

CHRISTIAN FORMATION
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As if 2020 didn't bring enough challenges and changes to how we do ministry, 2021 brought more of the same. As we continued into the new year, we offered our worship services through a livestream, and thanks to Les Alvis and Caleb Bedillion, our Sunday Lectionary class continued as a weekly podcast. For our younger children, we continued to offer Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a way that would be meaningful for them. Packets were mailed to them each month and we loved seeing photos of the children working with the materials we sent.

By Easter, we were able to return to in-person worship services and formation. This was a welcomed change in our Sunday morning offerings. For the remainder of the Easter semester, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was offered to children 3 years old through 6th grade and "Living in Christ" was offered to our 7th – 12th graders. We took a short break the first few weeks of June to re-evaluate our Sunday morning children and youth programming. After many discussions with catechists, parents and Phillip, and with only one certified catechist returning for the Advent semester, the very difficult decision was made to close our atria for now. We looked at several different offerings and in consultation with Michelle Hester, our volunteer Coordinator for Children's Ministries and Phillip we decided on the following offerings:

"Spark, Activate Faith," is offered for our children, 3-years-old – 4th grade which helps them connect at their level, with stories that correspond with the Sunday Lectionary. The lessons are packed with activities, interactive games, and creative crafts. My thanks to Allison Bedillion, Kelly Fleming and Cindy Smith for teaching this class.

Our children in 5th – 8th grades are studying "Connect", which connects kids with God's big story through videos, Bible exploration and hands on projects. Thank you to Sue Ann Averett, Marcie Harper and Michelle Hester for leading this class.

The curriculum, "Caffeine + Christ" was offered to our youth in 9th – 12th grades, to explore who Jesus was beyond the miracles and the hype. This offering explores the different ways for progressive Christians to study, journal and savor the flavor of Christ in their lives. This study offers more than just answers, it provides a way for our youth to explore the Bible and welcome Christ into their life. Connor Harper and Emily Jackson have been sharing the teaching duties for this class. We are considering a different model/format for this class when we return to in person classes, in hopes of engaging our youth in a more meaningful way.

And speaking of different models/formats, Vacation Bible School ~ "Who Is My Neighbor" was offered for all ages, June 13-16 in the evening. Programming was designed for specific age groups with common time for all groups. This was a highly successful model and one I think we'll try again! Thank you to Michelle Hester for organizing this offering and for all who taught the classes and for those who participated.

In the Fall, Phillip offered confirmation classes for adults and youth and Bishop Seage confirmed 11 youth and adults during his annual visitation on All Saints' Sunday.

Once the decision was made to close Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, an already established Montessori based Sunday morning offering and move to a curriculum-based Sunday School program, we needed to equip each classroom with the lessons, materials and supplies for crafts for each age group. The change in moving Vacation Bible School to evenings, with programming for all ages, caused an increase in expenses, not only in supplies, but the meal offerings as well. In 2021, Christian Formation was budgeted \$3,025 and spent \$3063.27.

