

HFSL & SPX Religious Education 2020-21

Dear Parents /Guardians,

We hope that you & your family are doing well in the midst of this troubling time. This email will provide a basic update, overview, & registration process for the upcoming 2020-21 Religious Education Program (grades 1-8) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As you well know, our situation is still very much in flux & we ask for your patience while we work out the remaining final details for the year ahead. We expect to have everything finalized & released to you by late August.

HFSL & SPX parishes will have a fully combined /joint program for grades 1-8 for the 2020-2021 school year in order to maximize our resources & allow us to offer you the best faith formation experience we can, given the circumstances. Faith formation will start off the year virtually for all grade levels. If we reach a point sometime later in the year when it is deemed safe & effective to gather in person for instruction & community building, we will reevaluate the situation at that time & strive to do so.

Before providing you with the program details, we want to summarize some of the major “takeaways” from the feedback you recently gave us in our feedback surveys that have shaped our planning.

- The majority of our families are extremely apprehensive about the 2020-2021 year ahead. They anxiously wonder what further impacts the virus will have (especially concerning schooling for their children). Everyone is hoping for the best and looking forward to getting back into a “normal” routine as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Many of our families deem it unsafe to send their children to religious instruction if it follows the traditional formats we have used in the past. Here is the breakdown: 14% of families were willing to send their children back in person, 46.5% were looking for a hybrid type model (*which we realize now was very unclear about what that specifically meant*), 25.5% were looking for online all year, 10% were looking for a homeschool option, 4% of answers were unclear about what they were looking for.

- 65% of our families were able to at least partially complete and enjoyed the lessons that were sent home at the end of the 2019-2020 year. 35% of families were overwhelmed with the possibility of adding one more thing to their plates at that time and did not complete the assignments (which is completely understandable to us!)
- For the year ahead, Parents are looking for easy to use, streamlined, community-oriented, virtual lessons that that will help their children to feel connected to their peers. Some parents specifically want to limit the amount of technology /screen time the lessons would utilize. Others have found the videos we have incorporated to be very beneficial.

In addition to your feedback, there were some other realities that have shaped our planning:

- We continue to have fewer & fewer volunteer catechists to staff (2) completely separate programs.
- It would be extremely difficult to provide socially distanced classrooms that meet the current health protocols.
- It is likely that we will experience a virus spike at some point this fall /winter that will shut down all face to face programming.

Therefore, after multiple rounds of discussion, brainstorming, & troubleshooting with veteran catechists, the Diocese, and Fr. Charlie, we submit following plan for the 2020-2021 school year:

Grades 1-6

We will be using a program that has one instructional session per month held on Zoom at 11:00 AM on Sunday mornings and two lessons per month that will be led by parents. We will have more details in our next letter but this model will allow for each family to take the lessons at their own pace. We are planning on having optional small group gatherings in person (more information to follow). Our tentative start date would be Sunday September 20 with the monthly meetings on October 4, November 1, December 6, January 10, February 7, March 7, April 11 & May 2.

Grade 2 - Sacramental Prep. -Reconciliation & Eucharist

The program for sacramental preparation will begin with "at home" instruction in mid-late September. The form of this instruction is still being developed. Stay tuned for more details. If safe to do so, class will meet in person during Lent 2021 to wrap up the preparation process. We will be using the *Blessed* textbook series by Dynamic Catholic (the entire program has a digital option which can be found at <https://dynamiccatholic.com/blessed>).

Grades 7 & 8 - Sacramental Prep. -Confirmation

The program for Confirmation preparation will begin with "at home" instruction in mid-late Sept. The form of this instruction is still being developed but will feature virtual small groups. Stay tuned for more details. We will be meeting Sundays 5:30-6:30 PM on ZOOM (tentative start date is Sept. 27). A separate email detailing all of the other Confirmation Program events & requirements will be sent out by the end of August.

If this plan meets your family's expectations, please go ahead & register now. If it does not, please contact John or Emma to discuss.

Registration form: <https://form.jotform.com/202103693967156>

Tuition is the same for all grades --\$45 per child. *There is no retreat fee for 7-8th grade confirmation candidates this year.* Families with 3 or more children will pay a flat rate of \$100. Scholarships (partial or full) are always available. Contact John or Emma if you would like to request a scholarship.

If your child is in 1st, 2nd, 7th, or 8th grade please be sure to send a copy of their baptismal certificate as well.

We will send a second letter in late August with all of the remaining details (including hard start dates & lesson formats).

Pax Christi-
Emma & John