



St Mary's, Sts Mary and Martha, Our Lady of the Snow and
Good Shepherd Catholic Community
Office address: 299 Clark Street, Auburn NY
Office phone#: 315-252-7593

Faith Formation Vision

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

This passage 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.

Jesus told us that the greatest commandment is to love God and the second is to love others. At the heart of discipleship is Love. Our Faith Formation vision is built around the Life Changing Love of God and the family as the center of catechesis. Together we Encounter, Engage, and Witness to the Life changing Love of God and all that is True, Beautiful, and Good in the Catholic Church. **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 discipleship formation.

Auburn is blessed with two excellent Catholic Schools that offer top notch Catholic education, St. Albert the Great Academy (Pre-K-6) and Tyburn Academy (7-12). Bishop Matano highly recommends parents to consider having their children educated in a Catholic School. The Bishop considers this the best option for forming our young people in the faith.

For children and families unable to attend Catholic school, you are invited to participate in our parish faith formation programs. At the center of the vision for Faith Formation is the family. Parents have the awesome role and responsibility of being the first and most important teachers of their children. Nothing can replace the role of the parent in forming children in the faith. The role of the Faith Formation Office and the programs we offer is to support parents in fulfilling the promise they made at their child's baptism “to raise them up in the faith”. 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!

This year we are offering four distinct programs with a focus on the age specific formation needs of our young people and families, including:

- a) *Pre-K (3&4)*-the **Allelu** program with **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** time in the atrium.
- b) Kindergarten- **Kindergarten Faith Club**
- c) *1st through 5th grade* - **Family of Faith**.
- d) *6th and 7th grade* – **Catholic Connections**



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Allelu and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (*Pre-K 3 & 4*) 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.

Kindergarten Faith Club The kindergarten Faith Club will meet at the same time as the Family of Faith and will use the Word of Life book from the Augustine Institute. The Word of Life Student Text makes learning the faith effective, engaging, and fun with Bible stories, contemporary children's stories, lives of the saints, and activities for a variety of learning styles. The text consists of core lessons, as well as four liturgical season lessons. Images used in each chapter range from photographs depicting a real-life situation, contemporary art depicting a Bible narrative, and sacred art that depicts an event in salvation history to draw students into the mysteries of Christ, leading them to understand doctrinal elements of the faith more fully. Every chapter has a page for parents that provides a brief summary of what the child learned in class and a variety of ways to live the faith in daily life.

Family of Faith (*1st through 5th Grade*) combines large group gatherings and at home learning. Families will meet two Sundays a month. The first Sunday everyone meets at St. Mary's at 9:30am. Then we meet the third Sunday of the month at either St. Mary's OR at St. Patrick's in Cato, both at 9:30am. 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.

Catholic Connections (*6th and 7th Grade*) students will meet at the same time as the Kindergarten Faith Club and Family of Faith. The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers, is a unique program, differing from traditional religion texts in appearance and approach. Its tested design engages middle school students and maximizes readability and understanding. Used with the Bible, The Catholic Connections Handbook can serve as the primary text for two or three years. The handbook approach is complete in covering the content of faith and flexible in the variety of ways it supports the learning process. The Catholic Connections Handbook will help your middle schoolers grow in their faith and answer the call to be disciples of Christ.

Family Faith Enrichment

Throughout the year there will be monthly family enrichment opportunities. Some of these will be gatherings and some of them will be activities that the family does on the own. I hope your family will decide to partake in these Family Faith Enrichment activities.



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Holy Mass at the Center of our Week

The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of our faith. The most important thing a family can do to grow in faith and in their relationship with Jesus Christ is to attend Mass. There is no other place that we can come face to face with our God than in the Eucharist. Decide as a family to make your participating in Holy Mass the center of your week!

If Catholic School and these options do not work for you, please contact the Faith Formation office to talk about other unique options that may work for your family. We are here for you if you have questions, concerns, or just need someone to pray for you!

In the Peace of Christ,

Mr. Carlo Stebbings, Director of Faith Formation

Carlo.stebbing@dor.org

[Sr. Anne Saphara, Administrative Assistant](#)

Anne.Saphara@dor.org