

## Build or Not Update Our Parish Faith Formation

Continuing our discussion of items that the Build or Not Committee is considering, this week we consider the needs of our Parish Faith Formation (PFF) program – formerly called Parish School of Religion (PSR). Currently we have one session for our young people that meets on Wednesday evenings in St Joseph hall (church basement). We also offer Home Study – Home Faith Formation (HFF) – for those who are unable to attend on Wednesday evenings.

Over the years, parents have asked continuously about having the sessions on Sunday mornings between masses. Numerous churches offer Sunday morning classes – sometimes called “Sunday School”. For some parents, their schedules simply do not allow them to bring their children to PFF during the week. That’s one of the motivations behind offering the HFF program. But these students miss out on the interactions with other students, interactions with PFF catechists, and the “community” of learning of God’s love with others their same age. Offering PFF on Sunday would allow these families another option. It would also allow for continuing education – faith formation – for Adults at the same time as their children.

Sounds like a great idea! What’s the problem? We simply don’t have the space. We’ve discussed previously the problems presented by the moveable walls. But we simply don’t have the space to hold sessions in St. Joseph’s Hall on Sundays **AND** host other parish social events (including Coffee & Donuts).

Even for our weekday PFF sessions, those moveable walls are challenges for the catechists. They don’t always come together properly, or if leaned on, they move significantly, and of course everything can be heard in the room next to you, which makes it difficult for children to focus and listen to their catechist. Catechists, like any teachers, like to display the activities the children do, and like to have things on the walls. But the space isn’t “theirs”. The walls move each week. When the walls are moved, the tables and chairs are moved, and may not be set up the same way next week. Furthermore, classroom supplies cannot be stored in the classroom. They are kept in a separate room and brought out each week in bins to the classrooms, and the space to store these supplies is limited.

Finally, like anything else, something always comes up - maybe a funeral. The classrooms are an issue. With time and limited space, sometimes we have had to meet in a completely different space. Multiple classes have met in an open area (coffee/donut space) or the chapel, due to time issues with moving walls, chairs and tables.

These situations simply make it difficult for students (of all ages) to learn, and that should be a concern to all parishioners.