

Attention Faith Formation Parents

Dear Parish Family,

As the dawn of the new school season approaches, we get the chance to share our faith once more. That's right, you guessed it, it's time for Faith Formation sign up! We are excited to welcome all children of our faithful community back for a new year of learning of and loving our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church that He built, and the mystery of His creation, but we need your help shining His light into their lives.

Throughout the past few years the trials and tribulations of life have left many hard pressed to send their children to programs that are ineffective, ill communicated, or nonexistent. These parents' decision was not made easier by the parish turnover that led to more uncertainty. Despite rough times, our team still saw many fruits of their labors and enriched the lives of all those who were present. Ladies and Gentlemen I assure you now is the time to revitalize the faith of the next generation, to give those fruits back to God, and to grow in new ways. All bad things come and pass, but righteousness lasts forever. Our Lord calls upon our bravery as He says "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Your role as primary educator to your children (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2223) has not been an easy one in these uncertain times, but I beg you brothers and sisters take heart, come and see the new program here at St. Joseph. Come let us ease your burden and allow us to earn your trust again.

This year we will be starting a new series of books called The Word of Life. These books are different in that they are less of a textbook with a million and one things to be remembered, but rather an approach to the facts in relation to God, life, and the world around us. This helps show our children why the facts matter, and not just that they must be memorized. Another new Faith Formation initiative is the Vigil program for high school students. We are taking a step away from our mentorship program for a short time and allowing our students to learn in a new format that consists of large group presentations with small group breakout sessions to follow. Interlaced with activities, sharing of graces, and adoration, our hope is to re-ignite the faith of our next generation.

Brothers and sisters, I am excited for the coming year of Faith Formation here at St. Joe's and hope to see all of you in a parent meeting on August 24th Elementary @ 6:30 - 7:00 pm middle school @ 7:00 - 7:30 pm and high school @ 7:30 - 8:00 pm to discuss the ins and outs of the programs. If you have any immediate questions, suggestions, or concerns always feel free to reach out.

Pax Christi,

Caleb Heckman
Director of Faith Formation
St. Joseph Parish - Pewamo
Email: c.heckman@stjosephpewamo.org

Greetings!

My name is Jenna Thelen, and I am blessed to be the newest member of the St. Joseph School teaching team! I will be teaching 4th and 5th grade this upcoming school year.

Here's a little bit about me:

I graduated from PW high school in 2014 and continued my education at Saginaw Valley State University where I obtained my Bachelor's degree in Nursing in 2018. After graduation, I moved to Detroit where I worked at Children's Hospital of Michigan in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for almost 3 years. In the NICU, I cared for critically ill babies and taught their parents how to care for their complex care needs. Last summer, I moved back home to Westphalia and began working in the NICU at Sparrow Hospital. During that time, I also began teaching 8th religious education at Saint Mary's. It was then that I felt called to serve God more directly by doing something authentically Catholic with my career. My goal is to love and serve God and others to the fullest, and I can't imagine a better way to do that than at St. Joe's! I am looking forward to bringing joy, fun, and a love of learning to the classroom. Mother Teresa put it beautifully in saying, "I am but a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world". This embodies my philosophy going into this upcoming year.

In my spare time I enjoy running, skiing, baking, reading, and time with my family and friends.

I am excited to see what God has in store for this year! God bless!

God Bless,
Jenna Thelen