

TO: Families with school-aged children in St. Mary's, Canandaigua and St. Bridget's, Bloomfield
FROM: Deacon Claude E. Lester, Director of Faith Formation
DATE: August 15, 2012
RE: Faith formation offerings for 2012-2013 school year

One of the important ways we develop in our faith is in the time we give to growing in information about God and His Church. Life is busy. You know that all too well. Every moment counts. So, how we use our time is a critical decision.

In our faith formation programs at St. Mary's and St. Bridget's, we attempt to give families many options to grow in our knowledge of God and the Church. This year we have added the option of learning online in the convenience of your home.

We have switched texts to a series that offers the entire grades 1 - 8 curriculum online. That means you can continue to choose to attend FAMILY programming on Sundays, OR, weekly GRADE LEVEL sessions on Mondays, OR, ONLINE GRADE LEVEL sessions 24/7 at your home computer.

Each year Sunday sports schedules interfere more and more with the FAMILY sessions. And each year, not only is it harder to find catechists able to teach in the late afternoon block of time during the week, but students have more and more after school commitments which conflict with the classes.

So, we are moving in a direction - NOT to phase out the FAMILY or AFTER SCHOOL programs, but to acknowledge that there ARE other options – and we need to explore them.

This year when you register your child(ren) for FAITH FORMATION, please clearly indicate which is your preferred option. Children in the weekly program will continue to use textbooks. Those in the FAMILY and ONLINE options will each receive a designated log-in/password to have 24/7 access to the online course work at home.

The monthly FAMILY sessions will continue to develop aspects of our faith found in the grade level texts; this year, those sessions will be open to any parish family who wishes to join us for them. Those unable to fit in the available sections of weekly grade level classes will be able to do their learning online at home. This option will also avoid overly large groups in the sections of the after school program.

I have taken great care in reviewing this new series, titled "Faith and Life" from Ignatius Press. I find it to be not only clear in its portrayal of Church teaching, but also very good in the ways it uses technology to reinforce learning through full text voiceover, instant test results, rich multimedia, adjustable font size (which my old eyes found particularly helpful), interactive maps, engaging games, video prayers, accessible vocabulary, an audio glossary, flashcards and practical exercises. And, because of the way the technology is set up, I will be able to monitor each student's progress throughout the school year. *(Because of technical problems with the parish website, forms and schedules are not available through that medium this year).*

Please use the forms attached to this e mail. Forms and schedules for classes and sacramental preparation are available at the doors of each church and in the St. Mary's PAC office.

Interest in sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist presumes enrollment in a formation program for at least one year previous as well as the current school year. Enrollment for sacramental preparation is done at the time of OVERVIEW meetings for parents and candidates for that sacrament.

As always, as you have questions about any of our programs of faith formation, do not hesitate to contact me at 394-1220, extension 15 or at clester@dor.org.