



**Religious Education Classes for Children
Touched by Autism, IDD and other
Developmental Disorders to begin at St. Thomas More**

On October 4, 2019

Last year 15 students from our parish grouping entered the Catholic Sacramental and religious preparation class for children or teens with an autism spectrum, intellectual and/or other developmental disorder which included First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation. As you may recall, this was the program I conducted at Our Lady of Grace Parish for 15 years. Last year, the program was cut short by COVID 19, however it is again my pleasure to announce that the program will again commence at *St. Thomas More Church* Sunday October 4 at 8:30 am.

The program, a part of the *St. Lawrence Ministries*, has evolved over these years to include preschool children through older teens as they wish to either prepare to receive Catholic Sacraments and/or to learn more about God through weekly Christian Religious Education classes. Our program follows an approved curriculum, the *Adapted Finding God* curriculum, with the Imprimatur given by Cardinal George.

The program has met with success both for the children involved and their parents as well as with the high school aged Teen Mentors or “teachers” who work 1-1 with the identified students. Classes will begin in the St. Thomas More School on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am, October 4.

Families of children and teens with autism, IDD including those with Down Syndrome and those with any other Development Disabilities who would like to participate or who would like further information are asked to contact Deacon

Larry directly through the St. Thomas More Parish Office or at suttonl@stmpgh.org.

High School aged or near high school aged students **who are interested** in learning and becoming “Teen Mentors” for these children and teens are asked to contact Deacon Larry directly (lawrence.sutton.stvincent.edu). They will be asked to participate in a half day training program October 3, 2020 beginning at 9:30 am; where the basics of what an autism spectrum disorder is and is not will be reviewed, as well as what other developmental disorders are and what our Religious Education Curriculum will entail. **Pre-registration is required.**

The weekly classes begin Sunday October 4, 2020 and run through the end of April. St. Lawrence referred to the Treasures of our Church as those individuals with untapped gifts – both our students and mentors clearly are a part of those Treasures which we as a Catholic community must tap; God’s Blessings to both. Thank you for your support for these important classes.

-Deacon Larry Sutton