

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Grace and peace of Christ be with you. The catechesis of your children is of the utmost importance in my heart. With the guidance of the diocese, our pastor Fr. Smith, my religious community, and faithful volunteers, I have been praying about how to best serve your family. In bringing us together to become St. John Paul II Scioto Catholic Parish, I believe Our Lord also invites us to a renewed vision for our faith formation program.

This invitation does, however, call for a transformation in our program model, hence the purpose of my writing to you. At the root of this paradigm shift is a fuller understanding of the Church's call for parents to be the primary educators of their children in Faith and the parish's role to support families in this mission. When your children were baptized, you promised to raise and nurture your children in the Faith. This is not an easy task, and we want to support and assist you. The following is taken from the General Directory of Catechesis, Articles 255 and 227:

“Parents are the primary educators in the faith ... It is for this reason that the Christian community must give very special attention to parents. By means of personal contact, meetings, courses and also adult catechesis directed towards parents, the Christian community must help them assume their responsibility—which is particularly delicate today—of educating their children in the faith.”

The good news is that we have already begun this shift these last few years, and we are eager to continue and improve our faith formation sessions for both children and parents this year. These sessions will involve children gathering with a teacher by grade while parents receive catechesis based on the monthly theme/topic and guidance on how to live the faith as a family. There will also be sacramental and service opportunities for the whole family, as well as activities to foster prayer and fellowship, such as Family Adoration and dinner.

Understanding the busy schedules and varied situations of today's families, this shift will naturally require some sacrifices. However, your time and willingness are essential to your children's spiritual formation in these formative years. The focus of the program is to draw your family together and equip you as parents/guardians in handing on the Catholic Faith to your children. You do not have to be experts in catechesis, just willing to devote a few hours a week to quality family time in sharing the Faith.

From his time as a young priest and throughout his pontificate, our patron saint, St. John Paul II, launched many initiatives to enhance the Church's mission to families, boldly and personally calling each family to, “become what you are,” that is, to be a “domestic church” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 17; *Lumen Gentium*, 11). With Jesus, who spent the first thirty years of His life on earth with His family in Nazareth, and through the powerful intercession of St. John Paul II, I humbly knock at the door of your hearts and homes to prayerfully welcome the graces of transformation that Our Lord wants to pour out upon your family and our parish.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with me or set up a meeting: psr@sciotocatholic.org or (740) 354-4551 ext. 1008. Further information, schedules, etc. will be posted this month on the page in our parish website: <https://www.sciotocatholic.org/childrensfaith>.

In the Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,
Sr. Chiara, LIHM