Dear Saint Hilary Families,

We are introducing some exciting initiatives to our Faith Formation Program at Saint Hilary Parish for the 2019-20 year, and we are very much looking forward to your family being a part of our program! These ideas came about in response to the challenges many of our families expressed to us about getting their children to weekly Faith Formation sessions because of conflicts with other activities that take place during the weekend, including family travel. One of our goals for the coming year is to make Faith Formation more easily accessible to families on their schedules, even if they are traveling. Our commitment to quality, Gospel-centered teachings remains unchanged. It is our intention, however, to enrich and improve the way children and families experience faith formation at our parish. Our improvements include two main components:

1. **Web-based, self-paced learning.** We’re changing the way faith formation is experienced by children. Instead of having children sit at desks and listen to catechists lecture at the front of the classroom, we’re going to give the “flipped classroom” model a try. This is a learning approach which moves away from the old-fashioned classroom toward more of an individual learning model, which allows for children to learn at whatever pace is most appropriate for them. Instead of having to attend weekly class sessions at the parish, students will be completing weekly lessons online, at home, wherever and whenever it suits your family. While each lesson typically takes 15-20 minutes to complete, each child can take the lessons at his/her own pace, with a parent’s help as needed to reinforce concepts. Lessons include videos and other interactive and engaging activities, making learning fun and easy to remember. Those lessons will deliver the grade-level content and faith-based knowledge children should be learning about the Catholic faith at each developmental stage.

2. **Monthly community gatherings.** With content being covered through web-based, self-paced, at-home lessons, we can then gather the children in their grade-level groups to engage in a more dynamic, interactive learning environment in which they can apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter they learned about. Families will choose one of two monthly sessions at Saint Hilary either on a Sunday morning (from 10:00-11:00am) or Wednesday evening (from 6:00-7:00pm) -- whichever one best suits each family’s schedule. In some sessions, we’ll gather all together for service projects like those we’ve done in the past. In others, children will complete engaging enrichment activities with catechists while parents take part in a program designed just for parents. Opportunities abound for growing in faith and as a community, and we hope each family will take full advantage of them!

Please remember that this will be a trial year for this initiative. At the conclusion of the 2019-20 year, we will take a close look at how our ideas worked for the families in our program and for our parish as a whole. We look forward to this new endeavor with you, as we think this format will help us meet children where they are as 21st century learners...moving from strictly sitting behind desks into a more engaging way to learn about being Catholic!

We look forward to continuing as your partners in the faith formation of your children at Saint Hilary Parish.

Father William E. Brown
Pastor
Saint Hilary Parish

Lisa L. Veto
Director of Faith Formation
Saint Hilary Parish