



CHURCH OF SAINT PETER FAITH FORMATION

MISSION STATEMENT:

**INSPIRING A WAY OF LIFE CENTERED ON THE SACRAMENTS,
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF THE
CATHOLIC FAITH. INSPIRING FUTURE SAINTS.**

INSPIRING A WAY OF LIFE

Luigi Guissani, the founder of the Catholic lay movement Communion and Liberation, writes about the double component of man's encounter with Christ.

"First, there is the fact of an encounter—the encounter with the reality of Christ—an inevitable occasion, an indelible event in the life of the person who has this experience. Second, there is the attention paid to that fact, our 'remaining' in that encounter, our commitment to it."

Following an encounter with Jesus, catechesis draws students into a deeper discovery of who it is they have encountered through a systematic study of the faith. This catechesis is given to equip students to remain in their encounter with Christ through a converted way of life.

Pope Paul VI writes in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." To inspire students to live a transformed way of life, centered on Christ, catechists themselves must witness to a life of joy and virtue that comes from their commitment to Christ and His Church.

CENTERED ON THE SACRAMENTS,

The Catholic Church, instituted by Christ, is the fundamental sacrament. The 7 individual sacraments are actualizations of the fundamental sacrament, the Church. These 7 sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ that give us grace. Although our gracious God can pour out grace in many ways, we know for certain that grace comes to us through the sacraments. This gift of grace is indispensable for us to be saved.

In Baptism, we become children of God and are given the infused theological virtues of faith, hope and love. This new life begun in Baptism is nourished by the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In receiving the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus, present to us in the eucharist, Catholics are sustained in their spiritual life, stimulated for further growth in love, repaired in their hearts from the effects of venial sin and given joy. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, we receive the seven-fold spirit. We are given graces and gifts to accomplish our God given mission. We are empowered to defend the faith and commissioned to spread the kingdom.

The primary study of theology is the experience of the sacraments and liturgy, while the systematic studying of the faith is the secondary study of theology. Convicting students to live a vibrant sacramental life is critical to catechesis.



CHURCH OF SAINT PETER FAITH FORMATION

RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS,

Saint John Paul II writes in *Catechesi Tradendae*,

“A certain number of children baptized in infancy come for catechesis in the parish without receiving any other initiation into the faith and still without any explicit personal attachment to Jesus Christ; they only have the capacity to believe placed within them by Baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit...This means that "catechesis" must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith, but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace, with opening the heart, with converting, and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith.”

Students come to catechism class with different levels of personal attachment to Jesus. Some are disposed to the gift of faith from the sacrament of baptism but still do not believe. Catechesis is meant to encourage a lifelong surrender to Jesus.

Saint John Paul II additionally writes “at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, ‘the only Son from the Father...full of grace and truth,’ who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.” To not miss the heart of catechesis, students ought to be encountering Jesus and coming to know him as one who is alive and present to them.

AND KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Frank Sheed in *Theology for Beginners* writes, “knowledge serves love in a still better way, because each new thing learned and meditated about God is a new reason for loving him.” As students are catechized and presented the truths of the Catholic Faith, growth in knowledge is meant to go hand in hand with growth in love. We learn so as to better love.

INSPIRING FUTURE SAINTS.

Pope Paul VI in *Lumen Gentium* writes,

“The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone of His disciples of every condition....Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity...In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ.”

Jesus offers the strength to become a saint to all of his disciples. Sanctity is not for a select elite, it is the invitation and calling of all. The catechist is to share this great calling and encourage the students to pursue holiness and sanctity in their lives.