**Year 1 Beginnings 2023-2024**

Hello & welcome to the Year 1 Beginnings program of the Parish Community of Saint Helen!  Parents, did you know that you are the primary Catechists for your children?  We are so happy to partner with you in this first formal year of faith formation for your child and share the joy of your child encountering Jesus Christ.  Year 1 Beginnings is designed for children in first or second grade who are beginning their first year of Faith Formation.

**The Year 1 Beginnings religious education program 2023-2024 will be held in room 102/103 in Meaney Hall.**  We ask you to walk your child into the main Meaney Hall entrance and you will see our check-in table where you will drop them off, pick up is at the same hallway. There will be two lessons each month, one in person lesson and one at home lesson as described here:

* **The first lesson date** of each month is an **IN PERSON** one-hour large group session held in the 102/103. Each of these large groups will be divided into smaller groups at tables of about 10 children and led by the Beginnings Volunteers
* **The second lesson date** is an **AT HOME** **parent/guardian lesson** done with your child. This lesson will be emailed to you through your mysainthelen database. Please keep your database information updated. You and your child will do the lesson together. The at home lesson will involve an activity & prayer and there is no homework to be sent back to me.
* **Parent Meeting**:  Tuesday, September 12 at 10am and 7pm for Grades 1 & 2  in the gym- Please attend one of the sessions.  A link will be sent in late August for you to register for one time to attend the meeting.

Children learn about their faith through praying together, singing songs of worship and praise, and learning about the Bible. We strive for consistency for the children in this ever-changing world, so our routine of the class begins each month with “The Gathering Song”, an opening prayer, and a lesson on the Sacred Space.  The theme of the lesson is introduced to the children through a video, a scripture reading and/or interactive questions as a large group.  The volunteers take the 20-30 minutes of the middle of the hour to work with the children in small table groups.  We end the lesson together in prayer and song before dismissal. The Year 1 Beginnings curriculum is based on Our Sunday Visitor publication for grade 1. The children will learn a new prayer at each in person monthly session and begin  making their own individual prayer booklet that they will add to each month when in person and take home to keep in March!

**Volunteers**: Saint Helen has a history of generous volunteers who help us run our religious education programs. The Year 1 Beginnings program will need about 50 volunteers in order to make this program possible. Please consider volunteering with us! We have a fun time with the children.

* **The new volunteer** **training meeting** is **Wednesday, Sept 13, 7:00pm**  in room 102/103.
* Lesson plans are provided for you via email the week before each class for you to review prior to the class, all materials needed for the lesson are provided for you.
* Responsibilities include instructing a small group of about 10 children within the large group session.
* The commitment is once a month from September through March.
* We also have a need for check in and check out volunteers for each session.
* **Substitutes are needed too**, please let us know what days and times you are available if you can't volunteer for the entire program.

**Volunteer Guidelines**: Volunteers over 18 who work with children need to take Protecting God's Children or Keeping the Promise Alive and submit a volunteer application along with a background check per the Archdiocese of Newark. Please click on this link from our website to read more about it.  <https://sainthelen.org/protecting-gods-children/>   We can assist you with this process.

Please pray on this and consider answering God's call to help in this Ministry. It is a rewarding and joyful experience. Check off on the registration of your child that you elect to volunteer, and we will contact you.

Please read the schedule below which is subject to changes:

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| **Beginnings**  **Year 1**  **2023/2024** | **Monday**  **Group A**  **3:45-4:45PM** | **Monday**  **Group B**  **5:30-6:30PM** | **Wednesday**  **Group C**  **3:45-4:45PM** | **Wednesday**  **Group D**  **5:30-6:30PM** |
| **Large Group Session** | **Sept. 18** | **Sept. 18** | **Sept. 20** | **Sept. 20** |
| **Large Group Session** | **Oct. 16** | **Oct. 16** | **Oct. 18** | **Oct. 18** |
| *At home parent/child lesson* | Oct.  23 | Oct. 23 | Oct.  23 | Oct. 23 |
| **Large Group Session** | **Nov. 13** | **Nov. 13** | **Nov. 15** | **Nov. 15** |
| *At* home parent/child lesson | Nov. 20 | Nov. 20 | Nov.  20 | Nov. 20 |
| **Large Group Session** | **Dec. 4** | **Dec. 4** | **Dec. 6** | **Dec. 6** |
| *At home parent/child lesson* | Dec.  11 | Dec.  11 | Dec.  11 | Dec. 11 |
| **Large Group Session** | **Jan. 8** | **Jan. 8** | **Jan. 10** | **Jan. 10** |
| *At home parent/child lesson* | Jan. 22 | Jan.  22 | Jan.  22 | Jan.  22 |
| **Large Group Session** | **Feb. 5** | **Feb. 5** | **Feb. 7** | **Feb. 7** |
| *At home parent/child lesson* | Feb. 12 | Feb. 12 | Feb. 12 | Feb.  12 |
| **Large Group Session** | **Mar. 4** | **Mar. 4** | **Mar. 6** | **Mar. 6** |
| *At home parent/child lesson* | Mar. 11 | Mar. 11 | Mar. 11 | Mar.  11 |
| **Large Group Session** | **Mar. 18** | **Mar. 18** | **Mar. 20** | **Mar. 20** |

**Special Notes**:

Wed., Feb. 14  Ash Wednesday Service 3:45pm

Sun., Mar. 24                            Palm Sunday (Passion Play Masses)

Thurs., Mar. 28                      Holy Thursday

Fri., Mar. 29                               Good Friday – Outdoor Children’s Stations of the Cross

Sat., Mar. 30                             Holy Saturday

Sun., Mar. 31                             Easter Sunday

We are looking forward to meeting you at the parent meeting.  If you want to contact us, please see our information below.

Peace & Blessings!

Nicole

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