

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

With the end of summer drawing near, some of you have been asking about the religious formation of children at St. Charles Garnier. In response, I've been talking with some of you about **"Family Nights"**, a time set aside for the whole parish to come together to celebrate faith and family in a way that empowers parents to be more involved in the faith life of their children.

A traditional evening would begin with a communal meal in our parish hall at around 5:30 pm. Meals should be easy to be prepared by two or three people (e.g.: spaghetti, chili and a bun, jambalaya, etc.) the meals should also be economical. Meals are an essential part of building community, giving an opportunity for informal interactions and in setting the stage for what is to come.

At around 6:15 pm the focus will shift to the church for a short period of worship/music and gestures. The music will naturally lead into a brief moment of prayer, in which the evening is offered up to God and our desire to come to know him better.

At around 6:30 pm there will be some form of skit, story or short presentation that will set the tone for the teaching of the evening. Skits/stories or short presentations will first be explored in the wider group setting in a variety of different ways and will be further unpacked through a simple family activity, discussion and/or project that follows. This will enable the parents an opportunity to engage their child(ren) in the learning process and to tie it in with their overall life as a family.

At around 7:15 pm the group will come together again in the church for a brief follow-up, which may include questions, comments and suggestions that come from the floor. It is hoped that we will all learn from one another and that families may learn to share with other families what they are doing. The evening will conclude with a follow-up activity (to be done at home) and a few minutes of personal prayer, journal writing or some other form of reflection or thanksgiving. At 7:30 pm we will sing a final song of thanksgiving to God for this time together.

Family Nights will take place every second Wednesday evening, beginning on September 20th at 5:30 pm. First Communion and Confirmation classes will be offered on the alternate Wednesday. Family Nights are open to all families, regardless of where their children receive their schooling. It is meant to build a spirit of community, networking, faith and support among the families of our parish and are intended to lead to other family-based initiatives as the need arises.

Anyone interested in helping out with food, music, skits, activities and/or logistics can speak to Fr. Bart. We hope to build on the spirit of community and support at St. Charles Garnier.

Fraternally in Christ,

Fr. Bart van Roijen