



September 2020

**Dear Parent(s):**

**Religious Education looks different for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish.** Our families are rallying to the challenge and passing the faith onto their children at home, without the help of catechists for the first nine weeks of instruction. Remember, your family is the Domestic Church... the first experience of God's love and grace. **Earlier in the summer families were invited to take a Google Survey, 237 families participated in this survey.** Thank you! When asked "How comfortable are you with homeschooling your child/children?" 84 families responded very comfortable, 102 families responded comfortable and 39 families were unsure. When I look at these results I see a majority of our families are OK with catechizing their children while a few may have "a wait and see attitude," before making a solid decision one way or the other. The exciting news is that the majority of our families feel GOOD about sharing their faith with the family unit. Hands down **the number one concern for 51 % of the families surveyed, is lesson planning.**

So I write to you to explain how to use the **Alive in Christ** religion text. I believe **Alive in Christ** is a very user friendly series with all the online resources you can easily utilize. Each child needs to have a **hard copy of the Alive in Christ** textbook. We believe after a day of virtual learning your **child/children will enjoy turning a "real" page of a book.** I suggest a parusal of the below site before you actually begin to conduct a lesson.

1. To get started go to the **website: [aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com)**
2. Find the green tab, "**Student & Family.**" Click.
3. Click, "**In the Home.**" You should be looking at a screen which shows the grade levels from 1 through 8. Choose the grade level your child is on, click and you will have the family lesson plan. If you have more than one child at home then click the "**Multi Age Family Session,**" and you will see the objective for each child at her/his grade level. Since Alive in Christ is setup in a spiral format. The chapter themes for each grade level coincide with each other, therefore, your faith topic, exploration and discussion can be family centered.
4. The lesson plans make suggestions for unfolding the specific topic of each chapter. Remember the plans are suggestions, not mandates. Feel free to experiment and use your own good judgement. My recommendation is if this is your first venture in sharing faith, **let the experts do all the work** (Our Sunday Visitor) and use the lessons plans like a cookbook. I truly enjoy cooking and experimenting with different cuisines, but the first time I try a new recipe I follow it meticulously. Once the meal is finished, I make mental notes on how I would vary the recipe to "doctor it up." Do the same thing with sharing faith with your children; follow the experts – the book and then add your own story.
5. Check out the "**Interactive Reviews**" for your child/ren. The reviews are a fantastic gauge on your child's comprehension of the faith material. The "Interactive Reviews" are self scoring, so as a parent you can have immediate access to how well your child

grasped the information in the chapter. When your child(ren) is/are ready to take an e-assessments for a chapter or unit review, you can send this directly to the Director of Faith Formation. Simply follow the prompts (more details to follow at a later date for this feature. You will need a specific email address).

6. **For the over achievers**, this next suggestion might be difficult – simply take a chapter a week, no more or no less. Traditionally, our parish sessions were 1 ½ chapters. When working at home, less time is more realistic.
7. Begin each lesson with prayer. **Don't understate the power of family prayer.** Each lesson provides and begins with prayer, usually a Bible quote. Take the time to share your thoughts and reflections. That's where God's grace builds and grows.
8. Recommended resource is <https://formed.org/>. Registration is easy. Go to formed.org, and find the prompt for New Registrations. Type Our Lady of Mount Carmel 15237 and register your email and personal password. Formed is very much like a Catholic version of Netflix. It is an incredible virtual platform for children, family and adult enrichment.
9. When you are ready to begin, take a deep breath and simply relax and enjoy the meaningful conversations you will have as a family.
10. Never hesitate to contact the Faith Formation Department by email or telephone!

### **SACRAMENT GRADES: SECOND AND EIGHTH**

Our texts are from a different publisher. For children who are preparing and participating in the **Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist**, families are using the “Blessed” series published by Dynamic Catholic. Parents need to register online with Dynamic Catholic. Follow the directions below:

To register for this program simply go to [www.dynamiccatholic.com](http://www.dynamiccatholic.com). Go to “**For Your Parish**” and choose “**BLESSED.**” Scroll down until you see **View Program**, **click** and make your choice of episode to watch. For your convenience, each program offers a download for either a workbook or leaders guide. The idea is to have **FUN** as your family watches and discusses the true gifts that Sacraments are to us!

**BLESSED** has a special site “**For Parents**” if you wish to register simply use your email address.

Our 2021 **Confirmation Candidates** are using the program “Decision Point” by Dynamic Catholic. Parents need to register online as well. Follow the directions below:

Go to “**For Your Parish**” and choose “**Decision Point.**” Scroll down until you see **View Program**, **click** and make your choice of episode to watch. For your convenience Decision Point offers a Parent & Sponsor component which you can sign up for. You will receive 2 emails a week from Dynamic Catholic that will help you engage in meaningful conversation concerning the Sacrament of Confirmation with your child.

Again, the idea for both grade levels is to have fun as your family watches and discusses the true gifts that Sacraments are to us!

**Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we navigate the waters of our new normal.**

Sincerely,

Mr. Victor Boerio and Deacon Robert (Bob) Koslosky