



Growing our Children in Faith

NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF
CHRISTIAN FORMATION STUDENTS,
GRADES 1 - 6

WINTER 2018

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I swear I just simply blinked and it went from back to school time to the middle of Advent! This past Sunday was Gaudete Sunday (also known as pink - or Rose, if you are Father Dan - Sunday). Gaudete means JOY! It is an acknowledgement that we are half way through our time of preparing our hearts for the coming of the Christ child!

For us as adults, Advent isn't always a quiet, contemplative/ preparatory time.

Instead the weeks leading up to Christmas tend to be filled with crazy schedules, shopping frenzies and baking blitzes. All of those are great things that can help bond families. But, try really hard to spend at least five minutes a day in quiet, asking God to help direct your actions for today - not this week, or until Christmas... just today. I love this quote - but it's been attributed to everyone from cartoonist Bil Keane to Eleanor Roosevelt to ??? Regardless of who said,

it, the truth of it remains.

In the remaining days (more like hours) of Advent this year, try to carve out just a few moments at the very least to give thanks to a God who loves us so much, He became one of us, born into a poor but hardworking family.

The presents under the tree are great and wonderful - but the best gift we can give is our time and undivided attention to those we love.

Wishing you and your family a beautiful Christmas!



UPCOMING ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We have the following events scheduled for the coming month of January:

WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY 16 AND 23, Stevie's Treks Series, 6:30 pm in the Gathering Space, Grades 4-9. This popular DVD series follows Stephen Pettit, a modern day nomad, as he travels all over the world, living like Biblical Characters and experiencing life as they might. Watch the series of FIVE adventures from the Old and New Testaments! **No RSVP required.**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, Internet Safety, 6:30 pm in Church, Grades 6-9. Eric Szatkowski, a former Government Special Agent, will share his experiences and what steps we can take to protect ourselves online. **No RSVP required.**

We are in the process of scheduling additional enrichment opportunities and will inform you when more are confirmed.

MANY ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!!!



3rd graders partnered with 8th graders to make a ham sandwich to be handed out to those in need through Franciscan Peacemakers

Our faith formation isn't just about memorizing prayers and learning Bible stories - those are important aspects, yes. However, key to children internalizing their faith and wanting to continue a relationship with God is putting that faith into action. Throughout the fall semester, different grades were able to do just that. Here are two pictures of the combined third and eighth grade classes as they prepared sandwiches for Franciscan Peacemakers. These were delivered to the organization and then handed out to those who benefit from their street ministry programs.

Sandwiches include two slices of ham, bread and butter on wheat bread. The idea is to include as many calories as possible for an item that may be the recipient's only meal of the day.



IF YOU HAD YOUR PICTURE TAKEN...



St. Leonard parishioners had the opportunity this past summer/fall to have a family portrait taken and to be included in the newly published parish pictorial. If you had your picture taken, you are able to pick up a free copy from the Parish Office - check in with Kathleen McGillis-Drayna at : 262-679-1773 for more details on how to get your copy.

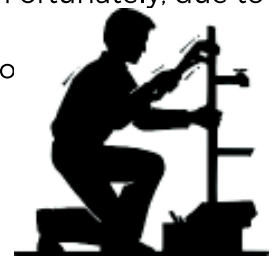
Copies are also available for purchase for \$10 while supplies last. Kathleen can assist you there as well.



CHECKING IN ON PLUMBING UPDATES!



Anyone who has ever built a home or other structure knows things don't ever go quite as planned. And, our new addition is no exception. Construction to replace a part of the in floor plumbing was completed last week and all seems to be operational. The pitch of a part of the pipe leading out of the restroom areas needed to be corrected so a trench was dug from in front of the restrooms, down the hall and through the table/chair storage area. New pipe was laid and the area repaired. You'd never know looking at it now. Fortunately, due to the time this was discovered, the parish did not have to absorb this cost as it was still within the first year window.



We appreciate everyone's flexibility as we've worked around a variety of necessary work, etc. The Gathering Space / Parish Center have been a remarkable addition to the complex and honestly, most of staff can't remember how we functioned without them. Bible studies, meetings, group gatherings, post Mass fellowship and more have been greatly enhanced by the space and the technology in the space. We appreciate all those who have helped make this a reality!



SPEND THE TIME...

Children are little for such a short time. For those of us with grown children, it seems as if it was over in the blink of an eye. We forget how the sleepless nights made us feel awful and how going from game to game or event to event made the weekends anything but restful. When we were in the midst of the craziness of family life, we felt as if it would go on forever. And then, without warning, post high school is looming and it seems as if time has flown.

My mom always told me when my children were little - "The days are long but the years are short." It is all too true. Spend some time, put down your devices and really interact with your children. Time spent with your family is never time regretted.



MEMORIZATION RE-DO

A portion of your child's formational experience in Grades 1 - 6 involves memorization of prayers and facts important to our Catholic faith. Since I stepped into the role of Director of Children's Ministry, I have been trying to find a more inclusive way for students to learn not only the **words** of the prayer but also **what the prayer means**. It's one thing to be able to recite a prayer verbatim. It is another thing to let that prayer change you. How many of us really know what "... Consubstantial with the Father..." means from the New Roman Missal Nicene Creed? Or, why are there two Creeds at all? In researching different approaches to learning prayers I have come up with the following on my wish list:

- * Families learning together
- * A deeper understanding of what is being said
- * An overview of why we say this prayer and how it came to be
- * Application of the prayer, ideas, facts, etc.



Watch for details on how we go about accomplishing this new focus as well as what exciting opportunities will be available. We want to provide your child and you with the most family friendly, enriching experiences possible while being respectful of your time and family needs.

NEW YEAR - 2019

The new year is just around the corner and what does this mean for us? The new year brings with it much anticipation and sometimes, much trepidation. If 2018 was a solid and good year, moving into the unknown can be overwhelming. If 2018 wasn't so good to us, we may be more than ready to shake its dust from our shoes and move forward.

For many of us, it might be the idea of a fresh start - a new beginning - the opportunity to begin anew. That's why there are white sales (for sheets and towels) and exercise equipment on special (new year, new body) and gym membership specials and health food choices... it's way TOOOOO much!

I have a friend who I met at a ministry gathering a number of years ago who always amazes me. Her entire life motto about anything is - don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed. Take stock of whatever the areas are where you need improvement. It's important to have a laundry list so you know where to start. However, don't try to do sixteen things at the same time - because, you will not be able to sustain it and you will let them all go. Instead, her philosophy is - just take one thing and do it...

Now she's typically talking about learning new technological skills.

I met her as part of the Technology in Faith Formation Committee. But, you know, this applies to all avenues of life.

Perhaps you want to make several changes to your lifestyle... Instead of picking five things to work on at the same time, work on one thing at a time and then add in when you're comfortable.

Studies shows it takes 21 days to make a habit stick - so something like making your bed every morning would hopefully be routine within a month's time. Running two miles a day - well, for some of us, that will take longer than a month..

Take each new thing, embrace it and own it before moving forward This gives us the best chance of doing as Matthew Kelly says, "becoming the best version of ourselves."

We all wish you the Merriest of Christmases and many blessings in the coming new year!

