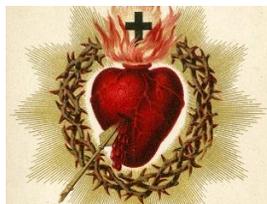


June 2021

Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus



Dear PREP Families and OLG Parishioners,

As we have now completed a most unusual – but successful! – year of religious formation with our PREP students, I now write to you to share our plans for the 2021-2022 PREP year. With the blessing and support of Msgr. Gentili, allow me to share **what remains, what’s new, and what’s the deal.**

What Remains

For a number of reasons and limitations beyond our control as a parish without our own school, PREP for the 2021-2022 year is going to **remain primarily digital.**

It is important to recognize that while pandemic restrictions have begun to lessen in many respects, as a global phenomenon the pandemic is far from over. Time and again, we received feedback this year expressing gratitude for the flexibility of the way we offered lessons digitally – as pre-recorded, pausable, rewatchable, focused lessons accessible on your own time and uploaded weekly. For most grades, this practice will remain in place. Many, many lessons were learned this year about how to effectively maintain a digital program, and we are looking forward to continuing with our trend of encouraging catechesis that takes place in the home and involves the whole family.

We are actively working to move away from the old normal of religious education, the so-called “drop-off,” and are instead dedicated to fostering the traditional affirmation that the family is the domestic church, the fertile ground where the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love are born and nourished. We affirm with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that “[e]ducation in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents” (CCC 2226).

In terms of content and programming, we maintain our proud partnership with Sophia Institute Press, the publisher of both sets of textbooks we use: *Spirit of Truth* and *A Family of Faith*. The content and quality of these texts and the accompanying lessons is unparalleled, and the growth in faith and

knowledge we are witnessing in the student body is only a further testament to the value of this program.

We will continue to offer a more classical “homeschool” option called “Family Catechesis,” which features parent-led instruction by way of monthly units. We are now in our third year of this program’s four year cycle, and will now begin a year titled “Life in Christ.” Parent catechetical sessions will resume at the Parish Life Center this year.

The two options for PREP enrollment are known as “PREP Weekly – Catechist-led” and “Family Catechesis – Parent-led.”

What’s New

For the grades which are preparing directly for the reception of a Sacrament of Initiation (Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation), we are happy to announce that we can offer some in-person instruction at OLG’s Parish Life Center. This means that, for the **2nd, 7th, and 8th grades, we will offer in-person meetings once or twice monthly throughout the year.**

We have been in communication with Cold Spring Elementary and Central Bucks School District about a return to in-person instruction through the rental of their facilities as we did in previous years. We have explored the same with other venues as well, but given our focus on family-centered catechesis and the ability to use our on campus for gatherings, we have chosen the present path as the best one for our parish family.

Last year, we had initially planned to make use of the digital interface Sophia Institute offers for their textbooks that would allow our catechists to assign more regular “homework” and to meaningfully evaluate student progress. That digital element was not ready or up to our standards until December of last year, at which point it was too late to implement into our curriculum smoothly. For the 2021-2022 year, we will be actively incorporating student-teacher interactions through the use of assignments and traditional progress evaluations – not as a way of “grading” students, but to more adequately and responsibly form the hearts and minds of the students and to ensure that our great tradition is being handed on faithfully.

We will also plan to offer, as often as possible, an opportunity for gathering at the Church as an entire PREP program for worship and fellowship. The forthcoming PREP calendar will set some of the dates for those in-person opportunities as a community.

Lastly, parents may be interested in also continuing their faith formation by taking classes at their level. This summer, I am offering a course through OLG titled “Church and Gender,” meeting weekly on Wednesday evenings over Zoom throughout July and August. For any adults with questions about the Church's teaching on contemporary issues, this course will aim to establish how best to understand and approach contemporary culture. See the attached flyer for more information, and email ddrain@olguadalupe.org if you are interested in registering. Classes will be offered in the Fall and Spring as well, with potential offerings including: a basic introduction to Catholic theology, atheism and the problem of evil, and death, judgment, heaven and hell.

What's the deal?

This year's tuition costs have been increased slightly from the previous year (but are still lower than in any year prior to that). We incurred a lot of costs last year in maintaining our website and purchasing additional resources to do so, and this year's slight increase will defray some of this increased costs for the parish. Here is the basic tuition table for the 2021-2022 PREP year. We maintain our practice of working with any families that may be struggling financially to establish payment plans or other solutions to issues of tuition.

PREP Weekly - Catechist-led

Number of children enrolling	Early Bird Pricing: Tuition paid in full by August 15 th (\$40 discount)	Tuition paid in full on or after August 15 th
1	\$200	\$240
2	\$250	\$290
Each additional child	\$250 + \$50.00 per child	\$290 + \$50.00 per child

Family Catechesis - Parent-led

Number of children enrolling	Early Bird Pricing: Tuition paid in full by August 15 th (\$40 discount)	Tuition paid in full on or after August 15 th
1	\$150	\$190
2	\$175	\$215
Each additional child	\$175 + \$25.00 per child	\$215 + \$25.00 per child

If your child is in a grade which is directly preparing to receive a Sacrament of Initiation [Baptism, Holy Communion, or Confirmation] or is in a grade which is receiving in-person instruction, there is a **Sacrament fee, which helps to defray the cost of incidental expenses, i.e., additional textbooks and resources, retreat supplies, robes, banners, and the like. This fee is an additional **\$60 per child** in the 2nd, 7th, or 8th grades.

Registration for the 2021-2022 year will be open by the middle of June, with the year starting in September after Labor Day. A calendar and registration form will be distributed as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I ask that you join me in offering this prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as we plan and prepare for another year of PREP at Our Lady of Guadalupe: "O most holy heart of Jesus, fountain of every blessing, I adore you, I love you, and with lively sorrow for my sins I offer you this poor heart of mine. Make me humble, patient, pure and wholly obedient to your will. Grant, Good Jesus, that I may live in you and for you. Protect me in the midst of danger. Comfort me in my afflictions. Give me health of body, assistance in my temporal needs, your blessing on all that I do, and the grace of a holy death. Amen."

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Daniel A. Drain, Ph.D. (cand.), MT

Director of Religious Education