

IMPORTANT INFORMATION 2011-2012

PHILOSOPHY: The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the first and best teachers of the faith. For many families, Family Program Faith Formation provides a superior process for parents to exercise their sacred responsibility to pass on the faith to their children. This approach to faith formation can be more effective, more personalized, more convenient, less time-consuming, and more rewarding for both parent and child. It can bring families together and increase the family's sense of unity with the Church. Family Program combines home study with monthly Family Program meetings which are held in the Parish Hall at Sts. John and Paul. Family Program is open to members of Sts. John and Paul and St. John Neumann parishes.

HOME STUDY COMPONENT: Children receive textbooks for home study. It is recommended that parents schedule approximately one hour of home study time during a regular day and time each week. For young children and those with learning challenges, we suggest that home study time be shorter and more frequent, with more parental assistance and less reading. Parents may elect to enhance the study experience using prayers and ideas from the "At Home Family Guide" or other supplemental resources. Chapters may be covered in any order approved by the parent.

CHAPTER REVIEWS: After completing study of a chapter, the child should complete a Chapter Review. For students in grades 1 through 5, these reviews can be found online at www.faithfirst.com. From the Home Page, click on the Chapter Review tab. On this page the student has three choices: Multiple Choice, Word Bank, or Time Trial. They may choose whichever review method they desire. Choose the grade level and the chapter. When the review is complete please send an email (it is no longer automatically generated by the Faith First site) to: holyfamilies@stsjohnandpaul.org with the results (i.e. Tommy Smith, grade 1, completed chapter 5). If there are any problems accessing the online Chapter Review, parents may conduct an oral review with children and notify us by e-mail when chapters have been satisfactorily completed. Online reviews are not available for children in Kindergarten. These children should simply complete the Review Questions in their textbooks and their parents should submit periodic e-mails to holyfamilies@stsjohnandpaul.org reporting the chapters that have been completed by these younger children. **Students must complete at least 17 chapters in their textbook AND attend at least three meetings to ensure continued eligibility for the program and to receive credit for this Faith Formation year.**

FAMILY PROGRAM MEETINGS: Children participating in Family Program are expected to attend one Family Program meeting per month (during the school year) together with at least one parent. These meetings are designed to build community spirit, renew enthusiasm, delight the senses, help everyone feel closer to God, and educate all participants. Meeting themes are based on Sunday readings for one of the weekends that month. During the first hour, families sit together and enjoy scripture, discussion, refreshments, music, skits, crafts, service projects, and/or other activities. During the second hour, children go to break-out sessions to enjoy hands-on activities directed by a Catechist for their grade-level, while adults remain in the mail hall to enjoy adult faith formation presentations. **Meeting attendance of at least 3 meetings is required to ensure continued eligibility for the program.** Due to space limitations, families are assigned to one of two Groups (A or B), which meet on different Sundays each month. Families will receive a schedule for their assigned dates. Please attend on your assigned date if possible. If your family cannot attend with your assigned group, it's OK to attend on the alternate weekend. Parents may elect to substitute a faith-related educational event for a meeting, such as the Teaching Mass, a theatrical or video productions of faith-related stories, a service project such as visiting a nursing home or collecting items for agencies that serve others in need. Please send us an e-mail at holyfamilies@stsjohnandpaul.org to update us regarding any substitute activities your child has completed.

INCENTIVE PROGRAM: Each student will be recognized after completing the first 5 chapters in their book. After that, an award will be presented for completion of the required number of Chapter Reviews (to total 17 reviews). Students who complete their ENTIRE book (all chapters) will receive a special certificate and a candy prize. All awards will be presented at the regular Family Program meetings each month.

MASS ATTENDANCE: Weekly Mass attendance and reception of Christ in the Eucharist is absolutely essential for a healthy faith life -- and MORE important than anything else. Families should attend any convenient Mass on the weekend of their meeting.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Families are encouraged to attend the Family Faith Events that will be scheduled and announced throughout the year, such as the Thanksgiving Feast Benediction, Evening Prayer for Life, Parish Reconciliation Service, and the Stations of the Cross.

DOING YOUR PART: The success of Family Program is dependent upon the generosity of the participants. There are opportunities to assist with clean-up, set-up, administrative tasks, teaching grade-level breakout sessions, music, skit production, photography, and planning. Your active participation will make the meetings more fun for everyone.

STAFF FACILITATOR: The Staff Facilitator for Family Program is Kathy Masters, 724-935-2104, extension 236, email kmasters@stsjohnandpaul.org.

STS. JOHN & PAUL/ST. JOHN NEUMANN
FAMILY PROGRAM
NEWS FOR THE 2011-2012 FAITH FORMATION YEAR

Welcome! This flyer pertains only to families who have enrolled a child in Family Program Faith Formation, rather than Weekly Children's Faith Formation. Over 150 families and over 200 children are expected to participate in Family Program this year. Our meetings are FUN – and attendance is high. In order to accommodate these numbers, it is necessary to offer the same Family Meeting 2 times each month. Your family will be assigned to Group A or B and you should attend the assigned Family Meeting if possible. This is particularly helpful for the children's breakout sessions so they can develop a sense of "community" in their classrooms. When scheduling problems occur, families may attend one of the other meetings provided for the month. All Family Meetings are on Sunday mornings from 10 AM to Noon.

A	B
October 16	October 23
November 13	November 20
January 8	January 22
February 5	February 12
March 4	March 11

ONLINE CHAPTER REVIEW TESTS

We are using the RCL Faith First textbooks. Chapter Reviews are available online for grades 1-8. To access the Chapter Reviews:

- 1) Go to www.faithfirst.com
- 2) Click on Chapter Reviews tab
- 3) Click on type of review preferred (Multiple Choice, Word Bank, or Time Trial)
- 4) Choose the Grade Level
- 5) Choose the chapter

At the end of the review please exit the site and create an email message to notify us of the results. The email should be sent to: holyfamilies@stsjohnandpaul.org. In the subject line you can simply state: Tommy Smith, Grade 1, completed chapter 5. That's all it takes! Please check our records against your own records each time you come to a Family Program meeting. The binder with all of the chapter completion information will be on the same table with the meeting packets. If we are ever "out of sync" your child **does NOT** need to retake a test. Just send us an email so we can correct our files!

AWARDS CEREMONY AND PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Each spring we end the year with a special Awards Ceremony followed by a pancake breakfast. At this event all students who have completed their entire book (26 chapters) will be recognized. Children who have learned all of the Memorization Station prayers for their grade level (and below) will also receive an award. **Date: 4/22/12.**

OUR PROGRAM FACILITATOR

Our Family Program Facilitator is Kathy Masters. You can reach Kathy at 724-935-2104, extension **236** or kmasters@stsjohnandpaul.org. Kathy's office is located in the basement of the church at Sts. John and Paul Parish.

**SEE THE REVERSE SIDE FOR OTHER IMPORTANT
INFORMATION ON FAMILY PROGRAM**