

“I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” John 13:34

I want to welcome everyone back to a new year of faith formation. So many in our community are facing challenges in their lives and I hope that together we can face these challenges and continue to completely put our trust in God and His plan for each of us.

Before I get into the goals for this year’s religious education I want to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Brian Rodgers and I am the new Director of Religious Education (DRE) at St. Leo’s Parish. I have been a member of St. Leo’s for 14 years, married 14 years to my wife Tina, and have two daughters, Ashleigh 13, and Morgan 9. I look forward to meeting and getting to know those who I have not had the pleasure to yet meet and to continue friendships I have with many of my parish family. St. Leo’s has had many great DRE’s and I have the pleasure of following one of the best in Cindy Clark. Her leadership will be tough to follow but 90% of what I have learned about being a religious educator has come directly from Cindy and I hope that I can become someday half the asset she is to St. Leo’s Parish. And for the record 9.99% of the rest of my learning came from my mother proving my belief that you will educate like those who taught you. I ask that you continue to pray for Cindy and her recovery and that God would grant each of us the wonderful spirit and outlook Cindy possesses.

With so many people in need in our community the goal of this year’s religious education is simple. I would like to use the new commandment found in John that I opened this letter with as this year’s theme. This disaster is a community wide one and the recovery should be as well. To best utilize the strengths of our religious education classes I would like to implement the following project.

What I propose is two-fold...

- 1) First is to collect needed items for our community
 - a. Each week I want to have a drop-off location at Bishop Ryan for any necessary items, such as
 - i. Food (non-perishable)
 - ii. Clothing
 - iii. Toys
 - iv. Monies
 - b. Each class will also be encouraged to collect items in ways that best suit their individual talents.
- 2) Second is to help organize, deliver, and distribute not only the items we may collect but also use our time and talents in assisting others whenever and however we can.
 - a. If we use even 15 minutes of each class and have the younger grades help box up items, the middle grades label and inventory, and older grades help load up the items it could be such a huge lesson for the children and give them a sense of contribution to the recovery effort that so many of them seem to want.

The need in the community is far reaching and we all struggle to recover from this devastating disaster, know that what I propose is definitely not limited to just our religious education classes. If you can and desire to help out please contact me. We are in a time of great upheaval in our family be it in our parish, community, school, or our own family. Our gift to our family is to become beacons of light and sources of strength.

I continue to pray for those affected by this disaster and I pray everyone finds peace and hope in this time of chaos. If you have any questions about religious education or you would like to volunteer as a teacher or classroom aide please call either myself or the church office and let us know we are always looking for those answering God's call.

God Bless,

Brian Rodgers

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Registration

Please return your registration as soon as you can for the upcoming year. If you do not have a form please stop by the church office to fill one out. We need all students to be registered before so we can have an accurate count for the purchase of supplies. Fees are \$50.00 per student with a maximum of \$150.00 per family. A payment plan is available; please contact Kim or myself at the parish office for more details. Many in our parish face tough financial decisions. If you are directly affected by the flooding disaster please be aware that no-one will be turned away from an education due to financial need.

Catechists Needed

If you have a desire to share your knowledge of the faith with the young members of our parish family we have openings for teaching and aide positions. Please call myself or the parish office for more information.

Confirmation

All confirmation candidates that have attended either the religious education classes last year in preparation or attend Bishop Ryan High School will meet for two classes at St. Leo's Church September 21st and 28th at 6 pm. Practice will be held on the 28th with the Sacrament of Reconciliation to follow. **These are mandatory meetings.** The Sacrament of Confirmation will be held October 1st at the 4:30 Mass. Please turn in your information sheet as soon as possible as all sacrament records must be on file at St. Leo's one week prior to receiving the sacrament. Call the church office with any questions.