

Rose Yagiela
St. John's Parish
Faith Formation Department
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Dear St. John Families;

Here we go again! It's that time of the year. Can you believe how fast the summer has gone? I hope you've all had a chance to have some family vacation time together. I look forward to seeing both my boys and their wives and girlfriends one more time before sending them all back to their perspective schools next weekend. My son Ken will have the experience of having his first apartment and cooking and cleaning for himself while going to school. Patrick has one more year of Instrument repair school and we hope and pray that his wife Melissa can find a teaching job for this year. Ah, the good ole' days. Does it bring back memories? Gretchen's daughter will be graduating this December and looking forward to Grad school. They grow so fast.

With our children growing in age and grace, we realize that it is important that they also grow in their relationship with God. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program is based on that premise first and foremost. After 12 years working with this program I have seen the children show signs of peace, joy and happiness. They live in this community of children surrounded by scripture and all the elements of the Mass. The last couple of years some of our 5th graders have returned in their junior high and high school years to be helpers in the atriums. Gretchen's daughter, Meghan was a helper when she was in high school. Last year worked with the liturgical dancers for Christmas and still cantors and sings with us whenever she can. When my son Ken is home, either at Christmas break or summer still helps with setting Environment for church with my husband Tim.

We're always forming our lives around God and with the community in which we worship. Then that community becomes a support of prayer and friendship when we need it most.

We begin a new relationship with our new pastor, Fr. Rick Varner. He just loves the youth of all ages. When I saw him sit down on the bottom step his first weekend for all the children to bring forth their stewardship I just had to smile. If you haven't met him yet, please introduce your family to him after Mass sometime. I think you'll really like him.

Our 2nd graders and their parents will be getting closer in their relationship with the Good Shepherd in a very special way by preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist. If your child is older and has not received the sacraments please get in contact with Rose or Gretchen at the office. A list of those preparation dates can be found in the registration packet called Sacramental preparation sessions for 2011-2012. All of our forms will also be posted on our website essexvillestjohn.com Sacramental fees will also be due at the time of registration. Reconciliation will be in the Fall and Confirmation and First Eucharist will be in the Spring.

Parents, we need you to help us by bringing your children to church and praying with them. With our five beautiful prepared Atriums your child can build on his/her relationship with Jesus and learn to know him more and more. We hope that you will see the importance of bringing your child and we look forward to working in cooperation with you as we search and make this journey together this year.

*This year we have raised the price of our tuition by \$5 per class,
But if you get your registration and payment in by August 26th we will discount your Good Shepherd
and Sacramental class tuition by \$5 each.*

Tuition for the 2011-2012 calendar year is \$45 per child or \$55 per family.

The Sacramental Fee for 2nd graders celebrating 3 Sacraments is an additional \$30.

Please know that Scholarships are available if there is a need, let us know if you need help. Please pray for our parish and staff as we ask God to lead us in forming our faith and the faith of your children.

This year we are asking for each family's email address this is used most frequently. To be greener this year we will be sending most of our correspondence by email. This will include any cancelations and reminders and partners in faith newsletter. In case you misplace any of your Good Shepherd or Sacramental Information it will be posted on our Parish Website at essexvillestjohn.com.

Just some Notes

- This year Parents are to drop off and pick up their children at the Parish Center entrance on Hudson. The doors will be locked at the beginning of class for your child's safety.
- We would like to ask if there are any parents or grandparents that would like to stay in the main lobby for about 20 minutes to let in any latecomers so that our catechists can start classes on time. Just bring a good book or magazine. We have a spot for signing up to help on the registration form. Last year we worked out a schedule for those who could help us.
- When picking up of your child, we will bring your children to the door. We would ask that you simply come to the doorway so that we can make sure to see that your children get safely in your hands. We will not release a child to someone sitting in their vehicle. This is not safe. Please try to be on time when picking up your child. If your child is being picked up or going home with someone else, we need to be informed ahead of time. If you need to pick up your child early, please come to the side door on Hudson Street, knock on the door and give the catechist the password. For this year our password is: **Bethlehem**.
- Please make sure to sign up your children for Liturgical Ministries on the form enclosed. Third graders on up can become altar servers. If anyone else in the family wants to serve through one of the Liturgical ministries (i.e. Usher, Lector, Greeter, Eucharist Minister, or Cantor) make sure to write it on the purple form.
- We have 2 Family Masses this year. This is part of our classes and we will be taking attendance. You can see the calendar enclosed. The Mitten Tree and the Good Samaritan mass. Your Stewardship at these masses last year was absolutely phenomenal. You should be so proud of yourselves and your children. Keep up the Good work!

Classes begin the week of September 12th.