

St. Patrick Parish Catechetical Plan

A Parish Plan for the Formation of Disciples for Christ

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

*St. Patrick Roman Catholic Church
is a welcoming community in a traditional and Eucharistic setting
focused on prayer, service, and life-long faith formation
on the values and teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church.*

(adopted January 18, 2018)

(revised for 2019-20)

(revised for 2021-22)

St. Patrick Parish
34 Amherst Street
Milford, New Hampshire 03055

Catechetical Plan Task Force

Developed Summer 2018

On May 8, 2017, a core team of parishioners and the Coordinator of Faith Formation and Fr. Dennis set out to complete the task of writing a new Catechetical Plan. The mission would be to develop a plan of life-long faith formation for St. Patrick Parish, with the help and direction of the Holy Spirit and guided by the Gospels and Church Teachings, with the goal of forming disciples of all ages for Jesus Christ and His Church!

The Task Force spent the last year familiarizing ourselves with the major catechetical documents of the Church for the last 30 years. We then moved to assess the current reality of our catechetical programs by surveying the parish with a questionnaire and convening several focus groups for discussion and evaluation on the present program and a needs assessment for the future. The results of these assessment tools were compiled and this Catechetical Plan was written for implementation and will be reviewed annually by the Pastoral Council's **Faith Formation Commission**.

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CHURCH DOCUMENTS

GENERAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS Congregation for the Clergy – Rome, 1997 The Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis

1. Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith.
2. Catechesis promotes a knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the sacraments.
3. Catechesis promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ.
4. Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ.
5. Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.
6. Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.

“These six tasks of catechesis constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: *the formation of disciples of Jesus.*”

(National Directory for Catechesis 20, p. 61-63;
General Directory for Catechesis p.86-87)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (as revised) United States of America Copyright © 1994, rev 1997 US Adult Catholic Catechism © 2005 United States Catholic Conference, Inc.

“The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a statement of the Church’s faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, Apostolic Tradition, and the Church’s Magisterium. It is a sure and reliable reference for teaching the faith.” – *Summary of the National Directory for Catechesis*, USCCB, 2005

All our catechesis must be based on and conform to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Catechism is structured around four “fundamental dimensions” (often called the “four pillars”) of the Christian life. All catechesis must be [designed to develop] these four dimensions:

1. The Profession of Faith/Creed (what we believe)
2. The Celebration of the Liturgy/Sacraments (how we worship)
3. The Christian Moral Life (how we live the faith)
4. Prayer (how we stay connected with the Trinity)

In 1992, Pope John Paul II encouraged the national bishops' conferences to write national catechisms suited to the needs of their local churches. The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* is intended to encourage adults to grow in their faith by study of the teaching of the Church presented in the Universal Catechism (the CCC).

DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL PLAN Diocese of Manchester, 2010

The catechetical plan of the Diocese of Manchester presents six elements of catechetical ministry the Diocese of Manchester intends to foster. This section addresses how the diocese will provide leadership and resources to parishes as a means of strengthening the growth of each element.

The six elements of the catechetical plan:

1. Lifelong Faith Formation
2. Youth Ministry
3. Sacramental Preparation
4. Evangelization
5. Liturgical Catechesis
6. Continuing Education

The entire Diocesan Catechetical Plan can be found at: www.catholicnh.org

THE MISSIONARY MANDATE OF JESUS

Jesus Christ, after his Resurrection together with the Father sent the Holy Spirit in order that he might accomplish from within the works of salvation and that he might animate his disciples to continue the mission to the whole world.

The Church, the Body of Christ, founded upon the Apostles, was given the responsibility of safeguarding and handing-on the doctrine of the Apostolic faith and the integrity of **this practice belongs to every member of the Church.** (*General Directory for Catechesis*)

Will My Child Keep the Faith?

One thing that nearly all Catholics agree: It's harder than ever to bring up children Catholic. If you are a parent with older children, you probably know the experience of passing on your religious faith is no easy matter. Some of the more recent ideas of about God and Church, their ideas of right and wrong, and their attitude about active membership in the Church may clash with your own convictions and cause you understandable anxiety.

To further complicate the issue, it has been said by leading Catholic sociologists that today we have at least two distinct generations of Catholics who just do not understand their faith and religion. Not only are many of our Catholic children unaware of their Catholic heritage but now we may have generations of Catholic parents who, for one reason or another, have let their active participation in the Church fall by the wayside.

Our young are NOT hostile to faith and religion. Our young are restless and long for a fuller and more meaningful life. It is the duty of all of us – parents and parish who believe – to pass that faith on to our children and our children’s children. The Church exists to "call us to follow Jesus". That call must be expressed not just in words but in deeds and good example. Will your child keep the faith? That answer rests will ALL of us!

EVANGELIZATION WITH THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP

Everything we do as a Church is Evangelization. It is our reason for being, the purpose for which the Lord established us. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20. We, all of the baptized, are called to be disciples and to make disciples.

GROWTH IN DISCIPLESHIP: to “know who we are” in the light of Christ and in the light of our own Christian beauty and dignity.

A PLAN FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Parents are ***essential collaborators*** in the formation of their child in the ways of faith. The mission of all our parish Christian Formation programs are to partner with parents to assist them with their child to become committed disciples of the Jesus Christ. They aim to unlock the riches of the seven sacraments, of Sacred Scripture, and the life of prayer. Sacraments are the meeting grounds between God and His people. The process of Christian Initiation begins with Baptism ... and is completed with Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. But learning about God is a life-time process and it involves a continual turning toward to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Catholic journey towards God is not a solitary one --- we live and move as a community of faith --- as the People of God --- His Church. It is in this Church that you are asking your child to be initiated into!

THE ROLE OF CATHOLIC PARENTS

The most important task of the catechesis of children is to provide, through the witness of adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith. (National Directory for Catechesis no. 205)

The primary responsibility of raising a child in the ways of faith and religion rests with the parents. Parents take on this responsibility at the Baptism of their child as they give assurance during the Rite of Baptism that they testify to their intention to raise their child in **the practice of the faith** (see below). **This obligation never ends.** The parish is happy to collaborate with parents in every way possible in their role as Christian parents with the parish faith formation and youth ministry programs.

It is essential that following the full Initiation Rites of their children, the FAMILY must energetically and enthusiastically witness their faith and religion by active participation in parish life. In particular, parents (as essential collaborators in their parish faith formation programs) are called on to:

- Esteem their children, seeing in each the face of Christ.
- Witness their own relationship with God in their love for their children as the outcome of God's love.
- Be actively involved in the life of the Church through participation in Sunday liturgies, the sacramental life of the Church, the community life of the parish and stewardship.
- Help their children to respond to the vocation God calls them to in the life of the Church and society.
- Be socially aware, promoting the dignity of human life and nonviolence in the home and in the culture.
- Educate their children in the sanctity of human life and sexuality.
- Collaborate with catechists and teachers by promoting and assessing the life-long development of faith in their children.
- Attend to their own spiritual lives through reflection, prayer and reading of the Scriptures.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRACTICE THE FAITH AS A CATHOLIC?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists 5 precepts.

- I. To attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and resting from servile works.
- II. To observe the days of abstinence and fasting.
- III. To confess our sins to a priest, at least once a year.
- IV. To consider receiving Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at every Mass however the church precept states at least once a year during the Easter Season.
- V. To contribute to the support of the Church.

*VI. To obey the laws of the Church concerning Matrimony.

*VII. To participate in the Church's mission of Evangelization of Souls.
(Missionary Spirit of the Church)

**The last two (#6&7) are included elsewhere in the catechism but are not listed as precepts. And they are equally important. The original seven are listed here for historic educational value.*

THE CHURCH OF THE HOME

Renewal of Family Life Renewal of The Lord's Day Renewal of Catholic Climate and Culture

The Church of the Home is where soul is nurtured at the family altar (the family table) at which we share a communion of food for the body, the mind, and the soul.

The Church of the Home where “prime time” is given to develop the familial union with God that is at the heart of family life.

The Church of the Home is where prayer is first and devotion is formed ... as “the ground” on which the family builds its day.

It is in the **Church of the Home** that our intellectual formation really takes place, where good books are read, articles are discussed, and critical thinking is developed. It is there that we learn to revere that which is above and beyond what is merely popular. For what is popular is ever changing; it has no absolutes ... nothing that really lasts ... only things that evaporate with the coming of the next new fad.

Without the **Church of the Home**, education, religious devotion, and the formation of our hearts and souls in the art and skill of loving and commitment are weakened and imperiled. And let us not forget the reality of the past ... it is in the **Church of the Home** where religious vocations find the richest soil to take root.

CATECHETICAL PLAN FOR TOTAL PARISH CATECHESIS

SUMMER VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Current Practices:

- Offered each year, first full week in August – for children ages 4 to 11
- Teens assist adults in providing this program
- Advertised on our website and e-mails, handouts and church bulletin and pulpit

Commendations:

- A good program is in place – On hold during the pandemic

Recommendations:

- Offer Bible classes for all age groups
- Find appropriate program for older teens e.g. “Teen Time Line”

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

Grades K thru 12 – The mission is to partner with parents to foster lifelong faith formation: to encourage a discussion of faith in their homes and beyond: to assist them with their child/ren to become committed Disciples of Jesus

For Grades K-5

Current Practices:

- Finding God from Loyola Press - A Family Faith Formation model that brings a catholic teaching conversation into the home in support of the Domestic Church
- Trained faculty lead sessions of instruction/overview to parents and provide materials for at-home weekly lessons
- Providing a four-year cyclical adult portion for parents; materials coordinate with the lessons the child receives
- One that is approved by the USCCB and Manchester Diocese, covers the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church and helps children to develop as intentional disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Base all catechesis on the four pillars of the Catholic Church (CCC)
- Materials and experiences that teach the four pillars of the catechism of the catholic church

- This program comes with three options: Meet monthly during the school year, Tuesdays at 5pm or Wednesday at 6pm or a two-week summer program offered mid-July.
- Parents attend all classes (8 total)
- Children who wish to become Altar Servers are trained as early as grade 3 depending on COVID restrictions.
- Children are welcome to accompany their parents various church activities
- Children are encouraged to participate in Operation Rice Bowl each year.
- Provide 20 subscriptions of “MagnifiKid” for children ages 6-12 – mass book – to be used by families during mass – families can take them home
- During the Pandemic – all classes are offered on Zoom
- A lending library (found in the parish center) is provided
- Continue to journey with parents: Accompaniment

Commendations:

- The Summer Family Faith Formation program was well received. Parents provided positive feedback
- All adults directly involved with children have satisfactorily completed the diocesan Safe Children’s Program
- Faith Formation parent orientation meetings are provided
- The Zoom classes are well received by the Parents and children – this is a consistent and reliable way to hold class during the Pandemic.

Recommendations:

- Find new ways to communicate education with parents through social media: website/church Facebook/special church seasonal retreats
- Utilize resources from FORMED as supplements to curriculum materials

For Grades 6-12

As we partner with parents our goals are:

- To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
- To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person

Current Practices:

- Meet Sept. thru May - Offered Sunday evenings for 1 ½ hours twice a month

- LifeTeen EDGE NIGHT provides a non-classroom approach that includes music, videos, discussion time, prayer, games, tasks, and mission to nurture teens to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Multiple corporal and spiritual works of mercy opportunities offered.
- Teens are given opportunities to become involved in various church activities
- Parents participation at all meetings
- During the Pandemic it is offered live on Zoom
- During the Zoom classes, during the discussion time, teens will be separated (gr. 6-8) from (gr. 9-12) with their parents to honor the age differences.

Commendations:

- A good comprehensive process is in place
- Parents and teens expressed positive feedback about having parents with teens during classes

Recommendations:

- Develop catechetical programming for older teens and young adults
- Provide Mentors for each young person
- Continue to strongly urge parent participation

Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy - Activities offered for Youth in grades 6 through 12 with the accompany of their parents and Faith Formation Team

- Encouraged to attend Diocesan events
- Adoration offered to teens and parents on First Fridays from 6 to 7pm
- Teens and parents are encouraged and offer their talents as greeter, usher, gift bearer, altar server and lector
- Teens and parents are encouraged to participate in various church activities; such as September Ice Cream Social, October Trunk-a-Treat, Knights of Columbus breakfast, spring cleaning in the church and parish center, assist with the younger parishioners during their various activities – Vacation Bible School, Sacramental Retreats, assist in the Family Faith Formation classes grades 1 through 5.
- Opportunities within Catholic Social Justice Issues offered (example: take part in the Tuesday evening suppers offered at SHARE in Milford, Operation Rice Bowl to raise money for the very poor. Summer projects.

Commendations: A good comprehensive process is in place

Recommendations:

- Continue to strongly urge parent participation
- Set up a ministry that would be a magnet for those involved and not so involved in church life: The ministry should be an outing group that would engage in various activities on and off church grounds.

- Establish a part time paid position for an adult in the parish (or deanery) to compensate for weekend time plus the time put in for planning, recruiting parent volunteers, and delving into insurance issues or release agreements.

FAITH FORMATION/RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF ADULTS (over 21, but programs are open to Young Adults as well)

Current Practices:

The entire parish, others from other parishes and non-Catholics are welcome to attend

- Mondays at 4:30pm and 6:30pm Fr. Dennis will offer classes.
- Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm and Thursday morning Bible Study– Sally Wilkins will offer classes.
- FORMED – a website that offers an incredible amount of solid Catholic educational programs, sacrament supplemental support, movies, book clubs and much more that people of all ages can enjoy. It is used in a group setting and/or at home. Used whenever you want, night or day. Go to our website to sign up free
- Assistants from the church offered if you need help to get established.
- Look for instructions and advertisements in our bulletin, website and from the pulpit.
- Kiosk – located in the church hall - provides CD, booklets and pamphlets of various religious subject that address family life, church teachings and devotions to name a few.
- Every Parishioners Family receives the Parable Magazine via mail
- Learning opportunities are stated during the mass announcements and placed in the bulletin and website.
- Child care is provided. Contact Faith Formation Office to make arrangements.

Commendations:

- Content of the three studies are well received and appreciated by the participants
- Families are verbalizing they do receive the Parable magazine
- The Kiosk is visited and items are taken
- The number of people registering on FORMED is growing each year

Recommendations:

To address scheduling issues (incorporating some suggestions)

- Assess moving the Bible study to Sunday evening, which would probably meet the definition of weekday night, with work the next day, and perhaps satisfy some of the “weekend” respondents.
- Assess weekday, work-hours bible study
- Family faith formation. Assess a periodic assignment from the FORMED set of programs to be accessed via the parish website, and have a once per month gathering to discuss. Format: First half of meeting – group discussion with a

moderator. Second half: presentation by staff member on the main points, or to fill in gaps. Details:

- Moderator needs to connect, probably by phone, to see if anyone is having a problem connecting to the website, and then to FORMED.
- People with children promise to watch with their kids
- Simultaneous kids meeting could be set up with the same format as above if there are enough of them. Depending on age, they could alternatively join the adults.
- If there is a demand, offer child care by recruiting qualified teens from high school level and adults who passed the “Protecting God’s Children” qualifications.
- Assess the interest level in a Christian book club to read a book a month (every other month) and come together to discuss. The book selection will be made, after input, by the staff.
- To address content ideas not addressed above and to bring in those who don’t feel comfortable/confidant talking in a group setting:
- Speakers search committee. Form a small committee of 1 to 3 people to
 - Assess potential for bringing speakers to the parish, or partnering with nearby parishes for a joint appearance.
 - Keep track of offerings posted on the diocesan web site.

Accept survey/focus group respondent recommendations

- for a dedicated activities bulletin board – location to be determined. Or call it the Faith Formation bulletin board to advertise all the above.

TEACHER (CATECHIST) FORMATION

Current Practices:

- Teacher orientation training
- Monthly educational classes
- Model prayer and discussion as well as presentation/instruction in all teacher meetings incorporated
- Encourage teachers to access materials on FORMED for personal growth and faith development
- Individual meetings and support through the year.
- At least one teacher with an assistant teaches in each classroom.
- Every adult 18 or older has taken the “Protecting God’s Children” class and cleared by the Diocesan office before they can teach.
- A “faculty” of individuals with more advanced faith education to serve as teacher-catechists and resources is maintained

Commendations:

- A good comprehensive process is in place

Recommendations:

- Offer both online and regularly-scheduled in-person training

- Look for new learning opportunities to bring to our teachers. Example: webinars and workshops

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS

Restored Order for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation

From the Bishop's Office:

June 2018 marks the start of our diocesan wide transition to celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation in the restored order. With this in mind, I would like to state once again the guidelines for preparing for and celebrating Confirmation and First Communion in third grade and reaffirm our practice of celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in second grade. And so, how is the celebration of Confirmation going to change in the Diocese of Manchester?

The standard age of Confirmation is to be the third grade, and Confirmation will be celebrated at the same liturgy as First Communion. As a result, the preparation and reception of the sacraments of initiation throughout the Diocese of Manchester will be Baptism in infancy, Confirmation and Eucharist in third grade. Although not a sacrament of initiation, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation will be received in the second grade.

Baptism

"Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and: reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ and are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission ... "(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1213)

Parental Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of raising a child in the ways of faith and religion rests with the parents. Parents take on this responsibility at the Baptism of their child as they give assurance during the Rite of Baptism that they testify to their intention to raise their child in the practice of the faith. This obligation really never ends. We are happy to assist parents in every way possible in their role as primary educators of their children in the ways of faith.

Current Practice:

This is a mentoring program where Catholic parents meet with new parents

requesting baptism for their child. The new parents will:

- Be prepared for the Rite of Baptism: What baptism is & what it does.
- Have an understanding of their responsibility of raising their child/ren in the faith
- Have an understanding of the role of godparents during & after the Rite
- Have their questions and concerns addressed
- Be given a copy of *“Outlines of the Catholic Faith.”*

Commendations:

- Includes Adult Faith Formation, *“Reborn”* series DVD and through FORMED
- Provides opportunities for parents to dialogue, Q & A
- Provides formed mentor parents
- Recognition of Baptism Anniversary

Recommendations:

- Provide Christian Parenting resources
- Continue to journey with them: Accompaniment
- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources
- Offer small (support) groups

Confirmation of Baptized Adults

Current Practice:

- Attend 4-6 week Catechetical preparation at the Diocese of Manchester
- Adult Confirmations celebrated at St. Joseph’s Cathedral: Spring & Fall

Commendations:

Recommendations:

- Celebration acknowledging reception of the sacrament
- Provide parish mentors
- Provide better communication about when this is happening
- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources
- Offer small (support) Groups

Confirmation of Baptized Children

Current Practices:

- Two years of Life-Long Faith Formation is required before entering this process
- Two parent /sponsor meetings are provided on Zoom
- Sacramental programs from FORMED utilized
- Immediate preparation for grades 3 and any child in upper grades who have not received the sacrament yet.

- Sadlier Confirmation curriculum, in conjunction with First Communion curriculum prep, covered over a 9-week period provided by the parents and taught at home.
- Weekly support to parents offered by e-mail, phone calls and/or by appointment.
- Confirmation will be received at the same Liturgy as First Eucharist by the Bishop.

Commendations: a good program is offered

Recommendation:

- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Continue to journey with parents: Accompaniment

Holy Eucharist

“The Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1322)

The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life. The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1324)

Current Practice:

- Two years of Life-Long Faith Formation is required before entering this process
- The parent meeting with First Communion theology is provided within the confirmation process
- Parents are instructed and will experience 6 lessons with their children at home using “Sadlier” materials.
- Immediate preparation for grades 3 and any child in upper grades who have not received the sacrament yet.
- A retreat for parents and children is provided – on hold during the pandemic. Second meeting on Zoom offered instead.
- Adults are catechized through the RCIA process that includes instruction (classroom & home assignments), reflection, rites and prayer. Adults are prepared for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist simultaneously.

Commendations:

- Ample offerings for participation
- Grade 3 preparation allows for child & parent faith formation & retreats
- Grade 3 preparation encourages parent participation
- Adults: a good comprehensive program is in place

Recommendation:

- Grade 3 preparation: Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Grade 3 preparation: Explore additional good Catholic internet resources; example FORMED
- Continue to journey with parents: Accompaniment

RCIA Process

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (or RCIA) is the way that the Catholic church initiates new members into the Christian way of life, specifically in the Roman Catholic tradition. RCIA is a reestablishment of the ancient catechumenate, which existed in the early church (second to fifth centuries).

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church developed a set of documents that defined the rites that local churches should use in the restored catechumenate. The RCIA process we use at St Patrick's is based on these Orders of Initiation.

Current Practices:

- **Catechumen or candidate?**
The RCIA process makes a distinction between a **catechumen** (an unbaptized person) and a **candidate** (a person who is already baptized in another Christian faith). The RCIA process is designed primarily for unbaptized people, but the Rite has been adapted for people baptized in other Christian traditions.
- **Catholic preparing for Confirmation or Eucharist?**
What about baptized Catholic adults who haven't received the sacraments of Confirmation or Eucharist? In recent years, the Diocese of Manchester recognized the needs of this group by including them in the RCIA process. Baptized Catholics preparing for these sacraments follow the **candidate** process.
- **Summary of the RCIA process**
The Rite includes four phases:
 - Evangelization and Precatechumenate (or Inquiry) phase
 - Catechumenate or catechesis (learning) phase
 - Purification and enlightenment or preparation phase
 - Mystagogy or reflective phase

The Process is experienced as:

- Year-Round Wednesday evening faith formation using Augustine Institute's "Symbolon" Series
- Retreat & reflection experiences
- Liturgical Rites specific to the process
- Life-Long Mystagogy – ongoing formation: Adult Faith Formation & Augustine Institute's "FORMED"

Commendations:

- Provide excellent & comprehensive program
- Provide excellent & formed catechists and team members

Recommendations:

- Improve efforts for invitation
- Advertise the program in local papers through press releases
- Continue to journey with them: Accompaniment
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources
- Provide a mentor for anyone who asks about program for immediate assistance

SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

Reconciliation

Current Practices -

Parish Reconciliation

- Offered weekly and by appointment
- Weekly during Lent: Wednesdays
- Diocesan wide – Monday of Holy Week
- Deanery Wide – Twice annually: Advent & Lent

Reconciliation Prep Grade 2

- Two parent meeting is offered through Zoom- includes Reconciliation theology and an overview of the program
- Parents are instructed to teach 6 lessons to their children at home. This is reinforced with weekly email from Faith Formation office.
- Parent and child attend a Reconciliation retreat/ words of wisdom from Fr. Dennis and receive handouts on adult reconciliation. Children watch a Reconciliation video. Parents and children receive a "Tour of the Church" that includes Reconciliation demo. – during the pandemic all is offered on Zoom.
- A Saturday morning Reconciliation service provided during Lent. Parents are encouraged to receive the sacrament as well.

Commendations:

- Ample offerings for participation
- Grade 2 preparation allows for child & parent faith formation & retreats
- Grade 2 preparation encourages parent participation

Recommendations:

- Continue to strongly urge parent participation. Continue to accompany parents
- Grade 2 preparation: Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media: example FORMED presentations
- Grade 2 preparation: Explore additional good Catholic internet resources

Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick unites the sufferings of the seriously ill to the cross, grants forgiveness of sin, and prepares us for the passage to eternal life with the Risen Christ.

Catholics who are anticipating surgery or experiencing health issues and would like to be strengthened with the Church's sacrament of healing and hope, contact the pastor personally to arrange for the Anointing of the Sick.

Current Practices

- Upon request
- Healing Mass once a year
- Ledgewood Bay, The Elms and Crestwood Nursing homes every other month
- Deanery Sponsored Chaplain available at the local hospitals

Commendations:

- This sacrament is celebrated very well

Recommendations:

- Seek opportunities for faith formation regarding this sacrament
- Offer occasional explanations about how and when a Parishioner might request this sacrament

SACRAMENTS OF VOCATION

Marriage Preparation

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation and union of man and woman and ends with "the wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7, 9). Scripture often refers to marriage, its

origin and purpose, the meaning God gave to it, and its renewal in the covenant made by Jesus with his Church. Man and woman were created for each other.

By their marriage, the couple witnesses Christ's spousal love for the Church. One of the Nuptial Blessings in the liturgical celebration of marriage refers to this in saying, "Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church."

The Sacrament of Marriage is a covenant, which is more than a contract. Covenant always expresses a relationship between persons. The marriage covenant refers to the relationship between the husband and wife, a permanent union of persons capable of knowing and loving each other and God. The celebration of marriage is also a liturgical act, appropriately held in a public liturgy at church. Catholics are urged to celebrate their marriage within the Eucharistic Liturgy. (*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*)

Current Practice:

- The Pastor prepares couples requesting the Sacrament of Marriage.
- Deanery sponsored *Engaged Encounter*

Commendations:

- Provide guidance and support during the planning process

Recommendations:

- Provide mentor couples who will continue to journey with them: Accompaniment
- Explore other programs: Retrovaille, Marriage Encounter
- Promote CMC center for reproductive health
- Provide a better understanding of being a good Catholic couple, info on dealing with marital issues, developing and maintaining love, info on creating a Catholic family; explain the church's stand on birth control, social activities for married couples.
- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources
- Offer small (support) groups
- Offer divorce support

Holy Orders

Holy Orders is the sacrament by which men are ordained serve the salvation of all the priesthood of believers as Deacon, Priest, Bishop.

It is the responsibility of all Catholics to pray to support the call of young men to the ordained life. A good family home and parish environment are very important

and fertile grounds for the blossoming of vocations to the diaconate and priesthood.

Current Practice

- Magazines, Brochures
- Holy Hour for Vocations
- Quo Vadis
- Support a woman in the convent
- Conversation with the Pastor

Commendations:

- Provide guidance and support for those inquiring about religious life and the priesthood

Recommendations:

- Seek opportunities for faith formation regarding this sacrament
- Provide yearly talks during Faith Formation of all age groups about what the vocation might entail, what life is like for the religious.
- Seek guest speakers for Q and A about the religious life,
- Provide contacts for those who seek encouragement and information.
- Steubenville Conferences highly recommended to the older teens to support this.
- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources

SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES

Young Adults (roughly 16-21)

Current Practices:

- End of Year Mass – blessings given to all our graduates at mass.
- The teens receive a “Book of Blessings” – gift from our entire parish

Commendations: n/a

Recommendations:

- Catechesis /Bible study for young adults (age 17-25)
- Offer occasional meetings when college students might be home on break
- Activities that include Parish Missions and charitable works that are accompanied by theological reflection
- More involvement with Life Teen- Look into what is offered including training for Youth Ministry, etc.
 - “Life Nights”- theme nights addressing current topics
- Prayers for college-bound- Seniors could request or we could form a list of volunteers

- Work with the elderly
- Activities 'off campus' that involve something fun with a bit of catechesis worked in. Possibly hire a part time coordinator to organize the logistics.

Prayer Groups

Current Practices

- **Men's Prayer Group:** meets weekly to support Spirit-filled Catholic men in piety, study and action while sharing their week's successes and struggles.
- **Women's Prayer Group:** meets weekly to support Spirit-filled Catholic women as they come together in prayer, reflection and sharing to foster their own spiritual journey and life of faith in Jesus in their daily lives
- No groups for young adults yet -
- Steubenville Catholic Teen Conference in each summer for teens age 14-18
- Offer "Steubenville East Conference" opportunity to be a prayer warrior during the weekend for those older than 18

Commendations:

- Groups have been started and are doing well
- Woman's Prayer Group on hold right now 2021-22

Recommendations:

- Find new ways to include our young people in college age group
- Invite them to First Friday Adoration during vacation months

RETREATS

Current Practices:

Retreats are offered for those who are receiving sacraments:

- First Reconciliation
- First Communion
- Confirmation
- RCIA
- Saturday Morning reflection once a month – all adult parishioners invited

Commendations:

- Provide sacramental retreats
- Men group and Women group Saturday morning retreats (reflection) are working well

Recommendations:

- Look for opportunities to offer & promote retreats to: (St. Pat's, Locally, On-line)
- All Parishioners
- Men
- Women

- Parents
- Families
- Staff
- Provide a Parish Mission
- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources: Example FORMED materials

EVANGELIZATION OF THE MARGINALIZED

The Church exists to carry on the Mission of Jesus: **to proclaim and teach God's word; to celebrate the sacred mysteries; to serve the people of the world.**

Jesus focused on HOPE as the central message of his evangelical activity. Through Jesus' resurrection (EASTER), we are empowered to hope. The Easter Mystery is at the heart of why we teach as Jesus did.

"Evangelizing means bringing the good news of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. Its essence is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, both being the work of the Spirit of God."

BECAUSE OF THE CARA STUDY AND THE GREAT TASK THAT LIES AHEAD IN THIS AREA, THE PASTORAL COUNCIL WILL FORM AN EVANGELIZATION COMMISSION TO PLAN AND OVERSEE THE EVANGELIZATION EFFORTS IN THE PARISH

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

No one can underestimate the need for good communication in the parish. We will make every effort to connect with parishioners beyond our time together at Sunday Mass. Our parish bulletin and website are the principal means of keep you informed about what is happening in the parish along with things you should know about the journey of our Catholic Church. We also know that good communication is a two-way process. Please let us know how we can help you!

Current Practice-

- Parish Bulletin
- Parish Website
- Bulletin Boards
- Announcements at Mass
- Bulk Mailings
- Emails
- Telephone
- "Parable" Magazine to all registered parish households provided

Commendations:

- Good use of bulletin, announcements, phone and email

Recommendations:

- Improve website and its use
- Provide updated Parish Booklet
- Be a presence at civic & community events
- Explore the utilization of texting
- Explore the greater use of St. Augustine Institute including Lighthouse Media
- Explore additional good Catholic internet resources

ST. PATRICK FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION****Mission**

The St. Patrick Faith Formation Commission (FFC) will provide an ongoing; Christ centered apprenticeship in the Roman Catholic life for all parishioners through the development of a program of total and life-long parish catechesis (faith formation). Our mission is carried out with the following focus groups:

Core Beliefs

- We believe the essential purpose of the St. Patrick Faith Formation Commission is to help St. Patrick parishioners meet Christ and follow the way of Christ.
- We believe that ongoing conversion is essential to growth in faith.
- We believe faith formation is an essential part of the Christian life for people of all ages.
- We believe the model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate.

We believe the model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate*

- We believe catechesis (faith formation) is the responsibility of all parishioners.
- We believe we must reach out and support the formation of parents and competent catechists.

FFC Vision

Inspired by the baptismal catechumenate, we will facilitate others to Christ as we:

A. Lead the parish in becoming a more hospitable and inclusive community.

1. We will market faith formation opportunities.
2. We will explore ways to become a more welcoming community, especially to those who are marginalized for any reason.
3. We will conduct periodical needs assessment to determine the needs of parishioners.

B. Encourage and facilitate the continuing conversion of all parishioners.

1. We will create/expand small faith sharing groups, especially for those in transition.
2. We will develop/promote adult formation opportunities.
3. We will encourage personal witness by all parishioners.
4. We will encourage pastoral outreach ministry by all parishioners.

C. Link catechesis for children and youth with catechesis for adults.

1. While everyone will be asked to make catechetical programs and experiences a high priority, catechetical leaders will seek ways to be more family friendly in scheduling programs.
2. We will provide resources to support and affirm family life as the center of faith formation for children.
3. We will explore and promote intergenerational faith formation opportunities.
4. We will provide encouragement and resources to parents as they prepare their children for the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation

*The baptismal catechumenate is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a process of preparation through which adults are fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

FFC Goals

1. Faith formation vision statement, goals and objectives

Annually goals and actions will be evaluated at the April St. Patrick Faith Formation Commission (FFC).

Annually, at the April meeting, the FFC will select two or three goals and objectives on which to focus for the coming year.

Specific actions for each selected goal will be developed for review at the June meeting and approval at the August FFC meeting.

2. Description of the present practice, Commendations and Recommendations for each of the focus groups for catechesis

This description of present practice, Commendations and Recommendations will be updated by a committee of FFC members and the Director of Religious Education annually and submitted for approval by the Pastoral Council annually at the May meeting.

3. Description of current practice and suggestions for methods of communication of parish faith formation opportunities

The effectiveness current practice and suggestions for methods of communication will be reviewed by a committee of FFC members and the Director of Religious Education annually and submitted for approval by the FFC at the May meeting.

APPENDIX

Back up comments from the parish-wide (CARA Study) and (Task Force Survey) for the data behind the recommendations for the Faith Formation for Adults section

1. The Tuesday evening Catechism course is attended by about 40 people, and the Bible study class by about 25. The recommendation section points are aimed at increasing participation in adult formation in general, both within and beyond these classes.
2. Statistical data from surveys
 - a. **77%** of the parish say that adult faith formation is important to them (“strongly agree” or “agree” out of 198 total responses, Q5 of task force survey)
 - b. But only **55%** of the parish would be interested in attending a course or other form of faith formation. (“strongly agree” or “agree”, Q6 of task force survey)
 - c. Actual participation in the courses offered is much less than that, approximately 65 people in any given year, correlating to **14%** of the active adult mass-goers (taken to be 471 adults from the CARA survey total responses which were gathered at the masses of a single weekend). This correlates well with CARA question 100, which found that **18%** of the respondents had attended adult religious education. The slightly higher result of 18 (vs 14) is to be expected since it would include those who have attended *in the last five years* vs the *current* year count.
 - d. If the answers are honest, the above means that **40%** (55-14; roughly, acknowledging the statistical impropriety of using two different sample groupings) of the parish is not currently attending, but is looking for something more or something different or at a different time. Q4 of the task force survey provides some insight:

What is it that prevents you from participating in educational programs?

No response	42%
“No response” since they <u>are</u> participating	14% (assumed)
“No response” due to lack of interest	28% (assumed)
Don’t need any more education	19% ¹
Subtotal of not interested	47%
Work/home schedule	24%
Not confident in group, travel, other	28% ²

¹ Sunday mass is sufficient 14%; Don’t need any further education 5%

² Don’t feel comfortable/confident in a group 13%; Distance or transportation 4%; “other” 11%. Note that these plus the total percentages for work/home schedule total more than 40%, but that is because several (apparently about 24) submitted two answers.

- e. Data integrity looks to be good. Various question data sets confirm each other.

Total population	100%	
- no response, lack of interest	<u>-28</u>	
	72	(the 77 who say formation is important)
- don't need more education	<u>-19</u>	
	53	(the 55 interested in attending course/other)
- already participating	<u>-14</u>	
	39	(the 40 interested but not attending)

Therefore, 40% interested but not attending is probably a good number. By extension, the reasons given by that group are probably an accurate reflection of their concerns. Call this group the target group

- f. Within the target group:
 Half have scheduling issues
 A quarter "don't feel comfortable/confident enough to discuss my faith in a group setting."
 A quarter are "other" or "distance/travel"

3. Ideas from respondents about content

Ideas submitted several by several different respondents (in bold in results summary)

- Bible study
- Retreats, internal/external
- Book club
- Speakers and/or trips to other places for speakers
- Other ideas of note
- On-line material
- FORMED**

4. Type of presentation preferred (Q16 "I would use the following to learn more about my faith". Total of "strongly agree" and "agree" for each method:

St Patrick website	63%*
Weekday	27%
Weekday evening	41%
Weekend	31%

*This seemingly contradicts Q12 if "more effective use of modern media by our parish would help me grow in my faith" 11% strongly agree; 30% agree, 43% uncertain. Perhaps "modern media" was understood to mean its use *in the church* or just something more intimidating than the parish website. Whatever is used on line must therefore be easy to use.