



FAMILY OF FAITH FAQ:

Q. Why is the parish changing from the traditional classroom Religious Education to the Family of Faith program?

A. We want to introduce your children to a real, personal relationship with Christ, and strengthen and guide them throughout their lives in the most effective way possible. THE most powerful teacher for children on their path of life is their own parents!

Studies have shown that when both parents actively practice the faith, most of their children will too – that is still true. When one or both parents do not practice, their children will most likely not practice the faith as adults.

Our Family of Faith program is designed to fortify both the faith and the family. We want to give your families the strength, joy, and warmth that only God can give! Family of Faith Formation is also a continuation of the goals set forth by the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Renew My Church campaign along with being in-line with parishes within our local deanery.

Q. What is “Family of Faith”? How much time does it take to complete this new program?

A. The Family of Faith Program is a new religious education initiative. It concentrates on supporting and strengthening families in both faith and their family unity. The program results in strengthening both the family and parish life as a great “Family of Faith.” It builds upon the most powerful element of effective faith transmission, the family.

This program has a cycle of four years. The complete course is an introduction to all aspects of Catholic faith, life, and morals. Through it, the students and their parents will grow together in their spiritual journey, through attendance at Mass, regular family activities, prayer, and participation in parish life. Instead of being something external, isolated, or merely obligatory at times for assorted reasons, students will come to understand and value their religion as a way of life—for all their lives!

Q. What materials do we get/need?

A. You will receive one parent book with information you need to teach your children the faith. This is included in your registration fee.

Each child will receive an activity book with resources and activities to learn each theme for the year. These are included in your registration fee.

You will also need to have basic art/school supplies for the activities.

Each family will need a Bible (New American Bible) and a Catechism of the Catholic Church. These can be purchased from Amazon or from any Catholic bookstore.

Q. How often do we meet?

A. Parents come together on Wednesday evening at 6:30 to learn the materials, and whole families come together the third Sunday of the month after 4:30 pm Mass. Parents are responsible for instructing their children for two lessons each month at home.

Q. What happens if we work on Wednesdays/ Sundays?

A. We understand that work schedules are demanding, and many parents cannot control their work schedule. If you are unable to attend a Sunday Family gathering, we ask that you try to find a way for your children to join us (another family may be willing to bring them or a relative). Again, we understand if your family cannot attend but if your children are able to come that would be fine. Parents can always turn assignments in at the next Parent Meeting to show us you are completing the assignments (this is important for those preparing to receive a Sacrament).

Q. How am I supposed to teach something I do not understand?

A. The parent book provides information and material for the parents to understand what they are teaching that month. At our monthly parent session, we will teach you everything you need to know about the theme and give you more resources to help you learn and be able to instruct your children. You can always call, e-mail, or visit us in the parish office for further support, help, and information.

Q. What if I have a first grader and a seventh grader (or more kids)?

A. Everyone learns the same material all year. The curriculum is the same for everyone. The children's activity book has age-appropriate activities for all ages. This way, you teach all your children at the same time and then give each child the activity appropriate for their age to assist in learning the material.

Q. What if we do not understand the material?

A. Call, e-mail, or visit us in the parish office and we will help you. As a parish, it is our ministry and priority to support you in your vocation and role as a parent.

Q. Do we have to turn anything in?

A. There is a year-long project every family completes. Throughout the year, parents will share at the Wednesday parent meetings their family project's progress. Families will support and share with one another ideas related to the project. At the year's end, families will be able to share their end project with the Family of Faith community.



Q: Can I bring my children with me to Parent Meetings on the first Wednesday of the month?

A: You can certainly bring your children to the Parent Meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. We will have activities for them while we take the time to teach you, our parents, the theme for that month.

Q: Is there a lot of time and work involved for families?

A: No. There are two lessons to teach each month, along with a variety of family and child activities. Each lesson takes about 30-45 minutes and requires minimal preparation from the parents. The once-a-month parent educational session will include icebreakers, presentation notes, discussion questions and answers, and step-by-step instructions for activities. Our group leaders will help you know, understand, and explain your faith, so that you can pass it on to your children in a personal way.

Q: How will the sacramental preparation work?

A: All Sacrament parents are expected to attend parent meetings and receive instruction on how to work at home with their children. In addition, the students will participate in the following:

First Reconciliation, students will attend two special educational sessions. Sessions will be 2 hours – 2.5 hours in length. First Reconciliation will be in November of 2024.

First Communion, students in the Family of Faith program will attend two class sessions in preparation coinciding with our monthly Wednesday Parent meetings and they will attend one educational retreat session with all the First Communion students from the parish. The day before First Communion in May, students must attend First Communion practice.

CONFIRMATION students in the Family of Faith program will attend their 90-minute class sessions during the same evenings as our parent meetings each month. Within their classroom they will move through catechesis along with working on the additional requirements set out for each Confirmation student. Confirmation Students also have 4 required Community Nights and 1 required day retreat. The evening before Confirmation spring of 2025 there will be a required practice for all confirmation students.

Although the parents do not attend the special sacrament instruction, the families of all the candidates for these sacraments at St. John Henry Newman Parish must participate in the Family of Faith program during the school year.

Q: Will there still be First Communion and Confirmation celebrations?

A: Yes. As a Family of Faith, St. John Henry Newman Parish has a long-standing tradition of the entire parish celebrating these important sacraments as memorable events for our students and their families.

Q: How much does the Family of Faith program cost?

A: As this is a family program, tuition is assessed per family, rather than for individual. Costs are:

\$325.00 per family cost, which includes the books and training per year. This applies no matter how many children you have in the program.

Extra charges for sacramental preparation:

\$100.00 per student receiving First Reconciliation and First Communion.

\$125.00 per student receiving Confirmation.