



"Alive in Christ"

We are a welcoming Catholic Community, "Alive in Christ", making present the kingdom of God!

Dear Youth Ministry Families!

It has been a wonderful joy to serve the families of 5th - 12th grade students here at St. Patrick - St. Anthony Parish for almost two years already. After spending time with your students, watching them grow, be confirmed last year, attend Steubenville and even graduate, I have learned that our students are hungry for the truth of our Catholic faith, the Eucharist and community. However, statistics show us that 52% of Catholic youth report little to no trust in organized religion and 85% of Catholic youth leave the faith by age 17. These numbers alone should get us thinking about how we approach youth ministry here at the parish. Through prayer and a year of preparation we are changing the way we look at youth ministry here at the parish. We are shifting from the large group model to intentional small group discipleship. Where students can create communities to learn about how to be a follower of Christ and to live their faith no matter where life will send them. We have also hired Sophie Raha as a part time coordinator for 5th & 6th grade Ministry. Explained below is a short version of our vision for this year.

5th & 6th Grade Ministry

All 5th & 6th grade students are invited to join Sophie on Monday nights at 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM at the Youth Center starting on October 2nd. As we are in the year of Eucharistic Revival we will be exploring the sacraments and what they mean to us. Through games, activities, prayer, religious artwork and more students will explore the sacraments and the graces given to us. Students will learn how to read scripture, dive into the YCat (Youth Catechism), and form a community in a small group as they prepare for small group ministry next year. If you feel called to volunteer with Sophie please email her at sraha.stpatsgh.org.

Introducing Emmaus Groups:

"Go and make disciples of all nations..." Matthew 28:19. Jesus commanded his apostles to make disciples. As Catholic Christians, discipleship with Jesus Christ is what forms our lives. It is what encourages us to choose virtue over vice, to

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find joy in suffering, to leave selfishness behind as we serve those in need. It is what helps us to discover who we truly are. We find our identity through our discipleship.

The question of “identity” is paramount in our current culture, and especially among our teens. They want to know who they are and why they matter. They want to be loved and seen for who they are by peers and adults in their lives. If not Christ, who or what will they follow as disciples?

Emmaus groups are small groups of teens, ideally of the same gender, that spend at least a year discovering more about themselves, each other, and the Catholic faith through the guidance of their Group Leaders. These leaders are adult men and women who have completed safe environment training (including a background check) and have a heart for investing in the lives of young people. The primary goal of these groups is to grow in deep friendship, knowing that the trust that is formed from these friendships will open the hearts of these students to the Gospel message. Each group leader will have a list of approved content to choose from and will work with the students and the youth minister to establish the content for the group. Discipleship groups will meet weekly at a day, time and location that works best and is most comfortable for the group.

Why same-gender groups? Discipleship groups will ideally be groups of 4 - 8 students of the same gender. Teenage years are an especially formative and confusing time for students, as they are still in the middle of a lot of development both physically and mentally. Having mixed-gender groups will limit the openness and vulnerability of the group members. There will be opportunities for men and women to socialize together at our large group events and retreats.

All Emmaus groups will be overseen by Makenzie as well as a team of small group leaders. It is our plan that bi-monthly we will be hosting families for a family night. Let us do the cooking! Gather as a family with other parents in the parish as we pray, eat together, and share in faith to serve you as the primary educators of the faith and the domestic church.

Confirmation: 7th & 8th Grade

Confirmation Students will meet in Emmaus groups weekly centered on the Holy Spirit and preparation for Confirmation. There will still be our normal parent

meetings, sponsor day of reflection and 8th grade retreat as included in the Confirmation process. A calendar and parent guide to Confirmation will be available to families at the end of September. Save the date for a middle school lock-in October 14th!

High School Ministry

The High School ministry will be diving deep into Emmaus small groups for men and women this year. We will be kicking off Sunday October 8th with a Fireside Chat night. Save the date! Pier Ministry will still be available for those who would like to be involved with student leadership to serve the 5th and 6th graders.

Please join me in prayer as we transition this year. We know that it will be different for everyone involved but our prayer is the Holy Spirit works through us to reach our students to have a lasting relationship with Jesus Christ. If you have any questions or would like to learn more. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me, there will be more information coming soon. Dates for small groups have not been released yet as we are still working to gather willing and able small group leaders. As soon as I have that information we will get that all to you. Please register your student so we know how many groups are necessary at:
<https://bit.ly/ymregistration>

Or scan the QR code to complete it online.



Blessings,

Makenzie Conner

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