

GOD IN THE FAMILY: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Program? The Archbishop has encouraged each parish to have a Sacramental preparation program in addition to the preparation of our students in our Catholic Schools, Religious Education programs or Home School Programs. The purpose of the God in the Family Program is to give the parents of children who are preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion an opportunity to discover more deeply what it means to be Catholic and how the Church's teachings and sacraments affect their lives and the lives of their children. It reinforces that the parents are the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith, and how, by their own growth in faith, they can better witness to their own children and reinforces that their children are learning about religion in their classes and in school.

How is the Program structured? Parents meet as a discussion group at a determined location, once a week for five weeks in the Fall of the year. The group size ranges from 8 to 16 people. A moderator couple is asked by the directors of the Program to facilitate the discussion for each group. (They start the group with the prayer, read the questions and keep the conversation on track with the questions, facilitators are not expected to know the answers, but will have an answer sheet) A program leader (staff) have been assigned one evening and they attend all or part of the meetings to help with any questions or concerns the group may have associated with the study questions. The meetings are limited to an hour and a half with the first half of the meeting devoted to discussion and the second half for socializing. We are offering the meetings on different nights that will accommodate most schedules. We have three evenings available, if an evening in a different parish works best for you, by all means sign up to go to that evening, your children are together in classes with all three parishes.

Who is the Program for? The God in the Family program part of the sacramental preparation program and this portion is designed for the parents or guardians of children who are receiving the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion and are enrolled in the LNMV religious education program, Holy Cross Catholic School or in a Home School setting. Parents or guardians of these children are encouraged to participate in the program even if they are not Catholic or are not members of the parish.

****Is the Program mandatory?** The program is an essential component and is an integral part of the preparation for these Sacraments. YOUR PASTORS WILL BE ASKING THAT YOU DO NOT TAKE participation lightly as it is generally understood by the parents that this is one of the most important things they can do to help themselves and their children, in addition to getting to know other parents in the parish. This is a gift that the parish is providing parents to help their families grow and become engaged with one another and become a family in dialogue with God. We can't stress enough that **this IS the preparation program** for your child's reception of their first Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and is highly encouraged by the Pastors of all three parishes.

When does the Program begin? September 12, 2018 is the Parent meeting for those whose students will be preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. We ask parents to come prepared with their family calendars. This general meeting helps explain the program and helps provide parents with the necessary materials, and the opportunity to give their preference as to which night of the week they prefer for the discussion group. You will be asked to sign up for a day of the week that works best for you. There will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

When is this general meeting for parents scheduled? On Wednesday evening September 12, 2018 at 6:00-7:00pm at Holy Cross School in the gymnasium.

Can parents still participate in the Program if they are unable to attend this general meeting? Please make every effort to have at least one of you at this meeting, it takes a lot of time to put everything together and those who do not attend often have a difficult time understanding the program. We understand that sometimes scheduling conflicts arise, if that does happen, please make PRIOR arrangements to meet with the Director of Religious Education. This will be a separate make up meeting, materials will not be just given out as they need to be explained, and hence the purpose of the meeting and pick up of material will not be scheduled on a Wednesday night before/during/after religion. Your priests are looking for 100% participation in this program.

I have already been part of the program with another child; do I need to go through it again? This program is as much about sharing as it is learning. We can never exhaust what the infinite God has for us, so reaching out in community with other parents and extending a welcome or perhaps becoming a moderator for the second year would be a real gift. So the answer is YES. If only one parent participated due to small children than rotate. Jesus is the *light of the world and men do not light a lamp only to put it under a bushel basket; they are to put it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house (Matt 5:15).* We ask your active participation by putting aside ourselves for the sake of others, (that is what Jesus did for us on the cross!) You are a gift to the parish community and to the parents in your child's class, you may be the presence needed. If you have participated in the program at least two times in the past 4 years, please contact the DRE or again consider being a moderator, your gift is vital to the parish community.