



Saint Mary's, Saints Mary & Martha, and Our Lady of the Snow
15 Clark St, Auburn NY 13021
315-252-3439

A New Vision for Faith Formation

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up.
Deuteronomy 6: 4-7

The above quote from Deuteronomy makes up the great commandment for our Jewish brothers and sisters. The first part of the quote is known as the *Shema*, and every Jewish person learns this and puts it to memory at a young age. It is no coincidence that when the Pharisees asked Jesus “what is the great commandment”, he repeated the Shema, and went on to add:

“The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:39).

When we love God with our whole being, we are formed and con-formed more to Him. As we are formed into God we learn how to really love others as ourselves. **Encountering** the Love of God, **Engaging** with the teachings of the Church, and becoming a **Witness** of the Faith make up the three aspects of our Faith Formation programs.

Faith Formation has been central in helping people meet Jesus, learn the faith, and forming them as disciples of Jesus Christ since the beginning of the Church. The process of Faith Formation has taken on many different looks throughout the years, and again, because of Covid-19 we are re-envisioning Faith Formation in our parishes to best meet the needs of the faithful. I am excited to offer three programs for the 2020-2021 Faith Formation year: **A Family Hybrid Program (K-7)**, **Family Online Program (K-7)**, and **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Pre-K)**.

The catechism calls the family a *domestic church* (2204) and *the original cell of social life* (2207). Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children (2223). Therefore, the family is central to our faith formation programs. Everything we do in Faith Formation is to support the family growing in holiness and the formation as disciples of Jesus Christ!

The Family of Faith Hybrid program (Kindergarten through 7th Grade) combines whole family at home learning, and age specific class time at our monthly gatherings. Families will meet one Sunday a month at either St. Mary's before the 10:45am Mass OR at Our Lady of the Snow at St. Patrick's in Cato after the 8:30am Mass. If for some reason we had to stop meeting in person for health reasons the program we would meet virtually through Zoom once a month.

A typical Sunday gathering will look like this:

- Gather for opening prayer and whole family learning
- Snack
- Move to grade specific learning. While students are in their class, parents will have a time for learning and sharing.



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- Come back together for closing prayer and announcements
- Virtual gatherings may be a part of this program as we navigate this year

Families will be split into teams. Each team will be assigned a Sunday to help the DRE. The team will be responsible to help set up, provide a snack, and help clean up.

**See tentative schedule on the website.

The Family Online Program (Kindergarten through 7th Grade) is where students with parental guidance will complete lessons online. Quarterly the student and a parent/guardian will meet with the Director of Religious Education (DRE) to review the main concepts learned. Students will have a physical book as well as a digital book. Activities will be completed online and tracked by the DRE. There will be a schedule of when lessons should be completed.

A parent/guardian and student will schedule a half hour meeting with the DRE in November, February, and May to review the main topics be learned at home.

Pre-School Program (3 & 4year olds) is a two-part program. First, students will complete activities at home with their parents using the **Allelu** Program. Second, students will have access to use the **Atrium of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**. This program founded on the principles of Dr. Maria Montessori. It is a unique approach to catechesis founded in both Sacred Scripture and the Liturgy: rich with the spiritual teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. Beautiful and orderly, the prepared environment, called the Atrium, is designed specifically for children to work with a wide range of materials; materials that are thoughtfully made to reflect beauty. The Atrium is ordered to allow children to work uninterrupted with the materials encouraging concentration. It is a peaceful place to learn, grow and fall in love with God.

- Atrium schedule for the fall will be available by the end of August

NOTE: as we navigate this year there will be a need to re-evaluate and refine our programs to best meet safety protocols on an ongoing basis.

Family Faith Enrichment

Family Faith Enrichment opportunities will take place throughout the year. These opportunities will be for the whole family or for parents/guardians. The first enrichment opportunity will start in September and can be started at any time.



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- **Feeding Your Family's Soul: Dinner Table Spirituality** has won second prize in the Family Life category from the Catholic Press Association! Feeding Your Family's Soul is a vital tool to enable parents to transform a regular dinner time into a prayerful faith lesson for their elementary school to high school aged children. It will indeed help to fulfill the Catholic Church's vision for evangelization in the family and beyond. Through 52 fun and creative faith lessons (one for each week of the year), this one-of-a-kind book will encourage parents and caregivers to seize the opportunity in teaching the Catholic faith to the children (the captive audience waiting to eat!) while gathered at the dinner table, and while reminding them of the value of coming together as a family to break bread and share hearts. Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle has recently started writing a column for Legatus Magazine called "Feeding the Foodie" and has begun filming a new TV series for EWTN called "Feeding Your Family's Soul". See her interview on Boston Catholic TV: www.feedingyourfamilyssoul.com
- If you are interested in ordering Feeding Your Family's Soul, please let me know as we can get a discount with multiple orders.

As we journey through this 2020-2021 Faith Formation year, parent input is going to be critical in refining our programs, keeping everyone safe, and most importantly keeping everyone moving forward in faith. Please share your ideas, thoughts, concerns, hopes, and dreams with me so that together beautiful things can happen in Auburn and Northing Cayuga county.

We want to offer something for everyone and have everyone involved in growing as disciples. The journey of faith is lifelong and ongoing and there is nothing more important than building our relationship with Jesus Christ. So, join us this year as we fall more in love with Jesus, His Church, and one another.

In the Peace of Christ,

Mr. Carlo Stebbings

Director of Faith Formation

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