



Department of Faith Formation
Diocese of Ogdensburg

Using Digital, Social Media for Family Catechesis

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Parents and teachers are starting to get a glimpse of what learning will look when the new school year begins. Schools are making difficult decisions and putting together complex plans surrounding face-to-face learning, online learning, and combinations of both. The Diocese of Ogdensburg and its parishes are also looking at their options to get religious education programs on track. Parents choosing to be the primary catechists are concerned about digitally overloading their children if school districts go with online learning. Publisher Sadlier Region hosted a webinar called “Screen Time: The Good, the Bad, and the Opportunity” which recognized the digital age we live in and how COVID-19 has made the use of technology more prominent during these difficult times.

During her presentation, Andrea Chavez-Kopp, Director of Advancement and Business Development for the National Catholic Educational Association, acknowledged too much screen time being a concern for parents, but finding a good balance and incorporating religious education into the mix, can be beneficial. For parents embracing digital tech for catechesis, Chavez-Kopp suggests this conversation starter: search and bring up a religious image on the screen and have the kids describe the image in three words. Talk about why they chose those words. This can spark a whole conversation and could help reflect on scripture.

On Facebook we see the use of “memes” which are captioned photos, usually meant to be humorous. As a homework assignment, parents or catechist could have a “meme-off”. Kids can find a religious image online, create a caption for that image and send it to the parent or catechist on social media. The memes can then be shared and discussed with the group the following Sunday.

Whichever format parents choose to continue their children’s religious education, keeping the faith alive in the home is crucial.

“Whether we gather in person or online, teaching our children about the Love of God and the amazing story of our Faith can be a challenge,” said Tom Semeraro, Keeseville Catechist and Director of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. “As a Catechist, I have always found that when I prepare a fun program that keeps kids engaged, moving, and actively participating, the lessons “stick” in their hearts and minds. “Sticky Faith”.”