

# Restoring THE Garden

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS THE RESTORING THE GARDEN PROGRAM ABOUT?

*Restoring the Garden* is St. Joseph's whole parish Catechism program. As a parish, we will be covering the Catechism over the next four years. We have coordinated our lessons at every level to unite, guide and empower our parishioners to embrace their Catholic identity. This year we will focus on Part II of the Catechism: Sacraments.

### IS RESTORING THE GARDEN REPLACING FAITH FORMATION?

Yes, this is the name of our new faith formation program at St. Joseph. *Restoring the Garden* provides for age-appropriate conversation and activities for Family, Youth, and Adult Formation, and complements, but does not replace, Sacramental preparation. If you have a child who would like to prepare for First Reconciliation, First Communion, or Confirmation, there is additional information on our website.

### WHEN DOES IT START?

All Faith Formation Programs—*Restoring the Garden* and Sacramental Preparation for First Sacraments and Youth confirmation - will begin in **October**. Register now on our website ([www.sjcissaquah.org/faith-formation](http://www.sjcissaquah.org/faith-formation)) and you will receive additional information by email.

### HOW LONG WILL THIS NEW FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM LAST?

October-May

### WHY IS PARTICIPATING IN FAITH FORMATION IMPORTANT?

We are called to be in relationship with God. To do this, we must know Him and spend time with Him with the intention of growing in our relationship daily. By our Baptism and Confirmation, we are called to be witnesses of the light of Christ in our broken world, to restore humanity to its intended order to the best that we are able during the time that we are given. To do this, we must cultivate our own life of faith through learning and prayer. *Restoring the Garden* Catechism Program will help give you the tools to equip you for this and offer you community to support you so that you know that you are not alone.

### WHY THE CHANGE FROM GRADE LEVEL CLASSROOM CATECHESIS TO FAMILY FORMATION?

*Restoring the Garden* Family Formation is designed to help parents respond to the Church's call to be the "first and foremost educators of their children." We know this can be a daunting task, but we are here to support families to grow together in their love and knowledge of the Catholic Faith. *Restoring the Garden* Family Formation provides parents with the tools to be the primary teachers to their children so that the faith is taught and lived in the home.

Study upon study shows that children look to their parents first as their model of faith, and if the parents are not invested and witnessing their prioritization of the faith to their children, the likelihood of these children practicing the faith as adults is very slim to none. We see this reality prevalent in our Church today, and we want to support parents in changing this trajectory.

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## HOW IS FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM DIFFERENT?

- Rather than each program and grade working independently studying different topics of our faith, we will all focus on one topic with the goal of enriching the family discussions and building community.
- We will be actively supporting parents in their role as primary catechists to their children, and instead of meeting every week, meetings will be monthly.

## HOW DOES FAMILY FORMATION WORK?

Parents with children in grades K-7 participating in Family Formation will meet once a month with a small group of 5-6 other families led by a mentor family. They will receive guidance and support as to how to utilize the books and activities provided to them to teach their children at home. Lessons and activities will be adaptable and flexible to the needs of each family. Parents will be given the resources to teach two lessons per month to their children.

Fr. Todd will host a Theology Night at the beginning of each month for the relevant content at an adult level. Parents can participate that evening or can view online at their convenience before they meet in their small group.

## HOW DOES YOUTH FAITH FORMATION WORK?

Youth grades 7-12 will be given materials to view on their own once per week, and then they will meet in weekly small groups with their peers and leaders for discussion. Monthly large group activities will take place on the first Sunday of the month.

## I DO NOT HAVE ANY CHILDREN, SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

Absolutely! Our Faith Formation team is committed to providing opportunities for adult faith formation. Every parishioner can engage in *Restoring the Garden* in some way, so we have a variety of ways for you to do this with different levels of time commitment. If you can only give one hour a month, we suggest that you view Fr. Todd's monthly Theology Night which will focus on an overview of the topic of the month at an adult level. For those who desire more regular formation opportunities, there will also be weekly sessions to delve deeper into the topic. For more information, please reach out to Mary Williams ([mwilliams@sjcissaquah.org](mailto:mwilliams@sjcissaquah.org)) or visit our Adult Formation page on the website.

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## WHAT IS THE COST OF THIS NEW PROGRAM?

- *Restore the Garden* Family Fee: \$65 per Family
- Youth Group Fee: \$65 per family
- First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Preparation: \$35 per child in addition to the Family Fee
- Youth Confirmation Preparation: \$150 per teen (Note: Teens participating in Confirmation are not required to participate in Family Formation)
- Adult Faith Formation: Complimentary

*Financial Assistance: If costs are prohibitive, please contact [mgraham@sjcissaquah.org](mailto:mgraham@sjcissaquah.org) to request financial assistance. We never want cost to be a reason you do not participate in faith formation.*

## I WOULD LOVE TO GET INVOLVED AS A VOLUNTEER. HOW CAN I HELP?

Wonderful! We would love to talk with you to discuss how you might offer your gift of time and talent to our parish community. We can use additional assistance in the following areas:

- **Mentor Family:** Help to guide a group of families through the Family Faith Formation Program.
- **Youth Small Group Leader:** Help to guide our youth grades 7-12 through discussions about our faith in a small group.
- **Adult Small Group Leader:** Be a leader of an adult small group to go over the monthly topics of faith.
- **Sacramental Preparation Assistance:** Assist with Sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, or Confirmation

We have a variety of roles and commitments. If interested in being a Family Mentor, Sacramental Prep Assistant or Youth Small Group leader, please contact Jennifer ([jcarney@sjcissaquah.org](mailto:jcarney@sjcissaquah.org)). If you are interested in being an Adult Small Group Leader, please contact Mary Williams ([mwilliams@sjcissaquah.org](mailto:mwilliams@sjcissaquah.org))

## WHAT DOES PREPARATION FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION INVOLVE?

- Families will be asked to participate in Family Formation.
- In addition to participating in Family Formation, you will be asked to go over two lessons per month in The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism with your child and help them to learn their prayers and answer the questions in each lesson. The beauty of this program is it is flexible.
- Parents are asked to view and comment on both the Forgiven and Presence programs on Formed.org. There are deadlines to complete these, but the programs are available to view on your own time. More direction will be provided upon registration. Total viewing time is 8 hours total for the year.
- Rehearsals and the Sacraments themselves will be scheduled for 2023 and these dates are expected to be provided to you sometime in the Fall.

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## WHAT DOES PREPARATION FOR YOUTH CONFIRMATION INVOLVE?

Confirmation classes will be held in person weekly from mid-September to January with the Confirmation Mass taking place in February. In addition to the classes, there is a mandatory weekend retreat over the first weekend of November. Parents will also be asked to walk alongside their teen and support their formation at home. Additional information will be provided at the orientation.

## WHY IS MASS ATTENDANCE A PREREQUISITE TO PREPARING TO RECEIVE FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, AND CONFIRMATION?

Families with children preparing for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, or Confirmation are asked to be actively living their Catholic faith by attending Mass every Sunday and Holy Day and striving to live out their faith in their home. The reason for this is that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith and the very foundation upon which everything else is built.

As practicing Catholics, we are called to participate in Christ's ultimate sacrifice by worshiping our Lord by attending Mass each Sunday, which usually amounts to about one hour per week. Active participation demonstrates readiness and openness to receive the graces that come through the Sacraments. We desire our young people to be set up to receive as much grace as possible from our Lord, and to continue to receive that grace for the rest of their life---these Sacraments are not meant to be received in isolation. Therefore, we ask families to make a commitment to make Mass attendance a priority, and we are ready to support you in this time of preparation for these beautiful Sacraments.

## HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT OUR FAITH FORMATION TEAM:

- *PA for Evangelization and Adult Formation, Mary Williams (mwilliams@sjcissaquah.org or 425-392-5516 x228)*
- *PA for Family Formation, Jennifer Carney (jcarney@sjcissaquah.org or 425-392-5516 x226)*
- *Administrative Assistant for Pastoral Ministries, Maria Graham (mgraham@sjcissaquah.org or 425-392-5516 x227)*