

June 15, 2011

Dear Middle School Parents,

Summer greetings to you! I hope that all of you and your families are enjoying the slower pace of summer.

We are writing to make you aware of some upcoming changes to our middle school youth ministry and religious education program for the 2011-2012 school year. The Middle School Youth Ministry and Faith Formation will be moving from Wednesday evenings to Sunday evenings. The Middle School program will be held separately but in conjunction with our High School GROW/Confirmation Program. The details of this new plan are outlined below. These changes are prompted by the following factors:

- Consideration of the ongoing, changing needs of our students and families.
- Feedback from our middle school families and suggestions from the town hall meeting
- Aiding in the transition from middle school into our high school program
- An increasing desire to serve our parish and beyond through community service
- Scheduling obstacles at a busy parish such as All Saints
- Opportunities for adult faith formation in conjunction with our youth faith formation

With these new changes to our middle school program, the format will stay primarily the same as in previous years. However, we will be incorporating more service learning and group liturgies into the curriculum. The curriculum will rotate between the following formats (a tentative schedule is included):

**Class Night & Youth Ministry: Sunday Nights from 6 to 8 pm.** Middle School Students will go to class in the education building from 6 to 7:15 p.m. We will have separate classes for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Middle School students will come to the parish hall after class to participate in youth ministry activities from 7:15 to 8 p.m. Youth ministry activities will include discussions, games, activities, media and more led by our youth ministry team comprised of adult volunteers and high school volunteers.

**Family Liturgy Nights: Sunday nights from 6 to 7:30 p.m.** Middle School Students, High School Students, and their families are invited to worship together on a monthly basis on a special, Sunday evening liturgy. Middle and high school students serve by helping lead music, do the readings, and serve as altar servers, gift bearers, ushers, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. Training opportunities will be available to those who would like to serve. This liturgy counts as a Sunday mass obligation...plus you can sleep in on Sunday morning once a month!

**Service Classes: Saturday or Sunday afternoons or evenings** Dates will vary; you will receive a schedule at the beginning of the school year. On many weekends, the service class will serve as our meeting on that weekend. Service projects may include helping the elderly, serving the poor, disadvantaged and at-risk homeless, feeding the hungry, working with the Angel Tree Program, working on the parish grounds, and much more. We have witnessed over the last few years how service has transformed our ministry and we are excited to bring more opportunities to our middle school students to serve as Jesus did.

**Retreat: Life on the Streets.** As in previous years, our middle school students and VIRTUS trained adults will join our high school program in pledging a weekend of solidarity with the homeless at our Life on

the Streets Retreat. Participants will sleep in cardboard boxes, forego showers and luxury items, work in teams on yard work and cleaning projects for residents in need, and worship and fellowship during this unique experience. This is an optional experience for middle school students, but definitely an eye-opener. Many opportunities are available for adults to serve with us during Life on the Streets.

A copy of the tentative schedule and the registration form are included. You can also download them online at: <http://allsaintsknoxville.org/node/313> . Please note that this schedule is subject to change. Any updates to the schedule will always be posted online and the most recent schedule will always be at the website.

### **How Can I Help?**

As a stewardship parish, All Saints is dependent on our wonderful volunteers to make our ministry a success. We will need many volunteers to make our programs a success. **If every adult volunteered at least once per year, we would have every volunteer need covered. Consider giving some of your time to our children.**

We need VIRTUS trained adults to help on a weekly, monthly and occasional basis in the following areas:

**Youth ministry volunteers:** help plan, facilitate, and execute discussions, games and activities with middle school students. You can volunteer every week, once a month, or a few times a year. We need people every week.

**Religious Education Teachers:** teach religious education classes on a weekly basis. You may work in a team. **This is a weekly commitment for the entire school year.**

**Drivers/Chaperones:** Help on an as-needed basis with service projects, outings, and other events. For service projects, you will be coordinating a small group of youth in completing the designated project. You can volunteer once, often or for every project. A motor vehicle check is required before you may transport children.

**If you are willing to volunteer in these areas, please contact Annie Nassis at 531-0770 or [annieatallsaints@yahoo.com](mailto:annieatallsaints@yahoo.com).** You can also indicate interest on your child's registration forms.

We are very excited about these opportunities for change and growth in our programs. We hope you will join us in the excitement this year and get more involved than ever. Please contact Annie Nassis if you have any questions regarding the proposed changes. Annie can be reached at 531-0770 or [annieatallsaints@yahoo.com](mailto:annieatallsaints@yahoo.com).

In Christ,



Fr. Michael Woods  
Pastor



Annie Nassis  
Director of Youth Ministry



Deacon Tim Elliott  
Director of Ministries