

August 30, 2011

Dear Sacred Heart Parishioner:

Greetings! This letter is being sent to every registered household in the parish. It contains information on our faith formation plan for all ages, including Registration, Sacramental preparation, **Journey In Faith** (our intergenerational program), and a Kickoff event taking place on Wednesday, Sept. 14th.

Faith Formation is for everyone, not just for families with young children, so please read on.....

KICKOFF

On **Wednesday, Sept. 14th** all parishioners are invited to join us at the church for the **Faith Formation Kickoff**. This celebration will include a simple supper beginning at 5:00pm followed by a video presentation for all ages at 6:00 with an informational session for adults and games for the children from 6:30 to 7:00pm. **Registration for the faith formation program, including sacramental preparation, will take place at this event.** A Confirmation student/parent informational meeting will be held at 7:15pm.

JOURNEY IN FAITH

Journey In Faith's (JIF) is our parish's primary catechetical program. The goal of Journey in Faith is to help form the faith of all parishioners throughout their lifetime. This year there will be 8 **JIF** Gatherings beginning in October. There is something for all ages at each monthly session.

Each month you have the choice of attending the **JIF** session either Sunday, 11:15am-2:00pm or Wednesday, 5:00-7:45pm. There is no Thursday session this year. The Sunday sessions will be held at the church. Due to our space constraints at the church, **all Wednesday sessions (except for May) will be at Cathedral High School.** The Sunday sessions generally have a smaller attendance and therefore have a less "busy" and more relaxed atmosphere. Families with young children or anyone who might appreciate that atmosphere are encouraged to try the Sunday session. A preschool/kindergarten program is offered as part of the Sunday afternoon sessions. This option may also be offered on Wednesday this year if there is enough interest. Childcare is available at all sessions upon request. Indicate your interest on your registration form.

A parent or another adult (possibly grandparent or sacramental sponsor) needs to accompany preschool and school-aged children for these sessions. **ALL ADULTS** of the parish are invited to make Journey In Faith part of their ongoing faith formation. **JIF** compliments the religious education curriculum of our area Catholic Schools. All families attending area Catholic Schools are highly encouraged to also participate in **JIF**.

The focus for the 2011-12 program year is "Catholic Social Teaching." The monthly gatherings are scheduled for: October 2 & 5; November 6 & 9; December 11 & 14; January 8 & 11; February 5 & 8; March 11 & 14; April 15 & 18; and May 6 & 9.

Participants attend one session each month. If you choose not to participate in **JIF**, contact Joan in the Parish Office for information about an at-home study program. Textbooks for children are also available for those participating in **JIF** if requested.

ADDITIONAL FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to Journey In Faith Gatherings there are opportunities throughout the year to participate in faith formation activities. These include youth ministry events, adult faith formation offerings, Tables for Two, Soup Suppers with Stations of the Cross, as well as metro-area offerings and more. Watch for information to come on these and other faith forming opportunities.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

RECONCILIATION and EUCHARIST

Children in grade 2 (or older) who wish to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time are expected to participate in a preparation program in addition to the ongoing faith formation program.

Registration is required for all children who wish to participate.

CONFIRMATION

Immediate preparation for Confirmation is offered to students in grade 10 or above who have been actively participating in a faith formation program prior to this year. Candidates are expected to participate in Journey In Faith monthly Gatherings in addition to completing Confirmation program requirements. Details of the confirmation program will be available at the parent/candidate orientation meeting to be conducted at the end of the faith formation kickoff on Wednesday, Sept. 14, 7:15pm in the church. There are changes to this program for the coming year. **All confirmation candidates along with a parent are asked to attend this meeting.** (*Families we have identified with youth in this category see the enclosed letter*)

SPECIAL SITUATIONS (Older Children)

School-age children who have not been baptized, or children older than third grade who wish to receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation for the first time, contact the Parish Office for more information.

Note: *More details on the preparation for all of these sacraments will be available at the Kickoff.*

REGISTRATION

Registration for the faith formation programs will take place at the Kickoff, on Wednesday, September 14th. If you are unable to attend the Kickoff, registration can be completed after the Masses on September 17 & 18.

At registration you will receive schedules for the programs being offered in the coming year.

TIME, TALENT, & TREASURE

We have made some changes to the financial commitment we expect of those registering for faith formation programs, as we continue to move toward being a stewardship parish. Included with this letter is more information about the financial commitment.

Your strengths, skills, and talents are needed to help make Journey In Faith possible. By virtue of our baptism, we are all called to spread the Gospel and share our faith. What can you do to contribute to the faith formation of others in our Sacred Heart Community? Consider serving as a small group facilitator, meal server, set-up or clean-up crew member, childcare provider, or an assistant with child or family activities. Facilitators are responsible to lead a small group conversation as needed during JIF sessions. You do not have to be an “expert,” this is sharing faith rather than teaching. We have a special need for meal servers for the Wednesday Gatherings at Cathedral H.S. We will provide training as needed for all volunteers. The registration form will have a section listing these and other areas for which you can volunteer, or contact Joan in the Parish Office.

If you have questions or need more information contact Joan Krause, Faith Formation Director, 251-8115, ext.*818 or jkrause@sacredheartsaukrapids.org.

God’s blessings to you and your family on your faith journey!

Joan Krause
Faith Formation Director

Joe Kresky
Youth Ministry Director

Fr. Ron Weyrens
Pastor