

September 9, 2019

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2019/2020 Youth Ministry Year! The Youth Ministry Team and I are very excited to start meeting with your teens! Our first session is Sunday, October 6th and we have a very busy year planned. Here is some information that I hope will be helpful to you:

Class times: Grades 6-8 will meet from 6:00 -7:00 pm at Spirit Central and **grades 9 -10 will meet from 7:15 – 8:15 pm** at Spirit Central. We do ask for your assistance with arrival time. Because we have so much planned, we do need to start on time. Having your teen arrive a little earlier than start time will not only help us, but it will also allow your teen some time to socialize with their peers before we start class. As always, the Café will be open to any parents that wish to stay and wait for their teen as well as for any siblings that need to wait for each other. If you have a teen in each session, you are welcome to bring both teens at the same time and the one who isn't in class can wait in the Café, do homework, or hang out in the game room. They will be supervised!

Refreshments: Every Sunday evening, we offer snacks and beverages in the Café for your teens. This can turn into quite an expense for us. If anyone would like to send in any types of snacks or beverages, please feel free. We are grateful for any help you can give!

Teen Masses and Praise/Worship/Adoration Nights: I am excited to inform you that this year we have **5 Teen Masses** scheduled at Holy Spirit. These Masses will be held on **Sunday evenings from 6:00 - 7:00pm**. Because these Masses are held during class time for grades 6-8, they count as their class for that week. However, since grades 9&10 are preparing for Confirmation, they will still have class after Mass. Although these Masses will be geared toward the teens, parents and families as well as ALL parishioners are welcome to attend. Teens will be asked to participate in certain roles at these Masses. They do count as your Sunday Mass so you need only go once that weekend. We also have **3 Praise/Worship/Adoration nights** scheduled again. On the nights that these are scheduled, teens in grades 6-10 all come at the same time from **6:00 -7:15pm** and we meet **in the church**. These prayerful evenings are full of great music, prayers, and quiet time to sit with the Lord and reflect. These nights are also open to parents, family and friends. Because these too are during class time, they also count as your teen's class for the week for grades 6-8 and 9&10.

9th and 10th Grade Retreat: We have a 9th and 10th grade retreat day scheduled for **Sunday, November 17th**. It will begin at 1:00pm and end at 7:00pm after the Teen Mass. This is their class for the day so there will be no night class. We will be heading over to the church at 5:30 to pray the Patriotic Rosary with the Knights of Columbus before the Mass starts. Grades 6-8 will meet us in the church at 5:30 and join us in praying the rosary and then celebrate Mass. This is the class for grades 6-8 this evening. All family members are invited to join us either at 5:30 or for Mass at 6:00. Please do not confuse this with the Emmaus Retreat in the spring! They are two separate events!

YOUTH MASSES: We have 4 of these Masses on the calendar for this year. They are not the same as the Teen Masses. These Masses occur during our regular Sunday morning Masses at 11:30 on days that we do not have class at night. We highly encourage teen participation during these Masses so your teen may be asked to help with a certain role. On the days that these Masses are scheduled, we will reserve pews up front for the teens to sit together and celebrate Mass. If you wish for your teen to sit with you, that is ok. We understand the importance of being with your family at Mass!

SERVICE PROJECTS: We will be working on several service projects again this year. We feel that it is just as important to show our teens how to actively live out their faith as well as teach them about it. In addition to the lass service projects that we will be doing throughout the year, we are asking each family to consider doing a form of service together once throughout the year. There are many events to help at, including Friday's Table and the Helpers Store, as well as being greeters at Mass. Please let me know if there is something particular you would like to do. I would love to help set that up for you.

SAVE THE DATE: If you have a teen in **9th grade**, **PLEASE** mark your calendars now for the **Emmaus Retreat** which will be held **March 13th -15th at Camp of the Woods**. This is a required retreat for 9th graders to attend before getting Confirmed. More information will be coming on that.

CONFIRMATION PREP: Please remember that Confirmation prep is now a two year program! This means that your teen must attend in 9th and 10th grade in order to be Confirmed at the end of their 10th grade year. Each class builds upon the other so attendance is very important.

MOM'S GROUP: The Mom's Group (MOFIA; Mothers of Faith in Action) that was formed a few years ago has decided to move in a different direction to get more families involved. The group that is being formed now doesn't have an official name yet and is like that of a school PTA which allows for a broader range of volunteers. Their mission is the same and that is to continue to plan and host activities for families throughout the Faith Formation year and to fundraise for our Faith Formation Programs. This is a great example of bringing families together and truly becoming one as a Church Family. There is a meeting, **Tuesday, September 17th at 6:30 pm** in our Spirit Central Café. ALL are welcome to attend! Once the events are planned, they will be mailed out to you.

CATHOLIC CARPOOL: A couple years ago, some of our teens expressed to us that we should have something in place to help them get to Mass if their parents can't bring them. They came up with the idea of the Catholic Carpool! I have been working closely with our Diocese on how to do this. We now have all the necessary paperwork in place to put this plan into action! I have enclosed a permission slip and youth agreement slip in this mailing for you and your teen to sign. If you sign this giving permission to myself and some other members of our Youth Ministry team to give your teen a ride to Mass and back home again, we will share some contact numbers with them. There will always be two adults in the vehicle, and ALL the adults involved have been background checked and Virtus trained! My hope is to have little business cards made up in the future to hand out to the teens with the contact numbers on them.

MASS ATTENDANCE: Please remember that going to weekly mass is an extremely important part of your child's faith formation as well as for your family's ongoing journey of faith! We will be teaching

your teens about the importance of attending Mass. You, as parents, have the power to establish how important attending Mass is! Let's work together and fill the pews!!

REGISTRATION: Enclosed you will find a registration form, a photo consent form, a calendar for the year, paperwork for the Catholic Carpool and an envelope. There is no longer a set fee for registration for your child(ren) to attend Faith Formation however, if you choose to do so there is a "free will" offering. You may send this envelope with your child to class; or place in the collection basket at any Mass throughout the Faith Formation year. Let God be your guide; this is an anonymous free will offering. The Registration and Consent Forms may be mailed to: The Faith Formation Program, Church of the Holy Spirit, 153 S. Main Street, Gloversville, NY, 12078 or sent with your child to the first day of class. The photo consent form needs to only be completed once and will be kept on file and may be changed at any time.

At the bottom of the registration form there is a place to indicate the best way to contact you. We use the Remind APP (text message or email notifications) and we find it extremely helpful to get a quick message out about weather cancellations or changes in the calendar or to remind you about an event. We also update our Parish website, www.holyspirit12078.org and put a status update out via our Facebook Page: Church of the Holy Spirit Faith Formation – like us and follow ups for those updates.

Our entire Youth Ministry Team of volunteers is looking forward to working with you in leading you and your children into a deeper relationship with God.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions or concerns: 518-773-8590 (office); 518-848-1986 (texting available) or via email at nosnomis3@yahoo.com.

Any changes to the calendar due to weather can be accessed through our Facebook page –Church of The Holy Spirit Faith Formation, as well as our webpage – www.holyspirit12078.org

God Bless,

Ann Simonson

Coordinator of Faith Formation/Youth Minister