



## **Overview of the Faith Formation Program at Saint Joseph the Worker Parish**

In reviewing the results of the parish survey, the Faith Formation Committee became aware that perhaps some parishioners did not have a full understanding of the Faith Formation for the children in our parish. Hopefully, this description will give people a better understanding of this Faith Formation program.

The GIFT program (Growing In Faith Together) was developed to assist the parents in teaching their children in grades Kindergarten through Grade 5, the priority of attending Mass on a weekly basis. The celebration of the Eucharist is the core and highpoint of our faith. Highlighting its importance is central to any Faith Formation program. What better way to teach this concept than by having the families come to Mass together to celebrate and Worship our Lord.

The GIFT Program has two parts. The first component is the Dismissal of the children for the Liturgy of the Word. The Dismissal for The Liturgy of the Word allows the children to hear the Gospel at their age level. The First Reading, Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel are read to the children, the same readings that are proclaimed in the church are proclaimed to the children but from a children's lectionary. Then an explanation is given through a variety of mediums. When the children leave the church, it is not for a class per se, but for a continuation of the Mass.

The second part of the program is the work that is done at home. Parents are encouraged to attend seasonal meetings at which time they are given theological background to the liturgical seasons and the readings proclaimed during the particular season. Parents are also sent materials to assist family discussions of the readings at home. The children receive worksheets that are based on the Sunday readings which are done at home with the parents.

In addition to the GIFT program during the academic year, the children attend the Summer Faith Formation program for a full week. (17.5 hours) During this week, the students learn in a systematic manner the basics of the faith. The children are separated into grade levels and each grade covers the curriculum for that particular grade, i.e., the third grade studies The Church, the fourth grades covers the Ten Commandments, etc. The summer program allows more time for more creative ways in exploring the content of the curriculum, as opposed to an hour long program each week.



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When a person looks at the entire Faith Formation program for Grades Kindergarten through Grade 5, we encourage people to look at all the components listed above. The goal of the summer Faith Formation, the parents' meeting and the home study is to bring the families to a deeper appreciation of their faith which is then expressed at Mass each week.

The Middle School Faith Formation program is held for grades 6,7, 8 and 9. For this age group we will be implementing a new faith formation program called [EDGE](#).