



SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL CATHOLIC PARISH

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Greetings and blessings to you as we find ourselves cautiously living in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, keeping our hearts and prayers aimed toward its end! It is truly hard to believe that nearly a year has gone by since I began my ministry with you at Saint Katharine Drexel Parish! I have enjoyed getting to know all of you through our *Living In Faith Together (LIFT)* program, which will again gather us together as families, but in a very different way than last year. COVID-19 has challenged our day-to-day lives and given us “virtual” alternatives to our meeting in person, for school, church and social gatherings.

As a parish, we have been open since June 1st for daily and weekend Masses and have also finished celebrating Sacraments of Initiation for Adults as well as First Eucharist and Confirmation which were originally scheduled to be celebrated in April, during the Easter Season. When it came to deciding whether we would begin our LIFT sessions this fall in-person or virtually, we decided that online sessions would be the best way to ensure the health and safety of our families, keeping in mind either meeting in person or online, we would have to still schedule multiple sessions instead of one per month.

If we met in person, we would have to limit the amount of people attending, following all protocols for safe distancing during sessions and thoroughly sanitizing immediately following each session. Also, catechists would have to teach the same session two or more times per month since our groups would be split into smaller numbers. Meeting online, the only reason to hold multiple sessions is the understanding that even though there may be enough devices/computers in the home, the more bandwidth used with video conferencing causes spotty service and interference. As we use services like Zoom to hold our meetings, we realize this is the case, especially since our parish service areas are so rural in nature, signals are not strong. Also, we found a way to schedule sessions for each grade, with catechists only having to teach once per month.

Here are some main points to lead us into the program this year:

- We will re-evaluate the program based on CDC, state and diocesan protocols and guidelines, hoping to return to in-person sessions at the start of 2021.
- **Sessions will be held on Sundays, starting September 6th, from 9:00 to 10:00 AM**, leaving enough time for families to still attend 11:00 AM Mass in person.

- Sunday sessions are organized in this manner (with the exception of December, as noted on our schedule):
 - **1st Sunday of the Month—Whole Family Attends** (use of one device is fine—primarily the focus will be a session for parents; however we will have an opening and closing which includes everyone in the family)
 - **2nd Sunday of the Month-Grades 1-5 with their catechists**
 - **3rd Sunday of the Month-Grades 6-Confirmation with their catechists**
 - **4th Sunday of the Month-Families on Mission** (Families participate in opportunities to help those in need, and in our parish community through prayer, events and celebrations) This will be further explained in our first session.

- As before, catechists will do one lesson per month with your child, and there is a detailed schedule of all lessons assigned to be done at home. After completion of each lesson, there is a short online assessment/quiz that should be completed by each child and the results are emailed to me.

- **We are using the same book series as last year, from Loyola Press entitled *Christ Our Life: Family Catechesis*, for Grades 1-7. Those are being distributed to your family today.**

- **Our Confirmation Program runs for two years, with specific content beginning as early as 7th Grade. Our first-year Confirmation 7th-Graders will be offered special Confirmation-related content at the beginning of 2021, either online or in person (the choice of venue will be evaluated in a few months, due to COVID-19 health and safety concerns). Materials used will be from St. Mary's Press, entitled *Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith*. We will be scheduling a retreat during Lent and a day of service also in spring. A special schedule for the year will be forthcoming within the first month of LIFT.**

- **2nd Year Confirmation program (for Grades 8-9) is using primarily an online intensive format from St. Mary's Press, entitled *Called to Mercy*, which prepares young persons for a mission of discipleship and service to others, through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. There also is extra content for the 8th -Graders which includes Scripture study and teachings on the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Families with candidates for Confirmation are also receiving more specifics on this program in the packet you received today, along with a schedule for Confirmation 2020-21.**

- The books, along with our monthly LIFT sessions, cover topics from the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Creed, Sacraments, Moral Life and Prayer and special seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.

Please see the enclosed schedule for more details on monthly themes, specific dates of our gatherings, and at-home assignments. The schedule runs through the month of December, pending changes after January 1st. The program will continue through the month of April 2021.

Above all things, we want to thank you sincerely for all your efforts within your family to become more the “Domestic Church”. **The Church upholds parents as the primary educators of your children in our Faith. It is my goal as your parish Director of Evangelization and Faith Formation to fully support parents and guardians in this role and I am available to you at any time. During the time I spend with you monthly, I will strive to assist you with ideas, structure and simplicity, so your families will enjoy what you are doing together, and more fully experience God at home and everywhere you go!**

Enclosed, you will also find a LIFT Registration Form. If you have not already done so, please complete the form and return it to the parish no later than Monday, August 31, 2020 along with \$50.00 fee per family. If the fee presents a financial burden, please contact me as soon as possible. No one will be turned away due to financial hardship!

For those of you with children preparing for reception of First Sacraments (Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation), additional information will be forthcoming via email or phone call.

See you on September 6th, and if you have further needs, concerns or questions, please phone or email me directly.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Deb Augustine
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