

Frequently Asked Questions

What does “in tandem with Mass” mean?

Many times it has been expressed to us how busy families are. It is tough enough to fit in everything that we have to do, how do we make time to experience the things we want to do – family time, quiet time with God, faith with each other and our community? The Community Faith Program will allow families to have choices within their busy schedules and within the framework of Faith Formation. “In tandem” means that class will take place either immediately before or after Mass, and will be offered at each of the churches relative to each of our 4 Masses. For example, during each month, class will be offered following Mass at St. Rose Church, the next week it might be offered following Mass at St. Paul of the Cross Church, and the following week it would be offered following Saturday and before Sunday Masses at St. Agnes Church. Families can choose to attend one session each month. If they choose to attend at St. Rose this month, it may work better for them to attend at St. Agnes the next month.

The importance of Mass attendance is not to be undervalued. If your family currently attends Mass at Christmas and Easter, just a few times a year, this is a great opportunity to attend each month when you’ve already made the commitment to attend Community Faith that weekend. If you currently attend monthly, perhaps you can make a conscious commitment to attend every other week; and if you attend regularly, is there another experience of faith that you can try to engage in – Adoration, Daily Mass, Small Christian Group, or Rosary Prayer? By holding our program in tandem with Mass, families have more opportunities to experience faith together.

“Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly... All have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose “Amen” manifests their participation.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1348)

Who is an adult partner and what is their role?

The adult partner is typically a parent, but can be a grandparent, godparent, aunt or uncle, or other trusted adult. The role of the adult partner is to facilitate the experience at Community Faith for their child(ren). In this way, the adult is supporting the child’s faith in a way that is most appropriate for the child based on prior knowledge of faith experiences, prayer, Scripture, service, and more. The Community Faith experiences will allow for multiple age groups and many levels of engagement. The presence of a trusted adult in a child’s experiences of faith is not to be minimalized. Children learn their faith through the example of their parents and other important adults in their lives, as well as through siblings, and engaging in intergenerational conversations and experiences. Community Faith is meant to support parents as the first teachers of the faith in their household.

*“Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. **Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith.** Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” (CCC 2226)*

Why are we meeting monthly? (how does that meet the 30 catechetical hours and besides, I liked when we met weekly/biweekly)

In order to facilitate the flexibility related to offering a program in tandem with Mass times and to make it available at all of our churches, a monthly requirement best fits the schedule. However, there are additional pieces required at home. Families will receive the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies on a quarterly basis, along with a guide to help parents utilize this curriculum at home. (Confirmation Year 2 will use the Chosen curriculum). This is similar to what we already do, but the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies will be used at home each week, rather than just on the off weeks of class. With 9 monthly Community Faith gatherings from September to May for 1½ hours each that is a total of 13.5 hours, plus families engaging in the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies at home for 30 minutes each week for 33 weeks that equals 16.5 hours which totals the 30 required catechetical hours. This is just the minimum requirement. If you would like to engage more frequently with other families then we can look into other ways to come together in our faith community. There are currently many offerings for families such as coffee hour after Mass, soup suppers, game nights, family rosary group, and a variety of service opportunities for all ages and interests. Check our online calendar for offerings each month.

The classes are offered at each church, does that mean I have to attend each class every week or can I pick the one that works best for my family?

Your family needs to attend one Community Faith session each month. Depending on your family calendar, you may want to attend at a different place each month, or you may make attendance at one site a priority. Perhaps you have children who cannot attend the same weeks, then an adult partner can accompany the children to each session that they are able to attend at two different sites for that month.

I used to be a catechist (or am interested in being one), how do I fit into this Community Faith model?

Thank you for your service and interest in supporting our faith community! Catechists, or Faith Facilitators, are an important part of Community Faith. They participate in planning lessons and activities for the monthly gatherings, and help facilitate at the monthly gatherings (as prayer leader, station leaders, small group leaders, etc.). Teams of adults are forming now to prepare for our sessions in the fall. Please contact the Faith Formation Office immediately if you are interested in learning more!

“Catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it, and communicates it in many ways.” (General Directory for Catechesis, #105)

What is a Faith Partner (or mentor) and what is their role?

The Faith Partner’s primary role is to support families in faith. They will check in with each family each week to offer support and to be a liason when you have questions. While the Director of Faith Formation oversees the entire program, the Faith Partner will provide mentorship as a partner in your faith journey. The Faith

Partner will be assigned at the beginning of the catechetical year (September) and you will have a chance to develop your relationship over the course of the year. You may make suggestions for Faith Partners.

"...encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you." 2Corinthians 13:11b

Community Faith sessions sound like fun for kids. What will I get out of it? (as a parent, grandparent, parishioner, teen, young adult)

The Community Faith sessions are hands on, give families resources, are experiences of faith, can include community service, and are based in the liturgical year. For example, at a Lent session, we might learn about Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving through a video or dramatic reading, we would make items related to Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving at different stations, including using prayers from Scripture as our guide at each station, to take home in a prayer bag. One additional station might be packing toiletries and making cards for Bethany House residents, then we would close with a brief prayer service using our Lenten Prayer bag. This is hands on, gives families resources through the video and the prayer bag items to be used at home, is an experience of faith and community service and is based in the liturgical year. People of all ages will be able to access the content with a variety of activities and discussion questions.

"We are disciples in community, and much of our learning happens as we pray, serve, worship, relate, and seek to understand our faith. Learning happens when we use our God-given free will and creativity to "figure" out what something means, to learn a new skill or understand current or new information, or when change forces us to look at things in a new way." (Intergenerational Faith Formation, Martineau et al., Twenty Third Publications, 2008)

I'm not sure this program is right for my family – are there any other options?

Community Faith is the only Faith Formation for grades PreK-6, and is also offered for grades 7-9 (including Confirmation Year 1 & 2) at St. Agnes/St. Paul of the Cross/St. Rose cluster of parishes.

Students entering grades 7-9 (including Confirmation Year 1 & 2, up to 12th grade) can participate in Summer Institute, which is a 5 full-day experience, and also requires 2-5 additional sessions during the catechetical year.

We urge you to complete one year of the Community Faith program. If after that time you are not satisfied with the program and would like information on other programs at nearby churches, we will assist you.

So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13