



Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle

Cathedral Parish and School of the Diocese of St. Petersburg

January 30, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

During our Confirmation meeting with parents and guardians on Wednesday evening, I referenced that we will be sending out a "cheat sheet" of sorts prior to each of our Confirmation courses. This will give you a quick look into our activities, conversations, and goals for each night in the hope that you can continue the dialogue at home during the four weeks in between each class.

We will try to send these emails out at the beginning of each week that we have class. We weren't able to send you a sneak peek prior to our class last week, so we'd like to share a brief recap.

Our night consisted of three parts:

1. Ice breaker Game

We opened our night with a game of hot potato. This was no ordinary game of hot potato. It was designed to give everyone a "consequence" after being stuck with the "potato" as the music stopped. It was high energy, lots of fun, and encouraged your children to come out of their shell a little bit while being comfortable around one another. We won't play hot potato again, but we will maintain the spirit of energy, fun, and a comfortable environment as we continue to learn more about our faith.

2. Juggling

After we were all feeling a bit more comfortable, we got right into our first activity where our focus was on learning how to juggle! Our teams of 12 began tossing a small rubber duck around the circle. They had three rules to start: Call the name of the person they threw it to, say "thank you" when receiving it, and with each round, they needed to throw it in the same order. With each round, they needed to go faster and faster without dropping the duck on the floor. Finally, in the last round, we began to add more and more items to juggle. The items came quick and soon after, chaos ensued!

Chaos was the desired result! And afterwards, it was your children who led the teaching and debrief. They helped to identify the metaphor connecting this activity to life. We discussed the various things in our life that we are juggling daily (school, family, friendships, prayer, sports, etc) and how sometimes we get overwhelmed, and things "drop". An emphasis was placed on making sure that we know our priorities and don't let the important things drop. We also started thinking of who in our life is currently or can help us to "juggle" when we struggle. *We will return to this next month when we discuss choosing our sponsors, but start the conversation now!*

We ended this session by turning to the Gospel of Luke Chapter 4 verses 16-21. Jesus returns to his home town and while at Temple reads from the Prophet Isaiah where God is promising people that are hurting and in need a Savior. Jesus reveals that He is the one who was sent to help them. While your sons and daughters are not the Messiah, God still wants to use them to help others. The gifts of the Holy Spirit that our young people will receive in Sacrament of Confirmation will be equipping them to go out into the world to help others "juggle". We will begin to learn more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and what each gift will offer to us on our faith journeys.

3. Post it Notes

Just as we did at the parents/guardians' session, each young person received 5 post it notes. On each post it, they wrote down one person, place or thing that was most important to them. Something that they felt helped to identify who they are. Some answers were serious and some...not so much. One by one, we started eliminating a post it note until we were left with just one item.

The idea behind this activity was connected to our previous challenge and helped us to name the items we don't want to let drop. However, sometimes there are elements that force us to second guess our priorities or even try to eliminate them from our lives. How do we respond? We talked about St. Jose Sanchez del Rio, a 13 year old boy who loved his faith. A change in the Mexican government led to the Catholic faith being attacked and Jose wasn't able to practice his faith legally.

When something of importance was taken from him, he sought to reclaim it, even to the point of death. The questions were then posed to your children, if we say that these people, places, and things are important to us, how do we react when they infringed upon? When we have a fight with our parents, we struggle in a sport, or we have people tell us that faith isn't important, do we work to reclaim them? Lastly, could people identify your most important people and elements of life just by interacting with you or do we keep those important

elements a secret? This is what we hope to unpack more in the months that follow!

Challenges:

I don't plan on giving your children homework after each course, but instead challenges. We ran out of time before I had the chance to issue any challenges. So, I'd like to extend these three challenges to you in the hopes that alongside of your children, you can start the journey to Confirmation together!

First, as a family, try to **go to Mass one more time this next month than you usually do**. If you go every Sunday, is there one daily Mass that you can add before February 24th's class. If you don't go to Mass on Sunday, is there one Sunday that you can try to add Mass to the schedule? Going to Mass brings us face to face with Jesus in the Eucharist and it brings us face to face with Jesus in our fellow parishioners. Both will strengthen us in our preparation for Confirmation.

Second, try to **go to at least one Edge** (middle school youth group) on Wednesday nights. Mrs. Abdo is leading it and she's a rock star! Going to Edge will allow your child to have fun while learning more about the faith, the Saints, and how to continue to juggling all that life has in store for us!

Lastly, **watch more TV** as a family. Ok, this one's easy! However, be intentional with this challenge. You might want to watch The Chosen as a family. There are a diverse offering of movies and shows on [Formed.org](https://www.formed.org). Youtube is filled with brief stories about the faith and Saints. And they are all free and can be streamed on your TV!

Thank you!

Ryan