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The Family Catechesis Corner



Department of Faith Formation
Diocese of Ogdensburg

Teach the Faith at Home

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The Department of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Ogdensburg is dedicated to keeping the light of faith alive in your home. Since the COVID-19 pandemic brought religious education and faith formation programs to a standstill in March, the department has been offering tips on the diocese Facebook page every week to keep the faith formation in our families going. With the proper tools and resources, parents can lead their children to learn and love the Catholic faith which will allow them to go out and share it with the rest of the world. If you need guidance, the Department of Faith Formation wants to light that flame for you. The North Country Catholic will regularly feature one resource on at-home in a series called “The Family Corner for Catechesis.”

There’s no denying that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a challenging time for ministry. Religious education is facing its own challenges since the diocese announced in March there would no longer be public Masses or church events. Classes and sacramental preparation programs were halted. In some cases, parishes furloughed their religious education leaders while most who are volunteer teachers faced their own pandemic problems. Although churches are now able to hold Mass at a limited capacity and must maintain social distancing, the question of when groups can once again gather safely, is uncertain.

As faithful families question the future of parish religious education, Western Region Director of Faith Formation, Catherine Russell, believes nobody knows for sure, but with this uncertain time comes opportunity.

“This is a wonderful time to get back to who is the primary person responsible for passing on the faith. That is the family. So for me the key question becomes how can the parish, the catechetical leader, the catechist reach out and support the family?”

Not wanting children to fall behind in their preparation to receive the sacraments, some catechetical leaders decided to go in a different direction, at-home catechesis. Understandably, parents may reply “I’m not a teacher” when told they are now their child’s primary catechist. However, parish catechetical leaders are doing what they can to ease the overwhelming feeling by making packets for parents to pick up at parishes, mailing activities to kids, and are offering online resources. One of those resources, Catholic publisher *Our Sunday Visitor (OSV)*, has adapted to the changing needs of parents by offering free, simple, and effective home session plans for paying curriculum users. This month, Joseph White, Director of Catechetical Resources at OSV, announced their new webpage called “Faith at Home”. It’s where parents and catechetical leaders will find all the resources they need for at-home catechesis including multi-age family session helpers. This plan allows families to have one meeting that integrates all their children and the chapter they are on. This option can be a relief for families dealing with “digital fatigue” from online schooling or families with a lack of devices. Also on the “Faith at Home” webpage you’ll find diverse resources including over forty games that can be printed and video playlists for each grade creating a blended learning experience.

Russell wants to remind families and catechetical leaders that if assistance is needed with at-home catechesis they can reach out to the Department of Faith Formation. The Diocese of Ogdensburg’s Department of Faith Formation also offers free catechesis resources under the Faith Formation webpage of www.rcdony.org.