Saint Hilary Faith Formation Program FAQs

Q: Where can I find an overview description of the 2019-20 Faith Formation Program at Saint Hilary?
A: See [2019-20 Faith Formation Program Description](#)

Q: How do I enroll my children?
A: Enroll your child(ren) in our 2019-20 program using this link: [2019-20 Faith Formation Program Enrollment](#)

Q: Why are we changing to this new program?
A: While nothing was “wrong” with our previous model of Faith Formation, we recognized an opportunity to provide families and children with a more engaging way to learn about the Catholic faith. In looking at what we could try to provide to families, we considered that children today are more digital learners and that there are more contemporary learning approaches that are being used successfully in other areas of education, namely, the “flipped classroom” model. This approach moves away from the old-fashioned classroom where children sit at desks and listen to teachers lecture at the front of the classroom. It allows for children to master content outside of the classroom, at each student’s pace and comfort-level. Children can then come together in our monthly sessions to engage with one another about the information they’ve learned, making the concepts enjoyable and easy to remember. The online lessons completed at home also provide parents with an unparalleled opportunity for direct involvement in the content their child is learning.

Additionally, these initiatives came about after much prayer and consultation with parents, clergy, staff, and the Archdiocese, in response to challenges many parish families experienced getting their children to weekly class sessions because of the demands of other activities during the weekends, such as sports, family travel, etc.

Q: Why are children only meeting monthly for Faith Formation instead of for weekly classes?
A: One of our goals for this new model is to help us build a Faith Formation community. By meeting on a monthly basis, and offering one of two monthly sessions for families to choose from each month, we hope to make it easier for families to attend without the pressure of competing with other weekly activities such as sports, etc. In some of these monthly sessions, we’ll gather all together for service projects. In others, children will participate in engaging enrichment activities based on the lessons they’ve completed at home while parents take part in a program designed just for parents. Our community
will be strengthened by coming together for meaningful programming and discussion as opposed to dropping children off and picking them up, with no interaction in between.

Q: Isn’t this new model placing more pressure on parents to “teach” the Catholic faith to their children? Isn’t this what the church is supposed to do?
A: Our program is designed to help parents respond to the Church’s call to be the first and foremost educators of their children, as set forth in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, section 2252, which states that “[p]arents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all virtues...” In fact, as part of your child’s Baptism, you, as parents, accepted the responsibility of being your child’s first teachers in the ways of the faith. (taken from Rite of Catholic Baptism-iBreviary)

Through our program, we hope to help families as they grow in their love and knowledge of the Catholic Faith. We will provide parents with the tools needed to help their children grow in faith and to live it. We’ll meet here at church once a month, but the rest of the work takes place in the home with the online program provided by the parish.

While we can’t predict with certainty whether this program will succeed at Saint Hilary Parish, one thing we do know for sure is that if the faith if not lived daily in the home, if it is not talked about at the dinner table, if it is not practiced in the family consistently, if it is not supported by traditions and activities and weekly Mass participation and modeled by parents, it will likely be lost as children grow older. None of us want that for our children. Let’s band together, as a faith-filled community and lead our children to a life of faith.

Q: What if my child needs to prepare for First Reconciliation?
A: Preparation for First Reconciliation takes place through online at-home lessons with children and parents, as well as in monthly sessions with children and their catechists. If your child is enrolled in our 2019-20 Faith Formation Program, you will be able to select one of two dates for your child’s First Reconciliation: March 7, 2019 or March 14, 2019. A sign-up for First Reconciliation will be available in February 2020. Additionally, a sacramental retreat for 2nd graders and their parents will be held on Sunday, March 29, 2020 from 1-5pm.

Q: What if my child needs to prepare for First Holy Communion?
A: Preparation for First Holy Communion takes place through online at-home lessons with children and parents, as well as in monthly sessions with children and their catechists. Our First Holy Communion Mass will take place on Saturday, April 25, 2020
at 10am. If we have a very large group of children, we may add another Mass on Saturday, May 2, 2020, but that will be determined at a later date. Additionally, a sacramental retreat for 2nd graders and their parents will be held on Sunday, March 29, 2020 from 1-5pm.

Q: What if my child needs to prepare for Confirmation?
A: Confirmation preparation takes place over two years, beginning in the 7th grade and finishing in 8th grade through online at-home lessons as well as in monthly gathering sessions with teens and their catechists. Our Confirmation date is determined by the Archbishop’s office and will be celebrated at Saint Hilary on Saturday, February 8, 2020 at 11am.

Q: Does Saint Hilary offer a Faith Formation Program for Kindergarten children?
A: Our Saint Hilary Faith Formation Program formally begins in the 1st grade with at-home online lessons and monthly sessions with catechists. We will, however, offer monthly sessions for Kindergarten children and parents. Lisa Veto can also suggest supplemental resources for Kindergarten-aged children. Additionally, Children’s Liturgy of the Word will continue to be offered periodically at Saint Hilary Parish’s 9am Masses for children of all ages to listen to God’s word and talk about its meaning in our lives.