



Faith Formation Handbook

2018-2019

Preschool through Grade 6



**“Let the little children come to me; do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”**

The words of Jesus from Mark 10:14

St. Patrick Church Elementary Faith Formation

Mission

St. Patrick Church Elementary Faith Formation Program is dedicated to providing the children of our parish family with a learning environment abundant with faith formation, church doctrine, and religious celebration. We also reach out to children outside our parish family who would desire to receive faith formation. We are committed to assisting children in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy

We, as catechists, know that it is not only a privilege, but a responsibility to assist our Pastors, Father Eric Bowman and Father Michael Samala, in supporting our families by providing instruction in the truths of our faith.

We approach this endeavor with the full knowledge that parents are the primary educators of their children, and we seek to assist them in bringing their child into the faith. It is through the parent's active role modeling that the child learns best about their faith. As a religious education program, we find that faith development is best obtained through experiences. Attending Mass each Sunday and the Holy Days of Obligation, as well as actively participating in the Sacraments, and creating a home rich in prayer, scripture and seasonal religious ritual, all demonstrate to the child the importance of his/her faith.

We seek to provide each child a religious education based upon the approved teachings of the Catholic Church in an environment where we encourage the whole family faith formation.

Goals

- **To provide a learning atmosphere where love and acceptance prevail**
- **To assist our faith formation students in understanding and living the teachings of the Catholic Church**
- **To bring our faith formation students into relationship with Jesus Christ**
- **To bring our faith formation students into awareness on matters of social justice**
- **To promote family faith formation**
- **To encourage certification of our catechists**
- **To provide up-to-date approved learning materials for our students**

Our Learning Approach to Elementary Faith Formation

The Spiral Model: The Most Effective Learning Approach

At Saint Patrick Church we use the **spiral model** approach to teach children their Catholic faith. This method places Christ at the center. This method also recognizes that learning about our faith is a life-long process. Children learn best when they are introduced to important faith topics simply, at one grade level when developmentally appropriate, and then reinforced at later grade levels as more information about the topic is added. This spiral method builds on a strong foundation established in earlier grade levels, by adding to the topic in later grade levels, as developmentally appropriate.

The Six Tasks of Catechesis

“The object of catechesis is communion with Jesus Christ.”

The following statements are the six tasks of catechesis, which we will accomplish through the use of Loyola Press Finding God Series

- 1 “Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith.”
- 2 “Catechesis promotes a knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the Sacraments.”
- 3 “Catechesis promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ.”
- 4 “Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ.”
- 5 “Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.”
- 6 “Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.”

Sources: The National Directory of Catechesis

Graded Course of Study

At St. Patrick Church we follow the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's recommended graded course of study. This plan or catechesis includes a systematic teaching of Catholic doctrine with the goal of bringing the students into a deeper relationship with Jesus, giving the students knowledge of his teachings and a commitment to follow him.

By systematic teaching we mean there is a very specific plan and order to the way we teach. In Pre-school and Kindergarten we teach children the very basics about God, self, and family. No concepts are concretely introduced at the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels because early childhood is a time for READINESS for religious experiences. This means that we offer appropriate learning activities to provide the foundation for the later introduction of religious concepts. At the first grade level we begin to introduce children to basic religious concepts, then in second grade we reinforce the first grade concepts and master them, plus we introduce more new concepts. So, the course of study goes on and on, introducing and mastering concepts, and the child's knowledge begins to "spiral" up and out as circles of knowledge become larger and larger.

The Graded Course of Study has been prepared using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *National Directory for Catechesis*. The Graded Course of Study may be found at the following website:

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/evangelization-and-catechesis/graded-course-of-study/>

This website contains much information and describes in detail the catechism of the church. The concepts introduced and mastered at each level are also listed. This would be a great resource for parents wanting to know exactly what your children are being taught. Teachers are encouraged to use the Graded Course of Study as a guide to along with their teacher's manuals.

Text Books

All religion textbooks must be on the "Preferred Textbook List" of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and must be in agreement with the Graded Course of Study as well as meeting the standards of the Subcommittee on the Catechism of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The text books we are currently using are the Sadlier *We Believe* Series. Parents who are curious about the textbooks we use might want to check out the publisher's website: <http://www.sadlier.com/religion/parish/catholic-identity-religious-formation-program>

Learning Styles

Faith Formation teachers are careful to consider the individual learning style of each child. We understand every child has a unique learning style, and a unique learning pace. A child learns more effectively when the learning strategy matches the learning style. For this reason, teachers are encouraged to employ a variety of learning methods each week.

Three methods most commonly used are:

Auditory (learning by hearing)

Visual (learning by seeing)

Kinesthetic (learning by doing)

Statistics show that learning increases when a variety of methods are used to teach an idea. For example, the child hears a Scripture story read by the teacher. Then the teacher has several children act out the story for the rest of the class. Finally, the students do an art project concerning the same story. By this time, most of the children will remember the lesson because one of the learning methods has appealed to their learning style.

NCEA ACRE Assessment

All Catholic religion programs are required to administer the National Catholic Education Association Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education (NCEA ACRE). This assessment gives us information for evaluating and planning our religious education program. Different assessments are given three times throughout the child's religious education – during fifth grade, eighth grade, and finally in twelfth grade.

There are eight areas of the assessment as follows:

- **God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit**
- **Church- One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic**
- **Liturgy and Sacraments**
- **Revelation, Scripture and Faith**
- **Life in Christ- Personal**
- **Morality and Catholic**
- **Social Teaching**
- **Church History**
- **Prayer/Religious Practices**
- **Catholic Faith Literacy**

HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Contained below are the Archdiocesan guidelines for home-based religious education. Please note that when choosing to home school your children in religious education there are certain guidelines to follow. We have resources that we can suggest, and we encourage and invite your children to join in parish liturgies and other events for children. If you are choosing to home school, we need to know this so we can help in making sure the child is ready for his/her sacraments. Please contact Susan Anderson, Coordinator of Religious Education for more information. 937-335-2833 Ext. 104 or email at sanderson@stpattroy.org

GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

1. When parents decide to provide the formal religious education of their children at home, they are encouraged to meet with the pastor so that he and/or his delegate can assist them in developing a catechetical plan and in choosing catechetical materials suitable for home-based religious education. (Canons 776, 793)
2. *Graded Course of Study for Early Childhood and Elementary Catechetical Programs and Growing Together: Adolescent Religious Education, a Manual for Parish and School Programs* have been approved by the Archdiocesan Commission on Education and promulgated by Archbishop Pilarczyk as the official content to be followed for all early childhood, elementary and high school catechesis in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. All catechists for children or youth are expected to follow the content outlined in these documents.
3. Parents should be invited to use the parish resource libraries and the Archdiocesan Media Centers to supplement their educational efforts.
4. Parents and their children are welcome and encouraged to participate in parish liturgies and/or other events prepared specifically for children and their families.
5. The pastor and/or his delegate should invite the parents to participate in the catechist certification process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as outlined in *The Ministry of the Catechist*. (Canons 779, 780)
6. Parents are encouraged to meet with the pastor and/or his delegate periodically to review the progress of their catechetical efforts.
7. When parents believe that their child is ready to receive a sacrament for the first time, the pastor of the parish to which the child belongs is to decide whether he or she is properly prepared. (Canons 777, 914) The parish to which a child belongs is either the parish in which he or she resides or is another parish in which he or she is registered. Section V of *Growing Together: Ministry to Children* should be used as the basis for determining readiness.

Teacher Certification

St. Patrick Church belongs to the Northern Area Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, which is part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. There are three areas in the Archdiocese - the Cincinnati area, the Dayton area and the Northern area. Troy is on the southern border of the northern area, which is made up of approximately fifty+ Catholic churches. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is currently implementing the Vocare Certification Program. Below is a brief overview of the program. For further information go to <http://vocarecalled.com/>

Vocare Overview

The call to be a catechist, rooted in our baptismal call, requires commitment to formation. The Vocare process includes study, practicing the Catholic faith through a life rooted in the Sacraments and prayer, as well as practical disciplines of faith as experienced in small groups. As a result, all catechists, religion teachers, catechetical leaders and principals in the parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati – full and part-time, paid and volunteer – are required to complete ten (10) credits per year in Vocare to remain certified in their ministry.

Finally, it is the job of the Elementary Faith Formation Coordinator to keep catechists informed of all the enrichment opportunities going on in the area. We also have teacher meetings as the need arises. In all, your catechists at St. Patrick Church are well informed.

Volunteering

Of course, we are always looking for parents who would like to substitute teach, on occasion when one of our regular faith formation teachers is absent. We are also always in need of volunteer classroom helpers. Any adult over 18 working with children in the Archdiocese for more than 1 hour in a given month, must have a background check through Selection.com and participate in a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session for the Decree on Child Protection.

We have many other opportunities for parents and families to volunteer throughout the year. These jobs range from helping with fund raisers, to baking cookies, to assisting with paperwork and more. Faith formation at St. Patrick's is not possible without the support and help of parents/guardians. Not all jobs require the security measures- only the jobs that involve working directly with or around the children. Any adult over 18 working with children in the Archdiocese for more than 1 hour in a given month, must have a background check through Selection.com and participate in a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session for the Decree on Child Protection.

Child Protection Policy

The *Decree on Child Protection* of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati requires adults (anyone over 18 or graduated from high school, even if not over 18) who have contact with children to have a criminal background check through Selection.com. The laws of the State of Ohio and the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati regarding criminal background checks must be adhered to.

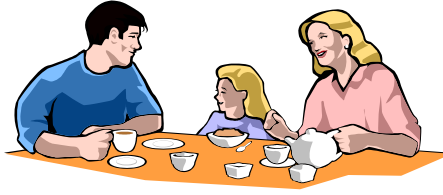
Any adult over 18 working with children in the Archdiocese for more than 1 hour in a given month, must have a background check through Selection.com and participate in a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session for the Decree on Child Protection before being approved to work with children. To view the *Decree on Child Protection* click the following link:

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/safe-environment-for-children-and-youth/decree-on-child-protection-2/>

Classroom Atmosphere

It is our goal for your children to love to come to faith formation class. Every child deserves this memory. We will do our best to provide a stress free environment for your child. Since we only have an hour and fifteen minutes each week, we need to utilize our time with the children. Some things you can do at home to prepare your child will help. We know with busy family schedules, it can be a whirlwind just getting to class. Here are some suggestions that might help:

- **Bring child prepared for class.** Make sure child has food before class, necessary medications, brings any necessary learning materials requested by teacher, make sure child uses restroom before class. (We do allow restroom breaks; it just helps if we don't have a lot of interruptions.)
- **Communicate with us.** If there is anything we need to know about your child or a family situation, please let the teacher know, i.e. as changes in medication, changes in family structure, serious illness or death in family, etc.
- **Talk to your child about religion class.**
 - a. Prepare your child for class by asking questions on day ahead, i.e. Did you remember Faith Formation is tomorrow? Were there any notes from last week that I needed to see? Do you have all of your stuff ready for tomorrow night?
 - b. Ask your child about class after it is over. In a quiet, individual time ask your child about what they're learning. Get a two-way conversation going about religion. You'll be glad you did.
- **Reinforce what they're learning.** Attend Mass weekly, take part in the sacraments, pray at home regularly, read scripture in your home, celebrate the church seasons in your home. Parents are the primary catechist for their children. We are assisting you!!



Parents are the primary catechists for their children!

Christian Behavior

In order to assure that the rights, privileges, and dignity of each person, both students and teachers, are respected, we have created the following guidelines:

1. All persons will be treated with love, charity, and respect at all times by staff, catechists, and peers. All are to refrain from disrespectful talk, distracting behavior or sarcasm.
2. No person is permitted in any other area of the parish campus unless approved by the Program Coordinator.
3. No child/youth is permitted to leave the parish property without written and dated permission from their parents/guardians. If an early dismissal is requested or if transportation will be provided by someone other than parents (not including regularly scheduled carpools), written permission should be given to the Coordinator.
4. Students and catechists are expected to refrain from gum chewing, smoking, consuming alcohol and the use of illegal substances while in the Faith Formation sessions.
5. All property of the parish and participants is to be handled with care and respect. Any damage is to be immediately reported to the Program Coordinator.
6. In the event that a student has in their possession any item that is causing a distraction, the instructor will remove the item until a time is appropriate for its return.
7. Students and teachers should exhibit Christian behavior both inside and outside the program.

Discipline Procedure

It is our goal for your children to receive a quality religious education. Each child deserves this and each teacher deserves respect for their time and effort. Therefore, each class will develop its own set of class rules with the direction of the teacher, and then the following discipline procedure will apply if rules cannot be followed. This method is designed to allow the teacher to effectively discipline the child, with the least disruption to class.

1. Teacher writes student name on board without disrupting class on first offense.
2. Teacher places check mark by student name without disrupting class on second offense.
3. Teacher sends student to the Office to speak to coordinator on third offense in one evening. Coordinator will talk to child, hopefully reaching an agreement with child for improved behavior. If an agreement cannot be reached, parents will be notified.
4. Parents will be required to attend a conference upon a child's second visit to office.

5. Child may be subject to have parent supervision while in class or be expelled from program in extreme cases of unacceptable behavior. Re-admission after expulsion may be possible after meeting with Father Eric Bowman, Coordinator Susan Anderson, Parents/Guardians of the student, and the student.
6. Coordinator of Religious Education retains the right to make changes to the disciplinary procedures.
7. No child will be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive language.

Admission Policy

All are welcome as St. Patrick Church does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national origin or handicapping conditions. Persons with disabilities should be provided opportunities to participate in parish religious education programs to the fullest extent appropriate.

St. Patrick Church accepts all children into the Faith Formation Program. Children of families belonging to the parish of St. Patrick Church receive our published fee rates, while the fees of children not registered with the parish are doubled. This is due to the fact that the fees charged to the families only cover a portion of the cost of the program, with our Parish general budget supplementing the rest. Fees can be reduced, delayed, or waived based on critical family need. Please see administrators privately. Do not let fees interfere with total youth involvement!

- Baptismal Certificates are required for all newcomers to our program, grades Pre-School-12
- Children must have the registration form and medical release form turned in before attending a class.
- Parents must sign on the registration form that they have reviewed the online Faith Formation Handbook.
- Students are to remain in good standing with attendance, appropriate behavior, and participation.

Non-custodial Parent Rights

The program Coordinator needs to be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent.

Communication

- E-mail is vital for faith formation and will be shared with teachers and the parish office as well.
- Phone numbers are vital for faith formation and will be shared with teachers and the parish office as well.
- Elementary Faith Formation Coordinator, Susan Anderson, may be contacted via email at sanderson@stpattroy.org or parish phone 937-335-2833 ext 104

Tuition Fees

Fees should never stop a child from fully participating in our faith formation activities. Please see Susan Anderson (for opportunities to set up a payment plan or to receive a discount based on critical family need.

Tuition Fee Schedule

Preschool...	\$25
Kindergarten-6 th Grade	\$75

Fee Discounts for Volunteer Teachers

Teachers (catechists) are vital to our parish mission! We are so grateful to our volunteer teachers!

- The most expensive child attends for free.
- The normal family discount remains in place: the free child is counted as a paying child, so the second child receives a \$10 discount, as does each child thereafter.

Tuition Fee Refunds

Tuition fee refunds will only be given after careful consideration with a written request being received, and deemed appropriate. All refunds will be pro-rated with the cost of the workbook being deducted from the refund.

Parish Sacramental Preparation Policy

Active participation in Faith Formation sessions is necessary for the reception of sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. Therefore, those who desire to receive these sacraments should be active continually, but especially the year prior to and the year of sacramental preparation. Therefore, Grade 1 activity is important prior to Grade 2 sacraments and Grade 7 activity is important prior to Grade 8 Confirmation. Parents and/or guardians are a vital part in preparing a child for a sacrament and are given the opportunity to become more familiar with our program through several meetings and retreat days held throughout the year.

Attendance Procedures

Archdiocesan guidelines state children should receive 30 hours of instruction per year of faith formation. In order to ensure a sound religious education the following guidelines are in place:

- All absences must be reported to Coordinator by the start of each Faith Formation session. (See contact information below.)
- Absence should be kept to a minimum. Any child missing more than 8 classes throughout the school year will subject to review to pass to next year's grade level, with the child's teacher deciding when absenteeism is interfering with completion of yearly goals. A meeting with the child's teacher, Coordinator Susan Anderson, Parents/Guardians of the student, and the student will be required.
- Too much absenteeism could result in not passing to next year's grade level or not participating in First Reconciliation and First Communion.
- When a child misses three classes in-a-row, a contact with the parent will be made.
- Excused absences not counting against student are: death in family, hospitalization, or illness with doctor excuse. Other situations may apply, but parents need to call Coordinator.
- Attendance records will be recorded and kept by Faith Formation office.
- Make up work for time absent is at the teacher's discretion. Work may be considered if it is necessary for the understanding of the lesson and future lessons taught.

Absence Reporting Procedure

- All absences must be reported to Coordinator by the start of each CCD session. This is for the protection of the child. That way, we know where every child is supposed to be.
- Absence reporting after the class has occurred must be done in writing to be excused.
- Leaving messages on voice mail is fine.
- Coordinator of Religious Education, Susan Anderson, may be contacted via email sanderson@stpattroy.org or parish phone 937-335-2833 ext 104.

Off Premise and Extra Curricular Activities Related to Program

In the event of off premise and extra curricular activities relating to program, an extra parent permission form will be required per Archdiocesan guidelines.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

- **Building doors will be locked for security**
 1. Elementary Faith Formation will implement a **locked door policy** during class time. Outer school and Parish Center doors will be locked during class time for the protection of the children and teachers. Doors will be locked from approximately 6:40 PM – 7:35 PM. No exit door is ever blocked from the inside.
- **Class Time is from 6:30 PM – 7:45 PM, unless otherwise noted on schedule.**
 1. Children should not arrive before 6:20 PM.
 2. No child/youth is permitted to leave the parish property without written and dated permission from their parents/guardians. If an **early dismissal** is requested or if transportation will be provided by someone other than parents (not including regularly scheduled carpools), written permission should be given to the Coordinator.
 3. Parents of **kindergarten, first and second graders** are required to escort their children to and from class.
 4. Parents may enter building to pick up children at 7:35 PM
 5. **Parents are still always welcome to visit class or wait inside, but you must enter before 6:40 PM**

Safety and Emergency Procedures (continued)

- **Parking Lot Safety**
 1. Children are not permitted to run in the parking lots.
 2. Drivers must use extreme caution while children are moving about in the parking lots.
 3. Incidences of careless driving or careless behavior should be reported to the coordinator.
 4. We are looking for adult parent volunteers to take turns monitoring the parking lots.

- **Fire and Dangerous Weather Condition Procedures**
 1. Faith Formation will follow the St. Patrick School emergency procedure for these events.
 2. We will hold practice fire drill and dangerous weather procedures in mid October.

- **Accidents and Medical Emergencies**
 1. The adult teacher and/or coordinator with the child will make the decision whether the situation requires 911.
 2. If 911 is required, the teacher will first make the call to get help on the way, and then immediately notify the coordinator. Parents or the emergency contact on the child's registration paper work will then be notified as quickly as possible.
 3. Other less severe emergencies will be handled appropriately and parents will be notified accordingly.
 4. All other children are expected to exhibit good behavior during emergency.

- **Child Protection**
 1. St. Patrick Church follows all guidelines set forth in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's *Decree on Child Protection*. All teachers / volunteers and any adult over 18 working with children in the Archdiocese for more than 1 hour in a given month, must have a background check through Selection.com and participate in a VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session for the Decree on Child Protection before being approved to work with children.

 2. The Faith Formation Program coordinator is required by the Ohio Revised Code and the archdiocesan *Decree on Child Protection* to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Snacks in Classrooms

Snacks are permitted in classrooms, however then following guidelines are in place.

- Snacks should not be provided weekly, but should be regulated or reserved for special occasions or lessons.
- Snacks are not used as a bribe for good behavior.
- Student allergies must be taken into consideration.
- Snacks should not be withheld from a student due to behavior issues.
- Snacks should be of a variety that would meet with parental approval.
- Students and teachers are responsible for cleaning up after snacks.
- Trash cans with food garbage should be placed in hallway at end of class so the coordinator can empty them.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

During 9:30 Mass each Sunday, children, grades K – 3 go to 9:30 Mass with their parents. Children are called forth by Father before the first reading if they wish, and then are dismissed to the undercroft for age appropriate liturgy. The children come back to church during the offertory. Please contact Susan Anderson Coordinator of Religious Education, for more information or to sign up to help. 937-335-2833 x104 church or email sanderson@stpattroy.org

Children's Server Training

Our server training for children fourth through sixth grade is held in the fall and is taught by our Deacon John Carlin. The class usually lasts six to seven weeks, depending on the progress of the children. We will be giving the children more information with dates and times as it is available. We will need to have one parent present at the training sessions to meet the Decree on Child Protection requirements, so there are always two adults present. Usually parents trade off nights, so no one has to stay all the time. Families who are interested may contact Deacon John at: 937-339-0726 or email Johnkcarlin@hotmail.com

R.C.I.A. for Kids

This is a religious faith formation process for children who are seeking the Catholic Faith. Many of these children have not been baptized or had any religious education. This process can also be for children who were baptized but not catechized (had any religious education).

The process for initiating children is similar to the process of initiating adults. The process involves participation in the four periods of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (pre-catechumenate, catechumenate, purification and enlightenment, and mystagogy) and all that those periods suggest about formation. As with adults, the formation process generally requires at least a year and often longer (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate* #6).

Here, at St. Patrick Church, this process generally runs with the school year, but it would be even more beneficial if the child could go through an inquiry stage (asking questions) in the summer. Children participating in this process receive their Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. After Easter the children go through the Mystagogy period until Pentecost.

Families of interested children may contact Susan Anderson, Coordinator of Religious Education, at 937-335-2833 x104 or email at sanderson@stpattroy.org
St. Patrick Church also has an adult R.C.I.A. Ministry. Those adults interested should contact our pastor, Father Eric Bowman at 937-335-2833 ext. 101

Pre-School Faith Formation

Pre-School Faith Formation are held during the 9:30 Mass on Sunday in the church undercroft. Classes run October 7, 2018 through April 14, 2019.

With the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Breaks

Please contact Susan Anderson, Coordinator of Religious Education, for more information or to sign up to help. 937-335-2833 x104 church or email sanderson@stpattroy.org

Sunday Children's Nursery during 9:30 am Mass

St. Patrick Church offers nursery for little ones during the 9:30 am Mass on Sunday in the undercroft nursery. Parents must take an occasional turn with nursery duty so all may utilize this service. All volunteers for the Nursery must be VIRTUS trained and complete selection.com. There must be TWO VIRTUS trained volunteers in the nursery for it to be open during the 9:30 mass.

Please contact Susan Anderson Coordinator of Religious Education, for more information or to sign up to help. 937-335-2833 x104 church or email sanderson@hotmail.com

Youth Ministry Faith Formation

There is a separate program for Junior High and High School Youth Ministry. There are many wonderful programs and Youth Ministers available to assist your teens with Faith Formation. Please contact Youth Ministry Director, Mrs. Hollie Danis, at 937-335-2833 ext. 106 or visit our parish website.

Adult Faith Formation Family Programs

For many other wonderful opportunities for family faith formation, please contact our Adult Faith Formation Coordinator, Pat Smith at 937-335-2833 x104 or watch the bulletin.