



**Parish of the churches of: St. Anne, St. Bernard, St. John the Baptist and St. Mary and
All Saints Catholic School**

817 Sable Street Alpena, MI 49707 - 989.354.3019

August 15, 2018

Dear Parents,

Welcome to All Saints Catholic Parish Faith Formation Program!

The four parishes of Alpena merged together three years ago and now make up the Parish of All Saints. What a great parish to be a part of since we should all be striving to be saints, or we can say we are saints in the making.

To help you, the parents, educate your child in the Catholic faith, and to help you and your child work on being saints in the making, we are offering a Faith Formation program. This program is not simply for the children to come and learn, but for the parents to be a part of as well. We ask you to advance your own education in the faith so as to help your child learn. In this way you are taking a real interest in what your child learns in each class. As you educate your child in the faith, we are here to assist you and support you along this faith journey.

One way the parish will be helping you and your child and therefore investing in your child's faith formation is by purchasing new materials. The faith hasn't changed so the old materials are still fine to use, but it is always good to have materials with new and updated pictures and new ideas for teaching the children our Catholic faith.

As for you, the parents, in the Rite of Baptism for children it states to the parents (paragraph #39): *"You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"* You made a promise to God that you would bring them up to know Him and love Him. Later in the Rite, a blessing for the parents states: *"They (the parents) will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of the faith. May they also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do."*

I have no doubt that you are working to educate your child in the faith. I'm sure you thank the gift giver for your child each day. I'm also positive that you guide them in the knowledge of the fact that it is only through God that we are in existence and what we have is truly not ours but His and He has blessed us with it.

Learning about God through you, the Faith Formation Program, and other resources available, your child will build a strong relationship with Him. In doing so, your child along with you will give back to God. We all know that by using our God-given talents, not just for ourselves but for others, and sharing the treasures He has allowed us to have, will in turn keep the faith growing and therefore will be giving back to God.

As far as the parish education component to help you, we offer an elementary grade level Faith Formation program, REDD (Religious Education for the Developmentally Disabled) program and the Jr. High youth group which all meet at the St. John site. We also offer a Sr. High youth group which will continue to meet at the St. Bernard site.

All Saints Catholic Faith Formation program offers Kindergarten through 5th grade classes. We also refer to the 1st-3rd grades as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd sacramental years. Our three-year sacramental program began several years ago because we feel that it is necessary for the children to spend that time in special prayer and preparation in learning the faith as they take steps to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Communion. This has also become the policy set by the Diocese that we are obligated to fulfill.

In the past years, we have had several children come forward in third grade and above who had not received one or more of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion). Because of them, the Holy Spirit has guided us to offer the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) at a child and/or teen level. We look at each child or teen and their situation and determine where to place them. Many of these students go through a two year process.

Our sacramental preparation program consists of sessions for parents as well as students. Parents are expected to participate and we ask parents to come to these sessions with an open mind in order to brush up on what they may already know of the sacraments while gaining new knowledge of their faith. Since the Faith Formation classes are held on Wednesday evening our specially scheduled parent sessions for the sacramental preparation program will be held on Wednesdays as well. Family sessions are held on another day.

All of the religious education sessions will begin on September 12. The Faith Formation and REDD programs will start at **6:00pm and end at 7:30pm** and take place at the **St. John Site**.

I ask you to please fill out the registration, medical release and media release forms that are with this letter. Return them to **All Saints Parish office at 817 Sable St.** by way of mail, collection basket on the weekend, or simply coming to the office.

You will notice there is a registration fee. This fee is used to help defray the costs of running the program. **When writing your check for the registration fee, please make it payable to All Saints Parish and return to the office by September 4** so that we can be prepared for all the children when Faith Formation begins. Also, notice there are scholarships available for those who might need some assistance with the registration fee. Please notify me if this is a need.

On the opening day of Faith Formation, as the children get to know their catechist, classmates and go over classroom rules, there will be a **mandatory meeting for ALL parents starting at 6:10pm in St. John Church of All Saints Parish**. There is new information I need to share with you and we will cover sacramental preparation information on this night as well. This meeting is very important and I ask you to please put it on your calendar and make it a priority.

I look forward to working with you and your child this year and beyond. Please feel free to contact me at any time with comments or concerns. I'm here to listen, guide and make your child's Faith Formation experience the best possible. Together we are working as one body of Christ in the All Saints Parish faith community.

Thank you and God bless you,
Jackie Benson, Catechetical Leader

In cooperation with;
Fr. Joseph Muszkiewicz, Pastor
Fr. Scott Lawler, Associate Pastor