

Family and Youth Initiatives Meeting

August 17, 2023 6:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Kari Mathys, Jenny VandenLangenberg, Joan Huntoon, Mitch Peterson, Loren Vandenplas, Tara O'Donohue ~ Staff Members: Theresa Williams, Neil Saindon

1. RE update

- Theresa has provided her report/update in advance of the meeting. See it attached here
- Backpack Blessing August 26-27 - Backpack tags and rulers will be handed out with the blessing. Committee members will help with the blessing. Tara and Loren can help cover Saturday 4:30 pm, Theresa will do Sunday 8:00 am, Kari and Jenny will do Sunday 10:00 am, Neil and Theresa will do Sunday 6:00 pm.

2. Middle & High School Update

- Neil has provided his report/update in advance of the meeting. Youth Group has been successful over the summer. The kids and Neil will work together to plan future events, missions, and meetings. Confirmation is set for October 21. Neil will try to get a Diocese approved form of communication going where the kids can contact him or each other. Youth Group events going forward may need to go off site depending on the construction schedule. We also talked about the desire to organize a mission trip with the teens and referenced the past support of the parish for this type of outreach and experience for the young people in our parish.
- Babysitting Ministry: Tara O'Donohue is going to be the leader for this new ministry. Two Virtus trained adults need to be at babysitting events, and teenagers can be helpers. The Babysitting Ministry will officially start in Spring after construction. Tara is looking into the Diocese and State guidelines on childcare and will report back at the next meeting.

3. FYI Committee Events & Initiatives

- Outdoor Movie Night Recap - June 8. Attendance was a little lower than last year but still an enjoyable event. We will pencil in next year's movie night as Thursday, June 13 and note that we need to be there to set up at 4:30. Jenny will reserve this date with FunFlicks.
- POP Playdates & Christian Mommy Group has been very successful. Red Sember has received great feedback from families enjoying the play dates and it has already resulted in a few new families joining the parish. The Playdates will pause during construction and start back up next spring.

- Pet Blessing October 7th 10:00- The committee discussed ideas to optimize this event. 1. Take pictures with pets and owners, and print them. A youth group project could be making frames, and then the owners could pick them up at Masses post event day. Mitch will look into frames and get back to the group. Jenny will look at options for a photo backdrop, both physical or digital. 2. Say a prayer for pets that passed away 3. Make homemade dog treats (Tara will look into for a Youth Group Activity) 4. Human treats like cookies or donuts. 5. Parish youth can read facts about St. Francis. 6. We would still hand out St. Francis medallions after the blessing. We will finalize details at our September meeting.
- Pumpkin Carving - Sunday, October 22 - Our Committee will provide pumpkins and treats. This will take place after 10:00 Mass with a start time at 11:30. Mitch will get the pumpkins. Kari will take care of food and drinks. We will have the pumpkin contest with gift card prizes. Jenny will submit the event form to the Parish Office.
- Breakfast in Bethlehem, Magi Market - December 10th. We are saving the date but realize we may have to modify this event due to the construction. We will discuss further at the next meeting but Jenny will submit an event form to reserve whatever areas are available for this event.
- Camp Tekawitha Scholarship- we discussed this in the past but it did not come to fruition this summer. Let's keep this on the agenda for spring.
- Epiphany Event in January - Tabled item but something we can look at in the future when construction is complete and we have more space!

Next Meeting: September 21 at 6:30 pm.

Faith Formation/Religious Education Report to FYI

August 16, 2023

1. **REGISTRATIONS** - Registration for the 2023-2024 Religious Education year continues. Currently, we have 193 students registered. I have sent reminders to all families from last year that have not registered yet.
2. **VBS** – The VBS was held July 24-28. We had 51 students and close to 30 volunteers comprised of adults and many of our older youth. The VBS theme was Wilderness Adventure: Through the Sacraments. Again, we received a lot of positive feedback on the week.

3. **23-24 CALENDAR** – I have attached a revised calendar for this year. Due to construction, changes were made to the one you received earlier. Again, please note, we have changed the times to 4:30-5:30 and 5:45-6:45. We are keeping the 7-8:15 later time the same. We are using Edge for grades 5-6 and LifeTeen for 7-9. Purpose is for the 10-11th graders.

4. **CONSTRUCTION** – In January, the main offices will also be moving to the Fellowship and remodeling will begin in the Conference Room and current office area. This will mean that all classes after January 17th will need to be held in church only. I revised the calendar to reflect this. There are a few weeks where grades 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 will have an at-home lesson, so that grade 2 can meet and have sacramental prep for First Communion.

5. **UPCOMING DATES/EVENTS**

Parent Meeting for Grades 1-9 on August 23 at 6:30 PM

Grades 10-11 Meeting for Parents & Students on Sun., Aug. 27 at 7PM (After 6PM Mass)

Backpack Blessing at all Masses on August 26-27

First class for grades 10-11 is Sunday, September 10

First day of RE classes for grades 1-9 is Wednesday, September 13

Catechetical Sunday – September 16-17 (Blessing for all catechists, aides, helpers)

In Christ,
Theresa Williams
Director of Religious Education
Prince of Peace Catholic Community

Youth and Young Adult Ministries Report to FYI

Aug 17th, 2023

1. **PURPOSE/10th GRADE**– Keeping with Tradition, the Diocese has moved our Confirmation Mass ahead to Oct 21st. It was originally planned for Oct 7th but, after seeing the number of conflicts that would create for the students, Dcn Jeff and myself undertook to “change the diocese plans” and while it was INTENSE it did come out our way. However, we still only have 4 weeks of classes to prepare the students. Luckily, we took the approach last year of continuing classes after the Sacrament, so we are already prepared for this

truncated prep schedule (See how the Holy Spirit works?!). Several High schools have Homecoming or some other very important event on Oct 7th which would force a choice of which event to attend and, while I hope they would have chosen Confirmation, a large part of our ministry is predicated on the idea that they don't need to choose between being themselves and being Catholic, so... We will be fielding a class of 21 10th graders spread between 3 Catechists and 23 Confirmands spread between 3 Catechists which puts us at an ideal small group ratio of 7x1.

Notable Calendar events for Confirmation and Purpose: Parent meeting Aug 27th, First class sept 10th, Spiritus confirmation retreat Oct 1st, Field trip to Champion Shrine Oct 15th, Confirmation Mass at St. Mary's in Ledgeview Oct 21st.

2. **LIFETEEN AND EDGE** – Theresa's report has the meat and potatoes for this section. However, I feel it is worth mentioning that Theresa and I are taking a more active role in the decisions of class topics and Catechist roles. In addition, we are providing more in-depth resources as well as more ongoing catechist formation this year.

3. **YOUNG ADULT** – We've put together our YA committee.

Erik Wiegand (Chair)

Lisa Patz (secretary)

Cassie Nooyen

Sarah (Farah) Wiegand

Calyn Saindon

Liz Rehberg

Thus far they have been discussing both service and social opportunities, but they only received official recognition from the Parish Council in July, so there has not been anything put on the calendar yet in terms of events. The next meeting is Sept 6th and that meeting we will be creating our calendar which we will provide to Red for publication and dissemination to the Parish.

4. **YOUTH GROUP**- Tara, Lisa, Cassie and I have remained the primary volunteers for this, and it is going quite well. We recently had a meeting with members of FYI, Tara and some students to discuss the direction for Youth Group as it continues to grow and thrive. The results from that meeting have been shared with FYI in previous messages, but I also undertook a survey of the students that regularly attend as well as the students who do NOT

attend in which I asked them several questions about their preferences for future YG events, format changes, advertising and some YG led programs such as a podcast to discuss issues important to our youth. The results have been illuminating and we will take action on them by the end of the year.

5. **RCIA-** We have several families coming into the church together, which means that we have the need to catechize at several different levels. Theresa and I will be working with the younger children of these families on most Thursday evenings this year, and I will also be handling some classes for Deb again as well as providing mentoring to the “mentors” who are present at the classes to assist with POV on faith and practice.

6. **LoSec-** Our annual LoSec audit was completed in June, and we were recognized as being 100% compliant with Diocesan codes for safe environment. This is extremely rare in parishes of our size, so it garnered special attention but even after additional scrutiny we were able to provide the Diocese with all the information they requested on 100% of our volunteers. While I may not advertise this fact, it does go a long way to witness POP’s commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for our children, our youth, and vulnerable adults.

7. **Babysitting Ministry-** The Babysitting Ministry has, at long last, found a coordinator in Tara O’Donohue. Tara has decided to help me and this committee in providing this ministry which is so badly needed for our younger families in the parish. The details are not yet worked out, but we will now begin the process of making this an official ministry within the parish and securing the Governmental and Ecclesial approvals we need to get this rolling in earnest. Tara comes with a wealth of experience in the childcare field and will be invaluable in making sure we become and remain compliant with all authorities that monitor such things in our area.

Neil Saindon
Dir. Youth and Young Adult Ministries
Prince of Peace Catholic Community