

Growing our Children in Faith



LEONARD CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL
Worship • Formation • Community

St. Leonard Christian Formation
W173 S7777 Westwood Drive
Muskego, WI 53150



So often, we think of "church" we think of this building - when in all honesty, **WE** are the Church!

ST. LEONARD CHRISTIAN FORMATION ELEMENTARY 2019 THEME IS:

BE CHURCH NOW...

When we hear the word "Church" we think of the physical building - but did you know - **WE** are the CHURCH?

Jesus didn't build buildings and monuments when He walked among us (*despite being a carpenter by trade*) - instead, he built **communities**. He fostered a sense of caring for others and helping those in need of assistance - physical, spiritual or other. Those who were more fortunate were not just encouraged, but expected, to help others. Jesus tells us in the Gospel of Luke:

"Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more." Luke 12:48.

Our theme this year is **BE CHURCH NOW**. What does this mean for us, as Catholic Christians? Attending Mass is an obligation we have but **BEING** Church is the fruit of that effort. Church isn't just what happens 55 minutes each Sunday. Church is what happens 24/7 each week. So, Church is when your children are pokey about brushing their teeth and getting into bed at night. Church is when you oversleep and are racing out the door to get to work on time. Church is when you see a person clearly struggling at the checkout counter at Target and you are in a hurry to get out to the car. Church is every minute, every day. So while we do attend Mass - we don't "go" to church - we **BE** Church.



Look for simple ways to **BE CHURCH** with your family - your actions will speak far louder than any words you can say.

NEW "PRAYER EXPERIENCES" DEBUT

Learning prayers and facts about our faith is integral to growing as a Catholic individual. However, reciting to someone you may or may not know isn't always the easiest thing to do. SO... this year we are debuting our "new" **Prayer Experiences Program**. This will replace the "Listener in the Hall" method of learning important prayers and facts about Catholicism.

What does this mean? It's actually more complicated to explain than it will be to implement, but here goes. Each week we will offer six different prayer experiences, broken down into two Levels **Early Elementary for Grades 1, 2 and 3 (Presentations A, B and C)** and **Upper Elementary for Grades 4, 5 and 6 (Presentations D, E and F)**.

Children come to a presentation scheduled throughout the year with a parent to learn specifics. For instance, one program will focus on the two DIFFERENT Creeds we pray, why we have two creeds, what they mean (*who runs around using words like Consubstantial in daily language?*) and then have a fun activity, too! Another time we will learn about the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and do a family based service project to benefit those in need. Many great opportunities are scheduled!

The plan is that as your child moves through lower elementary grades (1,2 and 3) they have those three years to attend one from each of the A, B and C Presentations. Presentations are offered twice per year, as often as possible on different days of the week (*in case you always have a commitment on a particular day*). You can attend one a year or all three in one year. But, as a third grader moves into fourth grade, a new series of three presentations are offered and again, before moving on to Youth Ministry, the three would be required.

We will have some periods of adjustments as current third grade students and sixth grade students are NOT expected to attend ALL three from their levels this year. HOWEVER, based on the grade your child is currently in, requirements will be applied on a pro-rated basis. **Watch for continued reminders on what grades need to attend what as the year advances.**

The push is on from both the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as well as nationwide to involve parents in the formation of their children, learning together. I firmly believe offering a "blended approach" to catechesis (*both traditional classroom formation coupled with some family based programming*) will offer us at St. Leonard Catholic Church and School a comprehensive approach to faith development.

So, gone will be the days of trying to remember words for word's sake and we are ushering in a time of understanding **WHAT** we are saying and doing (*and WHY we are doing it*). Please be sure to schedule yourselves and your child for the appropriate levels of **Prayer Experiences** for the coming year. The schedule will be in the class assignment mailing.



Our hope is to better partner with parents in their role as the primary educators of their children.

What exactly happens during the Consecration

So, I am a statistics junkie and since I'm also one of the biggest Catholic geeks around, researching statistics about our faith is a natural intersection for me.

One of the largest research groups in contemporary times is Pew Research Center. PRC is a non-partisan group whose sole purpose is to gather facts and you will hear it often referenced in statistical data analysis.

I was on PRC's website earlier this month to find statistics about what Catholics believe about the Eucharist and exactly what happens during the Consecration. Imagine my surprise when I read the statistics gathered in February 2019. Pew reported the following:

69% of US Catholics believe the bread and wine used to become the Body and Blood of Christ are *merely symbols*.

Wow - I did that math all by myself and come up with 31%, slightly less than one third of Catholics polled really believe the bread and wine are changed, becoming the Body and Blood despite this being central to who we are as Catholic Christians.

You are what you eat....

We often talk with our students preparing for First Eucharist about what they put into their bodies for fuel. The example I give is - if an Olympic athlete only ate candy and cookies, drank pop and never ate healthy food, what would happen when they needed to run faster or jump higher? They inevitably respond as I hope - they wouldn't be able to do it since they aren't eating healthy foods. We literally become what we eat. SOOOO... that being said, because we believe in the Real Presence, we are not only nourished by a wafer and wine - we are being filled with Jesus. What better food for this journey of life?

There are so many thoughts swirling in my head as I process this information. What I want most of all for my role in your child's faith formation is two fold - not only do I want to pass on the faith to the students in our program but I also want to help them and your family advance a relationship with Christ. Knowing a bunch of facts and history is meaningless if the connection is not there. SO WHAT if we know about Abraham and his son Isaac. Who cares if we know about Noah and the Ark? Moses and the Exodus? Jesus and the Resurrection?? If we aren't given opportunities to connect with God, develop a friendship and relationship with Christ, what is the point?

So what does this mean? It doesn't mean we toss formation in general. It doesn't mean we forego learning the basics. What it does mean is we work together with our children, giving them every opportunity to see God in their lives. Children are facing more and more obstacles and challenges at younger and younger ages. Let us equip them with every possible help we can as they grow and learn to navigate an increasingly self-focused culture.



Fall Fest



JOIN US FOR FUN, FAITH AND FOOD!

Saturday, November 16, 2019

1:00 - 3:00 pm

What does FALL mean to us? Pumpkin spice lattes, long sweaters, harvest season and raking leaves!

Fall Fest this year will focus on our responsibility to RAKE the leaves...
Wait - *What?!?*

Random Acts of Kindness for Everyone!

How can we share our faith, give witness to the Gospel and spread the GOOD NEWS in our everyday lives? Learn about several saints who did JUST THIS and how we can do the same in fun and engaging ways!!!

RSVP's to Christian Formation no later than **November 12**

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ALL Ages are welcome

Students in Grades 4 - 6 can use this as enrichment
Students in 7 and up can use this for service hours