

Why Is Faith Formation So Important To A Parish?

Studies have shown that most adult Catholics are active in the Church today because they were formed in faith by their own parents. Yet at the same time, many adults whose parents took great care to form them have drifted away from the regular practice of their faith. Our faith journey never ends. The fact of the matter is that we cannot substitute the role of the parents. They are the first and most important teachers of the faith to their children. **PERIOD!!** Our actions speak louder than words and we must walk the walk and talk the talk. If parents are active in their faith, their children will in turn see faith in them. If the parents are not active, their children will observe that faith is not very important in their daily life and that it is optional. Our Catholic faith not only informs us but transforms us. Faith is not always something that can be understood as much as something to be lived. At a child's baptism, parents accepted the responsibility of passing on the faith. This is not something that should be taken lightly or casually. Yet they often feel inadequate in passing on the Catholic faith and deferring their task to church professionals. We must be honest with each other: A child comes to a parish religious education program an hour and a half a week and no matter how good the program may be, if that child returns home to a household where no faith is shared, then there's very little the catechist can do for that child's faith development. All of us **MUST** assist the parents in helping their children develop the faith. Now more than ever, this needs to be accomplished in new and more effective ways. Here at St. Patrick's the elementary faith formation program provides so much more than learning about the Catholic faith; it helps a child to be able to live it out in their everyday lives through a variety of activities: special arts and crafts, behind the scene tours of the church and sacristy, special gatherings for the holidays, Mass with Miss Margaret, visits from the Storybook Princess, Little H.A.L.O.s program (**H**elping **A**nd **L**eading **O**thers) and so much more. The more a child becomes familiar with the Catholic faith; the more likely it will grow and flourish. It takes a village to raise a child. Yet it takes a parish to develop the foundation of their faith. Faith is sought, caught and taught. *Sherrie Clutts DRE*