



ST. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL  
— CATHOLIC CHURCH —  
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## Religious Education Newsletter

February 2019

### A Note From the Coordinator

*When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. . . When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*

Lk 2: 22, 39-40

One of the most delightful things about being a parent of a toddler is watching Andrew grow into his own person. Every day is a new adventure and just when I think I have it all figured out, he changes. Sometimes when I look at my son at almost three years old, I have a hard time imagining the baby he used to be. Is the little boy who now recognizes all his letters, and races to greet me at the door, the same little baby I used to tote around in the infant car seat? If it were not for the hundreds of baby photos I took, I might think the whole thing was a (sleep deprived) dream.



I find that watching Andrew grow in his faith life is no exception. Andrew has been accompanying us to Mass since he was three weeks old, and Josh and I try our best to make our relationship with Jesus as much a part of our lives as eating, sleeping, and playing. Not only do our days include time dedicated to reading, imaginative play, physical activities, mealtimes, and bedtime routines, but there are also planned times for prayer and reading the Bible. And yet, as with anything, we sometimes wonder how much he truly understands. Is explaining to a three-year-old about what the Eucharist is, or telling him the story of the Annunciation really “worth it,” or does it simply go in one ear and out the other? Some days in the midst of juggling both our jobs, completion of our master’s programs, and the day-in and day-out maintenance of keeping a home, it is simply easier to skip all the explanations and trust that Andrew will pick up what he needs to know about his faith from observing Mass and “the experts” he runs into throughout his life, whether they be religious education catechists or Catholic school teachers.

However, as with all other areas of childhood development, research shows that is parents who are the number one influence on their child’s faith life. A typical religious education program, including the one we have at St. Raphael, meets about 30 hours a

year, and **IF** the child is present and on-task for every one of those hours, that means that 99.7% of a child's life experience lies outside of parish catechesis, meaning in the home. Further research shows that as infants, before participating knowingly in faith formation, children naturally participate in the spiritual life of their parents. From infancy into early childhood (birth to 6 years), a child becomes bonded to and dependent upon parents for everything, especially religious and spiritual development before he or she even sets foot in a religious education or Catholic school classroom. In other words, if a relationship with Christ is important to Josh and I and we make it a priority in **our home, then Andrew will too**. If we don't, it is highly unlikely that he will see any value in claiming faith in Jesus Christ as his own.

Maybe it's only me, but knowing that "the buck stops here" in regards to Andrew's faith development seems daunting. Both Josh and I work full time. My degree is in education and his is in accounting, so neither one of us has a PhD in theology, but the awesome thing is, we don't need one. How do I know this? I need only look at the parents of Jesus as my model. Neither Mary or Joseph was a member of the religious elite of their day. Joseph was a carpenter and Mary was a homemaker. For most of his life, Jesus was formed in wisdom and grace within the quiet confines of his Nazareth home by two everyday people who lived life in an extraordinary way. The only equipment Mary and Joseph had was the same thing each of us needs: the desire to grow our own relationship with the Lord and the intent to enfold our children into that relationship to give them the ground in which to form their own relationship with Christ. So what does that look like in real life? I would like to offer four concrete suggestions for you to try in the next 30 days.

1. **Make prayer a priority-** Pray every day as a family. It should be as much a part of your daily routine as brushing your teeth. Parents who establish a time and a place for daily devotions are the single highest influence on a child's personal spiritual growth. In the *Letter to Families*, St. John Paul II reminds us that "prayer makes the Son of God present among us and asserts that family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of catechesis." Prayer does not need to be elaborate. It can be as simple as praying together before meals or in the car to and from sports practice. Small moments build prayer habits that last a lifetime.
2. **Take the family of faith inventory-** Another resource for growing in faith as a family is the "[Family Faith Inventory](#)" created by the Strong Catholic Families National Initiative. The inventory helps you take stock of your faith as a family and assists in setting goals for how to grow together in the Lord. Both Josh and I found it not only eye-opening, but helpful and practical.
3. **Attend the St. Raphael Parish Mission, March 17-19, 6-7:30 pm-** Our 2019 Parish Mission will feature Alice Heinzen, [Director of Marriage & Family Life at the Diocese of La Crosse](#). Topics include finding joy in the chaos of daily family life and getting the tools we need to grow as a domestic church. [Babysitting is available for kids ages 4-8](#). I heard Alice Heinzen speak at a convention in Green Bay three years ago and I cannot recommend her highly enough. I learned a lot as both a parent and a coordinator of religious ed, and am super excited to attend the mission this year.
4. **Be Open to the Movement of the Holy Spirit-** In the coming months there will be multiple opportunities to grow together as a family in faith at St. Raphael. Some of them are familiar, like attending events such as [Mardi Gras](#), praying Stations of the Cross, parent/child classes, reconciliation services, and—MOST importantly—worshipping at weekend Masses. As a teaser, other opportunities to learn together as a family on a deeper level will be offered in the very near future, and having an open heart allows the Spirit to do what He does best: bring faith, joy and peace to our lives. (And if all that sounds wonderful but maddeningly vague, it is because I want you to get you excited for what is to come. :-))

If you are like my husband Josh and would like to read the research being done on the importance of family catechesis for yourself, I highly recommend two articles that really informed our thinking: [Catechesis as a Way of Life](#) and [Catechetical Leadership: On](#)

Family Faith Formation in the Parish. As always, please know Josh, Andrew and I are praying for you. Please continue to pray for us and we will see you soon, but never soon enough!

**Jessie Adrians**  
Coordinator of Religious Education



## Sunday School

*Beloved, let us love one another,  
because love is of God; everyone who  
loves is begotten by God and knows  
God.  
1 John 4:7*

We've had a busy few weeks at Sunday School and are having a lot of fun. We read the bible story [Jonah and the Big Fish](#), learned that if we are sorry God will always forgive us, and did an art project of a fish with colorful scales.

We also learned about St. Valentine and God's love for us. The kids talked about how they can show the people in their lives how much they love them and made valentines for a loved one in their lives. Fr. Tom and Fr. Matt also got valentines from us to show them how much we love and appreciate them and everything they do to teach us about Jesus.

During our next class we will be reading the bible story [Daniel and the](#)

## Elementary School

This winter sure has put our minds and bodies to the test: from extreme cold that held most of us homebound, possibly leaving us a bit depressed from lack of social interaction, to the feet of snow that had to be removed leaving our bodies aching to the point of forgetting we have muscles. Yet, we persevere through and know spring is closer every day. How blessed some special people who are always homebound, in nursing homes and not feeling well, to be recipients of Happy Cards first graders created, third grader's Get Well Wishes that our care ministers took along on their visits, and lastly hearts that were made with the love of God in mind to remind ourselves how we are so very loved by our Great Creator♥

Know these gifts of love your children created here during religious education classes brought warmth to the hearts of the lonely and depressed, smiles to those ailing and struggling with their health, and especially the joy of being

## Lions Den.

God's Blessings to you and your families!

**Kathy Baehman**  
Sunday School Coordinator

remembered of how we are to love and be loved. I am blessed to be part of these graced little lives! I take my responsibility, given to us all at baptism, sharing our beautiful faith with them every chance I get...even if walking around with a giant teddy bear and gummy bears telling them, "Jesus loves you 'Beary' much!"

May the love of God keep you warm and comforted always♥† ~

**Jenifer Jensen**  
Elementary RE Coordinator

## Middle School

Hello! My name is Peggy Zickert. I live in Rosendale and have two grown children, Alyssa and Tyler. I began teaching religious education in the late 1990s when my daughter was in first grade. As my children grew, I followed them up through the grade levels, teaching and learning right along with the students. Over the years there have been many craft projects, games, and much laughter shared between myself and the students. After my son celebrated confirmation and no longer attended classes, I took a few years off from teaching and returned this year to volunteer for 7th grade.

I really like working with the middle school students because they are so excited to share what has happened during the course of the day or week, and even if it takes us off topic, I hope that by being present with them I can be a positive influence and give them something to reflect on when things do not go their way. The greatest gifts that I have received include meeting the youth of our parish and their parents, and having the opportunity to learn about and grow in my faith.

**Peggy Zickert**  
7th grade catechist

## High School

This week, 56 high school students were confirmed into the Catholic faith. From these 56 students, five high schools will be represented: Oshkosh West, Lourdes Academy, Oshkosh North, Appleton North, and Omro High School. These students have also chosen to be a part of one of two Confirmation preparation tracks.

One of these tracks was the Alpha class option. This is where students met at the parish once a week for 11 sessions, either in the school year or the summer. They met for 90-minute sessions that featured a meal, Alpha videos, and discussion. The Alpha video series dives into the deep questions of our faith, questions such as who is Jesus, and who is the Holy Spirit? One of my favorite things about this option was seeing the sense of community that formed among our students as they met here weekly.

The other track was our Kyrios Confirmation retreat option. These students chose a 3-day retreat that happened either in the fall or summer. Both retreats were held at the Green Lake Conference Center and were lead by our Peer Ministry team and COR team. The retreat features testimonies from other students, skits, a Holy Hour, praise and worship music, Mass, and much more. These students also had to attend four Aftershock sessions, which is our youth ministry night that happens every Sunday night after our 5 pm Mass.



It's been great coordinating both of these tracks and being able to attend almost all of the events that are part of it. I've seen our students grow in the faith in many ways. I'm very proud of this group, and I have faith in them continuing to live out their faith well beyond Confirmation. My prayer for them is that they do not look at Confirmation like it's a graduation of their religious education requirement, but that they continue to live out their faith beyond high school and for the rest of the lives.

God bless,

**Eric Rudd**  
Coordinator of High School Faith  
Formation  
& Young Adult Ministry

## Youth Ministry

Hey folks!

My family has been waiting for about 9 months for something big. Well, actually for someone not so big. Regina Caeli Kristine Nelson was born on February 7th weighing in at 8 lbs 5 oz. (Okay, so maybe she is kind of big.) Her brothers and sister are falling in love with her each day. They are so excited to continue to get to know her more and more.



There is nothing wrong with waiting. In fact, waiting for things can usually make the thing you are waiting for better. I think of Advent making Christmas better, or the anticipation before a new movie you want to see. In our spiritual lives we are called to wait upon the Lord. We use the time of preparation to be ready for whatever the Lord has in store for us. My family didn't just stop living the past 9 months. We had to prayerfully, emotionally, financially, and physically get ready for the arrival of baby Caeli. Hopefully that has made us better parents and siblings.

Speaking of waiting, this summer offers some big opportunities to grow in our relationship with the Lord. Kyrios #10 will be June 7, 8, 9. Our high school mission trip will be June 22-29 to our sister parish in Kentucky. Our first ever middle school mission trip through Love Begins Here in Shawano will be July 7-10. And our Steubenville Youth Conference will be

July 26, 27, 28.

So these are a lot of things to wait for. But that doesn't mean we should not be working on our relationship with God right now. The trick is growing daily as a disciple in the ordinary moments of our lives so that God can make those extraordinary moments even better!

God bless. Thank you for your prayers as our family adjusts to the new normal. Kayln and I are praying for you!

~Tommy Nelson

Coordinator of Middle and High School Youth Ministry.

## FORMED Highlights

FORMED is a Catholic content digital platform that provides 24/7 access to video-based study programs, feature films, audio presentations, and eBooks. St. Raphael has a parish-wide subscription, so sign up for your FREE account by visiting [raphael.formed.org](http://raphael.formed.org). Then click on the images below to view this month's recommended content for children, youth, and parents.



The Good Samaritan: A story of helping and caring for others even when hard to do. (video)



Hot Topics: One-off opportunities to engage youth and YDisciple groups with the issues that are impacting their lives. (videos)



On the Family by Pope Francis: A collection of all of Pope Francis' weekly Wednesday audience talks about the family from Dec. 17, 2014 to Sept. 16, 2015. (ebook)

## Upcoming Events

[Click here](#) for the full calendar of the 2018/2019 RE school year for grades PK-10

**Feb 26/27**

Grade 5, Grade 4, and Grade 8 Reconciliation Services

**Mar 16**

St. Patrick Party, 6:00-7:45 (Grades PK-5)

**Mar 26/27**

NO CLASS- OASD Spring Break

**Mar 5**

NO CLASS, please join us for Mardi Gras

**Mar 16/17**

Bread Partner weekend at all Masses

**Mar 31**

9th grade Retreat (11-7) @ St. Raphael

**Mar 6**

Please join us for Ash Wednesday Mass @ 7:15am/12:00pm/4:15pm/5:30pm/6:45pm

**Mar 17-19**

Parish Mission, What Pope Francis about the Mystery of Love in Marriage and Family, 6-7:30 pm (babysitting provided)

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DATES FOR SAFE ENVIRONMENT SESSIONS FOR GRADES 1-10 HAVE BEEN CHANGED FROM MARCH 19TH/20TH TO APRIL 23RD/24TH**

**Mar 12/13**

Gr. 2 First Eucharist Parent/child class #2

**Mar 19/20**

3rd grade reconciliation services\*\*

# PRAYER OF THE MONTH



O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured.  
Amen.



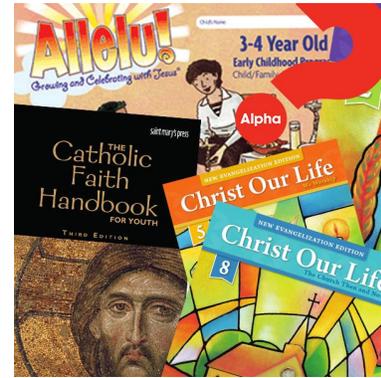
St. Raphael the Archangel  
Catholic Church

## Religious Education

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**Sunday School:** Kathy Baehman, Sunday School Coordinator

**Elementary School:** Jenifer Jensen, Elementary School Coordinator

**Middle School:** Jessie Adrians, Director of Religious Education & Middle School Coordinator

**High School:** Eric Rudd, High School & Young Adult Ministry Coordinator

**Youth Ministry:** Tommy Nelson, Youth Minister