



NATIVITY SCHOOL OF RELIGION

2020–2021 School Year

September 26, 2020

Dear Parents and Children:

Greetings and Welcome to the Nativity School of Religion Program! We hope that your families are doing well in this unprecedented time and are surviving the beginning of distance learning. It has been a difficult road navigating through all of the changes in guidelines, but we are happy to announce that we will be starting our program on Sunday, October 18 using an online format. We are looking forward to a wonderful and rewarding year of faith formation with you and your children.

Nativity School of Religion program is proud to offer faith formation classes to the youth of our parish and community and their families. The goal of our program is to pass on the essential elements and traditions of our Catholic faith and to help the children and their families incorporate these teachings into their daily lives. Our program seeks to supplement and support what the children are learning at home from their parents about the Catholic faith.

We believe parents are the primary educators of their children in all learning, including faith formation. We believe that parents serve as role models of faith in action for their children in their home by encouraging regular class attendance and by participating with their child at mass on a regular basis. Taking the time to look over your child's work with them and doing the supplemental at-home activities can encourage them to take greater interest during their time in class.

We do our best to maintain a small program with reasonable class sizes. You can be sure that your children will make friends and enjoy learning about Jesus in this environment. The teachers are volunteers who love children and are eager to teach them about our Catholic faith. All teachers in our program meet the Archdiocesan guidelines for those qualified to work with children in a religious/educational setting.

Students receive textbooks and supplemental materials in class. Students who are prepared for and attend class regularly develop a deeper understanding of the doctrine and teachings of our church.

Our program has developed and grown over many years at the Church of the Nativity, but one thing remains the same – *we are a PARISH program working with the members of our community to make our parish family stronger.* We look forward to your continued involvement and support of our program and our staff. We anticipate a productive year with faith-filled teachers and many opportunities to share in God's love through our faith-based learning.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Our Sunday School Term begins Sunday, October 18 – 8:15 a.m. We will begin our year with a Prayer Service and Orientation via Zoom led by Deacon Peloso. Dismissal to the classrooms will follow where children will go to Breakout Rooms for a “Back-to-School” introduction. If you have multiple children, they will need to be on separate devices. If that is not possible, please let me know and we can devise a plan. At 8:50,

we will dismiss everyone to Church for the 9:00 Mass. Due to the Mass time changing from 9:30am to 9:00am, we will have to dismiss early for those who want to attend the Mass in person. There is more information on the parish website for attending Mass in person. However, because Mass is such an important part of our faith, we will be Livestreaming it on the Zoom call, so families can watch it together in their homes with our community. **For those preparing for First Reconciliation/ First Communion, there will be additional class times for direct instruction on sacrament preparation.

The format of our program will be changing. We will be centering our focus around whole family catechesis. All sessions throughout the year will have a family component. I am very excited to bring this new interaction into the program where parents will truly be the primary faith educators of their children. The domestic church is alive in each of your homes and will be celebrated every Sunday. More details will come during orientation.

Confirmation Preparation classes will begin on Wednesday, October 21– 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. These classes will also be held via Zoom. They will have clergy guests for more in-depth studies in the teachings of our faith.

Registration Information

Registration forms for this school year are now available. Fill out the form with your child's information for our school records. A separate form is needed for each NEW student. A returning family form is also available. Please mail the forms along with your tuition check made payable to Nativity School of Religion and your completed form(s) as soon as possible. The address is Nativity School Of Religion, 1250 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA, 94025. – Attention: Monica Hickam. Should you have any questions email me at mon.hickam@gmail.com.

FEES:

Registration Fees for the 2020-2021 school year are \$100.00 for the first child and \$80.00 for each additional child. If there is an issue regarding your ability to pay please let me know. No child will be deprived of his/her religious education due to financial hardship.

If this will be your student's FIRST year attending the Nativity School of Religion, please provide us with copies of the certificates of the Sacraments your child has received to date. For all students receiving the Sacraments of First Eucharist or Confirmation, a copy of the Baptism certificate is required (even if Sacrament was received at Church of the Nativity).

Please note that classes are held on ZOOM and begin at 8:15 a.m. Classes end at 8:50 a.m. Mass follows at 9:00 a.m. at Nativity Church. The ZOOM link will be left on to Livestream the Sunday Mass. Also, if a child needs to leave early, please let me know by sending an email that day.

In addition to the regular Faith Formation classes for grades 1 through 8, a Sacrament class will be available for children in grades 3 through 8 who have not received their First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

Calendars

Calendars will be available for the 2020-2021 school year on pick up day.

Picking Up Materials

For Sunday classes:

Material pick up for faith formation books and supplemental material will be on Saturday, October 10 and Sunday, October 11. Please enter the drive way by the school gymnasium, where tables will be set up by Last name letters. The exit is at the opposite end of the driveway.

For Wednesday Confirmation classes:

Materials will be given online.

Parent/Guardian Requirement

Our goal is to build community in our program through parent involvement especially during the synchronous ZOOM classes. There is a parent/guardian-led component that begins in the class then more activities are led asynchronously by the parent/guardian after the Sunday gathering.

Our in-person parties are cancelled for now due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, once we are able to do an outdoor gathering, social distance style, we will plan accordingly

In closing, each of us in the School of Religion Program at Nativity are happy to assist you as we continue to partner together to inspire and nurture the spiritual growth of your children.

May God bless all of us in this endeavor.

**Sincerely,
Mrs. Monica Hickam
Director of Religious Education**