

Faith Formation common Questions and (some) Answers:

Q1. Why do things have to change? Why can it not stay as it has been if that has been working?

A1. We have moved to one canonical parish and are working on moving to one civil corporation as well. The pastor feels it is important that we move towards not just being one parish on paper, but in reality and in the hearts and minds of all parishioners. If we simply keep doing things as we were when we were separate parishes, people will keep acting like we are still separate parishes and true integration and communion will suffer.

Q2. Is the plan to go to one program?

A2. Doing multiple programs multiplies the work that needs to be done for those programs. It makes sense from a practical and structural perspective to have one director/supervisor and implement one shared vision.

However, there is no set plan at this time. Just because there are good reasons to go to one program does not mean we have to do so. It would be fair to say that the lean is in that direction at this time. Note that one program does not mean that it would have to be at one site – you could have one curriculum that teaches the same things in two or more locations.

Q3. Is the plan to go to one site for faith formation?

A3. There is no set plan at this time. We can acknowledge the benefits of one location for classes, which would begin to bridge the cultural gap and connect individuals and families together. I can also acknowledge the difficulty of travel for faith formation across the territory of our parish. It would be especially difficult if there was one site and we had classes every week.

However, it seems there could be reasonable compromises between the extremes of two completely separate locations and only one location for everything. For instance: if we had meetings each week, most of those meetings could be in either Mora or Milaca, but once a month the whole faith formation body would meet in Milaca (again this is only an example). Another example would be having the sacrament preparation years all meet together at one location (First Holy Communion and Confirmation), and the other grade years meet at separate locations.

We should also recognize that having multiple sites does increase the work for staff and the number of volunteers needed for the program as a whole. It also means that the pastor cannot reliably be present at both locations on the same day. Or if there are speakers or presenters as part of the program, they obviously cannot present in both locations at the same time – and even if it were different days, it is less likely they will want to come back and give the same talk just a day or three later. There are real practical difficulties to having multiple sites.

Q4. What is the pastor's vision for faith formation in the future?

A4. This is a very broad topic and could take an entire document to answer fully.

Fundamentally, in my view, faith formation at the parish should supplement and support the faith formation that is already taking place in the home. It should build on the foundation of prayer and encounter with God established in the family, and provide those things which families are less equipped to provide – namely a deeper theological knowledge of God and

his revelation in Jesus Christ. The more we can come to know God, the more we can come to love God. The parish faith formation program is also a center for living out the faith in community and service to one another. It should help provide opportunities for service and works of charity and mercy. This can be done both in the classroom by learning to care and cooperate with one another, and in the community, thereby making the faith an active, living part of our lives.

Ideally, the program should help families foster the relational piece with God through prayer and the sacraments. Yet we know that many families do very little in regard to the faith at home and leave everything to the Church at religion classes. Children of those families are going to come in so far behind the curve, such that the theology and the service are often going to be like good seed falling on unprepared soil that will not find root. So, there must still be relational pieces in a faith formation program which will hopefully catch those who have not yet truly encountered Christ and reaffirm or strengthen those who already have.

Q5. What are the next steps?

A5. This is a very broad topic and could take an entire document to answer fully. The next steps are to send out a survey to all those families in faith formation for feedback on different possible options. Those results will then be discussed with the Transition Team to craft a general plan for the coming year. That plan will then be shared with parishioners for further input and feedback. That feedback will be used to revise that plan as needed. *[Faith Formation Directors will be involved at each step as well.]

If you have any follow-up questions, or additional questions you would like answered, contact Fr. Timothy or any members of the Transition Team.