

April 2nd 2020

Dear parents and families of St. James Church.

I am launching an Upper Room for families at our Church. The Upper Room is an in home program of study, discussion, prayer and fellowship that I have been directing for adult small groups in the Parish for 3 years, maybe longer. The “Upper Room for families” is geared to the formation and enrichment of Catholic Families. I write the curriculum, but use the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church as primary sources. I draw from my experience and will share stories from my faith life to inspire you and your children. The Upper Room for Families is written for a 5th grade level of education and above. Children younger than 5th grade may or may not struggle with some or all of the concepts (but they should be present when your family meets to do the Upper Room).

About some practical aspects regarding doing the Upper Room for Families in your home.

- ✦ **The whole family does this together. It’s not homework for the kids or an assignment, this is prayer, study and reflection for the family**
- ✦ **If there is a non-Catholic member of the family they should be included in the Upper Room and encouraged to participate in some way**
- ✦ **No food or drink during the Upper Room. Snacks or a small party should be had for all after the Upper Room is over**
- ✦ **Shut TV off, turn off phones, no hats, you can light candles, set up a small altar with statues or holy pictures to help with your focus. You can also do this outside (if you want) but I think there are more distractions outside (say around a bonfire).**
- ✦ **The “how-to” is pretty easy. All the directions are *italicized* on the script or curriculum which you can get off the website or St. James Facebook page. The leader should review the directions before doing the Upper Room for the first time.**

The values to doing this as a family are most abundantly clear to me. I don’t want to have to sell this to you however. I want you to discover for yourselves, by doing this as a family, what this can mean for your spiritual lives and unity.

Finally do you know what the Upper Room is a reference too? There are a number of references in the Bible to the “Upper Room”. It was a place of gathering, typically large and on an upper level of the house (closer to the heavens) for people to pray, to feel protected, to find strength in numbers. It was from such a place that the Apostles and Mary experienced the birthday of the Church on Pentecost.

This is a kind of Pentecost opportunity for you and your family now. A re-birth. What is the most important aspect of your life in these trying and uncertain times? Your belief in God and in your family. I hope that’s true. If not this can be re-discovered as a family, in the Upper Room.

In Christ;

Fr. David