

Faith Formation 2022-2023

One-In-Faith 4: St. Andrew's, St. John's, St. Mary's, St. Michael's

## **Dear 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students and families,**

Thank you for choosing to participate in faith formation this year – we are blessed to have you with us!

**Our faith formation program has two main elements:**

### **1) Once-a-month gatherings for students and their parents**

**Our theme for this year is: Getting to Know the Saints**

At most of these gatherings, we will

Begin in church with prayer for all grades/families (5-15 minutes)

Listen to guest speaker on the theme for the night (10 minutes)

Break into groups, according to grade level; each grade will have age-appropriate activity for the theme that evening, led by a teacher & helpers (15-45 minutes). We hope to do a lot of fun things with baking this year!

Pray closing prayer within each grade grouping (5 minutes)

### **2) Activities and homework that are done as a family, in your home, during the rest of the month**

You will receive homework materials for each month at church, at the once-a-month gathering

At the next gathering, your child can turn in their completed homework

For more information, see the **Frequently Asked Questions and the Calendar below!**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Juliann Heller, Rita Meyer, or Blanca Barragan. Information about faith formation is also posted on the One in Faith parishes website ([www.oneinfaith.org](http://www.oneinfaith.org)) and the Faith Formation Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/OneInFaithUnoEnFeMN/>).

Thank you for being a part of our community -- we look forward to getting to know your family a little bit better this year!

Blessings,

Juliann Heller, interim Director of Faith Formation for the One in Faith 4 cluster of parishes (St. Andrew's, St. John's, St. Michael's, and St. Mary's) [faithformation@stmarysofmelrose.com](mailto:faithformation@stmarysofmelrose.com) or message through the Remind App

Rita Meyer, part-time Faith Formation Admin. Asst. [faithformation@stmarysofmelrose.com](mailto:faithformation@stmarysofmelrose.com) or text/call (320) 290-5687

Blanca Barragan, part-time Faith Formation Asst./Hispanic Ministry [stmarys@stmarysofmelrose.com](mailto:stmarys@stmarysofmelrose.com) or (320) 491-4860

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q:** Why don't the students have classroom sessions every Wednesday throughout the whole year? Why does the faith formation program devote as much time as it does to activities like prayer, service projects, and fun activities?

**A:** We do not have classes every Wednesday, because we would like to give parents the flexibility and the opportunity to teach their children some of the material at home, at times that work best for your family.

**A:** There is a "theological" (religious) reason for why our faith formation program tries to keep a mix of different kinds of activities: some academic/classroom time, some service opportunities, some prayer experiences, and some activities that are simply for fun, to help build community. We have this mix because as Catholics we believe that we find God in all those areas of our lives – God is present when we study, when we serve others, when we pray, and when we find joy in each other's company.

There are also some "pedagogical" (teaching) reasons for the mix of activities. Everyone learns in different ways. Some students will learn more about God through classroom work, some better through service, etc. In addition, research shows that people learn better when they enjoy what they are doing (or at least when they don't dread it!). So the more we can do to make faith formation enjoyable (by mixing things up!), the better our youth will learn.

**Q:** What will this mix of activities look like for students in grades 1, 3-6?

**A:** For these grades, we will have a One in Faith gathering for students and parents roughly one time per month. On most of these evenings, we will have a mix of study, prayer, service, and fun. We would encourage you to talk with your children about how all these different elements are essential ways to deepen their relationship with God and neighbor. It is just as important for them to come to a fun night or a prayer night as it is for them to show up for a class night.

**Q:** Why are parents/ guardians asked to attend the One in Faith gatherings?

**A:** Throughout our faith formation program, we have been trying to do a better job of involving adults. There are a number of reasons for this effort: 1) By involving parents/guardians in their children's faith formation, we are better enabling them to fulfill their baptismal promise, to raise their child to know and love God, 2) By involving adults in faith formation, we are setting a good example for our youth – showing them that a person's faith formation doesn't stop after the Sacrament of Confirmation, 3) We are enabling youth and adults to learn from each other – we all have different stories and different gifts and we'd like to help people to share them a bit with each other.

\*If it is impossible for any parent/guardian to attend, due to work schedules or child care issues, a grandparent or aunt or uncle is certainly welcome to come instead! (also, there are a few retired parishioners who have said they would be willing to attend some sessions with a student whose parent could not make it – let us know if you need to borrow a volunteer grandparent!)

## **Calendar for Grades 1, 3-6 for 2022-2023:**

**All gatherings are from 6:00-7:00 at St. Mary's Church, unless otherwise noted**

8/31 Opening night for all students/families

9/14 September gathering for Getting to Know the Saints

10/26 October gathering for Getting to Know the Saints All Saints Liturgy + class

11/16 November gathering for Getting to Know the Saints

12/14 Advent gathering: parish Advent Reconciliation liturgies (see bulletin for times and locations)

12/21 December gathering for Getting to Know the Saints + Christmas party!

1/18 January gathering for Getting to Know the Saints

2/15 February gathering for Getting to Know the Saints

TUESDAY 2/21 Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday celebration - stop by St. Mary's church before school (7:30-8:00 AM) to pick up a doughnut!

2/22 Ash Wednesday liturgies

3/15 March gathering for Getting to Know the Saints

3/22: Lent gathering: parish Lent Reconciliation liturgies (see bulletin for times and locations)

4/5 Easter jelly-bean service project

4/26 April gathering for Getting to Know the Saints (+ registration for next year!)