

St. Joseph Youth Ministry

~ a way for high school youth and their families to live out their baptismal call with the opportunity to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation ~

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Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Parents and Teens,

Welcome back!

This year provides a tremendous opportunity for your teen's spiritual growth. In addition to deepening their relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, worship and service, and learning about their faith, the teens will go on their Antioch retreat and move into the immediate preparation phase for the sacrament of confirmation.

Teens, last year you embarked on your journey by committing to live as a disciple of Christ. We talked about using the 8 components of Youth Ministry as the template for living as a disciple of Christ. (This diagram is available on the website). With that said, you should have already experienced many of the components in your first year. Hopefully, you have shared some of these experiences with your family. Each of these experiences is designed to enrich your spiritual growth.

We are looking forward to your participation in the upcoming Antioch retreat. The Antioch retreat has the potential to add a new dimension to your spiritual growth. It is an opportunity to dive deeper into your relationship with Jesus Christ. The retreat is scheduled for the weekend of November 30, December 1, 2 2018. (Snow date December 7,8,9) A letter and registration form will be sent out with further details. Clear your calendar. It is a full weekend!

This year all teens in the second year of youth ministry will be attending their faith formation session on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:15 pm in St. Joseph School. The basis of the discussion will be the program called 'Decision Point'. The dates of these sessions are on the attached 'Year 2 At A Glance' form. There are 8 sessions. **Four sessions are designed for at least 1 parent to attend with their teen. These are designated on the 'year 2 at a glance' form.** In the other 4 sessions, each teen will participate in a small group discussion led by an adult facilitator. Teens in year 2 youth ministry will **no longer be required** to attend Generations of Faith sessions **with one exception. On November 18,** parent(s) and teen(s) are asked to attend 12 noon mass followed by Generations of Faith at 1 pm. Bishop Serratelli will be speaking and we would like all of you to participate. This will take the place of your scheduled Decision Point session that day. This is a required session.

On Sunday evening October 7, 6:30-7:45 pm we will be meeting for our annual youth ministry prayer service and reflection and discussion of the upcoming year. We ask that teens and at least one parent attend, as this is required. After the prayer service, the adults will have an opportunity to ask questions about the upcoming year while the teens will have an opportunity to meet with our peer ministers. We hope to give you a better understanding of what we do as a parish to help your teen grow in their faith and to participate in the life of the church. We will review the goals of St. Joseph Youth Ministry and the expectations of those participating in the ministry. Our evening will begin in the church at 6:30 pm.

I would like to remind you to use the Faith Formation website, faithformationnj.org. There you will find valuable information for Generations of Faith, Decision Point, and Youth Ministry. We highly recommend that you look through **all** of the Youth Ministry information prior to you the start of the year. To access the Youth Ministry information:

- For an overview of Youth Ministry, select the **'Programs'** tab. Under this tab select **'Youth Ministry'**. We highly recommend you becoming familiar with this page. It contains general information about the ministry.
- **FAQ (frequently asked questions)** can be found under the **'Programs'** tab as well. Please read through this material as it contains the details of the ministry.
- The **Calendar** can be found on the upper left-hand side of the 'Faith Connections' home page. This calendar will provide you with all the dates for events happening in Youth Ministry as well as parish and Faith Formation events for the upcoming year. This calendar is updated as events become available. It is clearly marked Year 1 or Year 2. Where it is not marked Year 1 or Year 2, it is available to any teen in high school. If you have any trouble viewing this, please contact Camille Kluge.
- Assignments – The **annual Christian Service assignment** can be found by typing in 'assignments' in the search bar of the faith formation website. The **Confirmation Sponsor and Confirmation Name essays were due last December 31, 2107.**

We encourage you to be faithful to your commitment. The Year 2 'at-a-glance' form is attached to this email and can also be found on the website faithformationnj.org. Please look at this carefully and keep it in your family binder. **We will be reviewing this October 7 so we ask that you bring it with you.** The 'at-a-glance' form contains many of the required dates for the upcoming 2018-2019 year. This form is for your records as well as ours. We will be meeting with each teen April 2019 to discuss their experience thus far. The completed form will be collected at this time. It is the teen's responsibility to keep track of all their requirements and to make sure this form is filled out. **We recommend that you keep a copy for your records.**

We encourage all teens to attend and participate in the youth masses that are held at the 12:00 pm mass in the church. The youth mass dates are listed on the attached 'at-a-glance' form.

Please make sure we have your current family email address on file. Email is the primary means for us to communicate with families. Last year we began using a communication platform called 'Flocknote'. It enables us to communicate with you more effectively. The platform allows us to send out emails and texts. Please make your cell phone is on file with the office if you would like to receive texts. If you would like your teen to receive this information, please send us their contact information. Please let us know if you have difficulty using Flocknote. We are happy to help you.

Please find attached to this email, a Medical Release Form. We ask that you complete this form and return to the rectory as soon as you can. This can be done by email, regular mail, or in person.

Finally both Year 1 and Year 2 At-A-Glance forms, service reflections, confirmation sponsor essay and confirmation name essay will be placed in your file. These must be completed prior to the reception of Confirmation. Detailed instructions for the reflections and essays can be found on the website.

We hope that you continue your journey once you have been confirmed. There are leadership opportunities as well as opportunities to serve in the various ministries that will aid in your spiritual growth. Remember...

We don't receive a sacrament and then walk away; we receive a sacrament so that we can walk in a different way.

Peace,

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Youth Minister

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