



ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE PARISH

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September 12, 2018

Dear Parishioners:

It's time to begin another year of praying, learning, and growing together as a...

A FAMILY OF *Faith*

Last year was our first taking this new approach to religious education and faith formation, which aims to *teach the Catholic faith to parents so that they might then pass it on to their children.*

You might be thinking, "But I'm not trained to do that!" As Jesus often said, "Do not be afraid!" A *Family of Faith* is designed to give you, as Catholic parents, the essential materials and tools you need to accomplish this crucial task—a responsibility you accepted on the day your children were baptized. But you've already been given something even more important: *the Lord has given you his grace to do this!* Passing on the faith to your own children is part of your God-given vocation of parents, and God never calls us to do something without also giving us everything we need to accomplish it.

As you might expect, our first year with this new program was not without a few bumps in the road, so we're making some adjustments to our program based on experience and the suggestions of the families involved. But the bumps were very small compared to the big rewards. **Be sure to check out the enclosed sheet with comments from families at the program's end last spring.** We're looking forward to another great year!

Our first parent session is scheduled for Sunday, September 23, 9:15am-10:45am, and will be held in the parish hall at St. John Bosco Church. That's coming real quick, so please register as soon as possible! As an incentive: bring your completed form to this Sunday's Holy Harvest Festival, and your family eats for free.

We offered childcare last year during parent sessions, but very few families took advantage of it. If you would like us to regularly provide childcare for your children this year, please indicate that on your registration form and we will see what we can do.

I look forward to working with you and your children again this year as we allow Jesus to transform St. André's Parish into a *family of faith.*

► **CALLING ALL FATHERS!**

Are you worried whether or not your kids will stay Catholic? Studies show that if only mom is with the kids in church, then 2% (that's just 1 out of 50) will "keep the faith"—but if dad is there, that number rises to 44%. Man up, dads! Get involved. **Your kids need you!**

In Christ's peace,

Fr. Joseph Giroux
Pastor

Have questions? Looking for answers?

■ Why did St. André's Parish make this big change in religious education?

To put it bluntly: because our "traditional" Sunday School/CCD program was no longer working. Its past success depended on families regularly participating in Sunday Mass and actively practicing their faith at home...but these can no longer be taken for granted. *A Family of Faith* aims to foster both.

■ How does *A Family of Faith* work?

A *parent session* (90 minutes) is held near the beginning of each month, to help parents deepen their own knowledge of the Catholic faith. (While only one parent is required to attend, both are highly encouraged to do so.) There are two *at-home lessons* (30-45 minutes each) to be completed per month, with additional suggested activities to help make the Catholic faith a part of your family's daily life. And then there is a *community meeting* (90 minutes) near the end of each month, which is for the entire family, to build community and ensure accountability.

■ Where is this all happening? And what's the schedule? We're a busy family!

A Family of Faith is meant to be more flexible than a traditional religious education program. Parent sessions (and most community meetings) will be held in the parish hall at St. John Bosco Church from 9:15am-10:45am, in order to allow your family to attend Mass either beforehand or afterwards. You determine when to do the two monthly lessons—at home, on your family's schedule, and at your child's level. The program runs from September to May. A calendar for the year will be provided at the first parent session. *Yes, this is a significant investment of your time...but it's far less than what is asked by a typical sport or other organized youth activity...and—really—aren't your children worth it!?!?*

■ Who is this for? What if we don't have children or our kids are grown?

The at-home lessons are geared for kids in grades K-8...but all parishioners are most welcome to get involved. Teens can help teach younger siblings, or assist with childcare. All adults can come and benefit from the teaching during the parent sessions, and those without their own children might consider volunteering to accompany and mentor another family that could use a helping hand.

■ What about First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation?

Specific preparation to receive these Sacraments is something separate from *A Family of Faith*, and additional information will be provided after registration. Participation in *A Family of Faith* is expected of all families preparing for a Sacrament—even those enrolled at Holy Family School. First Penance/First Communion are typically received in 2nd grade, and Confirmation in 7th grade. Families that intended to have children receiving one of these Sacraments in 2019-2020 should start participating in *A Family of Faith* in 2018-2019.

■ Who is running this program?

A team of staff and volunteers from the parish is coordinating *A Family of Faith*. Our priests will teach most of the parent lessons. Be sure to thank them when you meet them at parent sessions and community gatherings, and say a prayer for them as you benefit from all of their hard work.

■ Why is there a cost for registration?

We believe this small investment by each family will make a big return, while also encouraging a family's ongoing involvement. The annual fee of \$25 does not even cover the cost of the books used for the program (let alone other expenses and materials), but it will help to ease our very tight parish budget. *Please know that no family will be turned away because of an inability to pay.*

■ Do you want to learn more about *A Family of Faith*?

Visit the publisher's webpage at <https://sophiainstituteforteachers.org/shop/family-of-faith>.