

A PARENT'S REFLECTION

Blessed with a beautiful weekend of October 1st and 2nd, families from the parishes of the Saint John Paul II Pastoral Unit participated in the Faith Orientation Walk as part of the Faith Education Program for children preparing to complete their Sacraments of Initiation. Pastoral agents Christine, Karen, and Ljubica welcomed children and their parents to St. Augustine's of Canterbury Parish in St. Bruno for a new year of Sacrament Preparation. After viewing *The Road to Emmaus* video, families were grouped together to journey to four distinct stations around the church grounds where we learned about the **FOUR PILLARS OF THE FAITH**.

At the station about **THE CREED**, the children discussed their **FAITH** and what they can do to grow their faith. A balloon was used to demonstrate how our faith requires attention and dedication to grow. Sometimes in life, we forget to nurture our faith and it may "deflate", but with the Holy Spirit, through the love of Christ our Lord, we can turn back to Him through our belief in the truth of the Creed.

At the station about the **SACRAMENTS**, the children learned that these are gifts of love and grace from God, each represented by signs or symbols. Most of the children were aware of the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist (First Communion,) and Confirmation. They learned of the other three sacraments: Marriage, Holy Orders (Ordination) and Anointing of the Sick.

At the station about **CHRISTIAN MORALITY**, parents participated by reading out the 10 commandments and we listened to how the children can respect them in their day to day lives. These commandments, through the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ, have been condensed into two statements:

- 1) You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
- 2) You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

At the station about **PRAYER**, the *5-Finger Prayer* was introduced to help visualize prayer intentions:

- *Thumb*: Pray for those closest to your heart (family and friends)
- *Pointer finger*: Pray for those who point you in the right direction (teachers)
- *Middle finger* (tallest): Pray for those that lead us (in government, in business, in church leadership)
- *Ring finger* (weakest): Pray for those who are most in need (poor, sick, in pain, in trouble)
- *Pinkie finger* (smallest): Pray for yourself and your own needs

At the end of the Faith Walk, families mingled, enjoyed some refreshments, and collected the resources for this new year of the IIGC program. Finally, after two years of virtual online meetings, it was delightful to be able to gather and celebrate together in person.

Thank you to all the volunteers and the Faith Education team for making this orientation event possible. My daughter and I really enjoyed it.

Warmest regards,
Grace Wong Makar
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Saint John Paul II Pastoral Unit