



SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL

CATHOLIC PARISH

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord! I hope that these summer months have afforded you the opportunity to relax and rejuvenate with your family and friends before beginning anew the busy school year and all of the many wonderful activities in which your family is involved. In looking forward to a new catechetical year, we are pleased to continue our intergenerational faith formation series, *Living in Faith Together*, which gathers together families with children in Pre-K through grade 8, as well as all parishioners. Last year, we examined each of the seven sacraments as occasions of God's grace that transform our very being. This year, we will examine more closely the implications of our "new life" in Jesus by considering how the theological and cardinal virtues, as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit, help us to grow in holiness as we strive to become more like God.

Our first session will be held on Saturday, September 8, 2018, beginning with the 4:00 p.m. Mass at the Bentleyville Main Church. The Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh, will serve as principal celebrant and homilist for our opening "LIFT" Mass! As part of this Mass, we are assembling a "LIFT Children's Choir" which will join with the adult choir in singing a special song during the liturgy. There will be a practice on Tuesday, September 4th from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Bentleyville church for those children who would like to sing for the September 8th Mass. A parent/guardian should plan to stay for the practice. If your child would like to sing for this occasion, please indicate so on the back of the enclosed registration form.

During our September 8th session, we will celebrate the birth of our Blessed Mother, Mary (September 8th), as well as Grandparents' Day (September 9th). Grandparents have a unique role in the transmission of the Catholic faith, and we will honor their special contribution. To this end, ALL grandparents are invited to participate in our opening session. We realize that some grandparents have already gone before us in faith, and although they cannot be present with us in person, we will honor their memory during our celebration. We also realize that there are special individuals in our lives who may not be our grandparents, but who nevertheless step into this role in our lives and the lives of our children (e.g. babysitter, neighbor, elderly parishioner, etc.). These individuals are also invited to join us on September 8th. Please see the enclosed invitation, and share it with grandparents, great-grandparents, and/or those individuals who you would like to honor as part of our Grandparents' Day celebration.

Enclosed is the full schedule of this year's LIFT sessions, which also indicates additional family and community faith formation opportunities through the month of June 2019. Each of this year's eight (8) LIFT sessions will begin with the 4:00 p.m. Mass and will be followed by a communal meal in Drexel Hall, prior to the catechetical breakout sessions for all ages. You will notice that we are adding 15 minutes to the LIFT sessions this year and will end at 7:30 p.m., as in some instances we may need a little extra time. Please keep in mind a few fundamental

elements of LIFT: first, each monthly session is an organic unit that includes the liturgy, meal fellowship, and catechesis, **so families should make every effort to participate in the entirety of each event.** Second, *Living in Faith Together* is a model designed for the entire family, and not just children. Many sessions will include family/table activities that provide a foundation for further conversation at home, in addition to the invaluable content communicated to parents during the breakout sessions. As such, **all children must be accompanied by at least one parent/guardian, grandparent, or other responsible adult for the duration of each LIFT session.** Finally, children's consistent participation in their parish formation program is required by the Diocese of Pittsburgh, **so families must participate in a minimum of six (6) out of eight (8) LIFT sessions this year.**

More information about additional opportunities such as Prayer Partner Ministry, the Traveling Good Shepherd Vocations Prayer Experience, Family Stations of the Cross, Holy Week Liturgical Pilgrimage, and Pentecost celebration will be communicated as the weeks and months pass. For now, there are two opportunities that I would like to briefly highlight and invite you to consider helping with:

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) provides children who are 4 years old up through 3rd grade an opportunity to listen to God's Word during Sunday Mass at an age-appropriate level. Beginning in October, we endeavor to offer this experience on Sunday mornings at each of our parish church sites: Bentleyville, California, and Fredericktown. Doing so will only be possible with the help of dedicated parents, grandparents, and parishioners who desire to share the Good News with our children. Specifically, adult volunteers are needed to serve as CLOW leaders whose responsibility includes proclaiming God's Word and leading the children in a short lesson on the day's Scripture readings. Youth in 9th through 12th grades are also needed to assist the CLOW leader by helping the children to participate and by setting a good example for them.

Families on Mission is a response to the desire expressed by parents to engage in works of mercy, service, and outreach with their children (similar to our Bentleyville County Home visit this past February). We are looking for individuals interested in forming a "Families on Mission Planning Team" whose task will be to discern, organize, and facilitate such opportunities throughout the year.

Additionally, new volunteers are always welcome to help with the various aspects of LIFT, including:

- **LIFT Food Ministry:** provides meals and desserts for LIFT sessions, helps with setup/cleanup for meals.
- **LIFT Art & Environment Ministry:** provides décor for each LIFT session, including table setup/centerpieces, hallway display, etc.
- **LIFT Youth Helpers (9th-12th grade):** assist catechists in the breakout sessions with children. As noted above, 9th through 12th graders are also invited to consider assisting the Children's Liturgy of the Word leaders on Sunday mornings. Service hours required for organizations outside of the parish may be earned by helping in either of these ways.

If you are interested in any of the volunteer opportunities indicated above, or would at least like more information about them, please indicate your interest on the back of the enclosed

registration form. Also, if your child is interested in participating in the LIFT liturgies as a reader or junior usher, there is a place to indicate so on the back of the registration form. Please complete the registration form thoroughly (front and back), and include the names of all family members – children and adults – who will be regularly participating in the sessions throughout the year. The purpose of the registration process is to reserve a place for each person listed, so that we may adequately prepare food and materials. Guests are always welcome throughout the year, and can be included in the count prior to the session they wish to attend. Completed registration forms, along with the \$45.00 registration fee (per family), are to be returned to the parish office by Tuesday, September 4th. If the registration fee presents a financial burden, please contact me as soon as possible. No one will be turned away due to financial hardship!

For those of you with children preparing for reception of the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (typically second grade) and Confirmation (seventh and eighth grade), please check your mail for an additional packet with information relating specifically to the sacramental preparation schedule.

Just a reminder that our “Roamin’ Catholic Summer Bulletin Challenge” (announced at the May 5th LIFT session) is still on! Please bring any bulletins that you picked up while attending Mass during your vacation this summer to our LIFT session on September 8th so that we can see who traveled the furthest. Prizes will be awarded! I hope that your family enjoys the remaining weeks of summer. See you on September 8th!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Marita Hunchuck Parker
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