If you cannot remember your username, contact me and I can give it to you.
- If you have any difficulties, please let me know. All students, regardless of if they are attending our sessions or home-schooling, need to be registered for our records.

Kindergarten – Grade 3:

- Sessions to be done at home begin this week (September 16). The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies that you picked up. Should take about 20 minutes per week.
- 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 consider families with children in more than one grade. If having devices

available is a problem, please let me know ASAP. Please review the Zooming policies with your student prior to class beginning. Here is the connection information:

Topic: St. Mark RE - Group A

Time: once per month on Wednesdays (6:30-7:15pm)

Join Zoom Meeting: contact me for the link.

- Once a month we will hold virtual family activities. All students and at least one parent is expected to attend these events.
- This year we are excited to offer our youth another great and fun way to learn about the faith... a game called Wanderlight. Each family will receive an email with their usernames and passwords. I encourage you to check out this resource with your kids. If they have a device available, it is a great way to pass the time while traveling or waiting for appointments. As administrator I can see how students are progressing, so if you ever have any questions, let me know.

Grades 4-6:

- Sessions to be done at home begin this week (September 16). The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies that you picked up. Should take about 20 minutes per week.
- 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 consider families with children in more than one grade. If having devices available is a problem, please let me know ASAP. Please review the Zooming policies with your student prior to class beginning. Here is the connection information:

Topic: St. Mark RE - Group B

Time: once per month on Wednesdays (6:30-7:15pm)

Join Zoom Meeting: contact me for the link.

- Once a month we will hold virtual family activities. All students and at least one parent is expected to attend these events.
- This year we are excited to offer our youth another great and fun way to learn about the faith... a game called Wanderlight. Each family will receive an email with their usernames and passwords. I encourage you to check out this resource with your kids. If they have a device available, it is a great way to pass the time while traveling or waiting for appointments. As administrator I can see how students are progressing, so if you ever have any questions, let me know.

Grades 7-8:

- Sessions to be done at home begin this week (September 16). The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies that you picked up. Should take about 20 minutes per week.
- 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. Please review the Zooming policies with your student prior to class beginning. Here is the connection information:

Topic: St. Mark RE - Group B

Time: once per month on Wednesdays (6:30-7:15pm)

Join Zoom Meeting: contact me for the link.

- Once a month we will hold virtual family activities. All students and at least one parent is expected to attend these events.
- Youth Ministry virtual gatherings will be held once per month. Our next gathering will be Sunday, October 11 (6:45-8:00pm). Join us for fun fellowship (maybe with prizes) and to pray. Connection information:

Topic: Youth Ministry:

Time: once per month on Sundays (6:45-8:00pm)

Join Zoom Meeting: contact me for the link.

- **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 the national federation that puts on NCYC and will make a decision in February.

Grades 9-10:

- Classes have begun! We will be gathering (virtually) typically twice per month for three hours each (we will include breaks). These classes are a combination of Religious Education and Sacramental Prep. Please review the Zooming policies with your student prior to class beginning. Here is the connection information:

Topic: St. Mark Faith Formation - HS

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting: contact me for connection 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 the national federation that puts on NCYC and will make a decision in February.

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>

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.

- **Ember Days Holy Hour**

Fr. Kevin brought back this beautiful Church tradition last year and we are blessed to offer this prayer opportunity at St. Mark this weekend. Please join us Saturday (September 19) beginning at 9:00am in the church. We will spend time in prayer before the blessed sacrament, and Fr. Kevin will give a brief talk. Just like at Mass we will be practicing social distance and masks are encouraged. We hope you will be able to join us.

- **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. Tickets can be purchased online or through me for in person or live-streaming: www.christourlifeiowa.com/tickets To view our planned Covid Precautions visit: www.christourlifeiowa.com/covid-precautions Please let me know if you have any questions or are interested in attending this wonderful opportunity.

- **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.

- **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!

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