

St. Raphael Parish, Milford – GIFT Program -- 2020/2021

Faith Formation for People of All Ages – Information Sheet

What is GIFT?

GIFT – Growing in Faith Together – is open to all members of Saint Raphael Parish as well as non-parishioners -- from age 6 through adult. It is our Saint Raphael Parish faith formation program. It is the way our parish educates children and teens about the basics of our Catholic faith. It is also designed for adults – to answer their questions about the Catholic faith, explain religious traditions, and help them grow in relationship with God.

Through GIFT, we build community by involving people of all ages in the life of the Church. Materials are provided to encourage continued learning at home.

Living the Moral Life

Our GIFT theme for 2020/2021 is Living the Moral Life. We will begin in October with Respect for All Life, focusing on the dignity of all human life. Other GIFT topics include:

- * Love of God and Neighbor
- * Being Good Stewards
- * Living Faithfully, beginning with our family relationships
- * Being Truthful
- * Mercy and Forgiveness, modeled after the compassion of Jesus

GIFT In-Person Class Schedule – 2020/2021

- * October 23, 25, or 27 – Respect for All Life
- * November 20, 22, or 24 – Love of God and Neighbor
- * December 11, 13, or 15 – Being Good Stewards
- * January 22, 24, or 26 – Child/Teen Lures Safety Program (families with young people)
- * February 19, 21, or 23 – Living Faithfully
- * March 19, 21, or 23 – Being Truthful
- * April 16, 18, or 20 – Mercy and Forgiveness

We will offer family sessions, a Grade 5/6 session (if needed), teen sessions, and adult sessions on these dates – based on registered families/participants.

Note: For our 2020/2021 Advent/Christmas Celebration, Lenten Activities, and Pentecost Celebration, we will provide a take-home and/or virtual program with at-home activities for people of all ages.

GIFT Program Changes Due to the Pandemic – 2020/2021

Due to COVID-19, we are making changes to our GIFT Program for health and safety purposes for 2020/2021. We will not be gathering in the Parish Center Hall for a shared meal or the opening prayer, song, Deacon's overview, and all ages opening activity. We plan to send a monthly video with all of our opening activities to registered GIFT families/participants, which can be viewed any time.

Our GIFT families/participants will be able to sign up for either in-person or virtual classes this year. Adult participation is still essential to our program so at least one adult is required to attend with children and teens. There will be three options for in-person GIFT classes in 2020/2021: Friday evening (6:30 to 8 pm), Sunday afternoon (1 to 2:30 pm), or Tuesday evening (6:30 to 8 pm). *Note: There will be additional classes for families in our Sacramental Program: First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.*

Families/participants are asked to indicate first and second choices for in-person classes on the GIFT registration form. Families will be scheduled into GIFT dates and classrooms based on these first and second choices. We will share additional details in early October after reviewing required GIFT registration forms.

Virtual classes will be scheduled for different dates – which will be after the in-person class dates. Families/participants who sign up for in-person classes will have the option to participate in virtual classes, e.g., changes in CT COVID-19 status, illness, schedule conflict. Please note that the closing prayer service will be incorporated into the in-person classroom sessions and the virtual sessions.

Other health and safety accommodations include:

- * Face masks/coverings required for all volunteers and participants
- * Hand sanitizer used on entry to Parish Center and available in all classrooms
- * Classrooms and common spaces will be sanitized after each in-person session
- * Safe distancing required between families and participants from different families
- * Separate materials and supplies for each family or participants from different families, e.g., crayons, markers, glue sticks, scissors, pens, learning packets. Supplies will be sanitized between sessions.

Questions? Please contact Maria Tomasetti, atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (cell phone – voice or text).