

IGNITE

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

*A Joint Ministry of St. Bartholomew Parish, Middleburg Heights
& Holy Family Parish, Parma • 2026–2027*

Dear Mothers and Fathers,

There is a truth so simple that we are prone to forget it, and so weighty that nearly everything else depends upon it: YOU, and not a classroom, a catechist, or even a priest, are the first and most important teachers of the faith to your children. The Church has always known this. Long before a child ever sets foot in a religion class, the faith is already catching fire in the home — or it is not.

For a good many years now, parish life has quietly leaned on an arrangement that most of us have sensed isn't quite working: a child is dropped off for forty-five minutes once a week, and we cross our fingers and hope that somehow it will be enough. It was never enough. And so, this year, as sister parishes, we would like to stop tinkering with a broken model and instead meet the real challenge where it actually lives — not in the under-catechizing of children, but in the under-disciplining of the very parents God has entrusted them to.

That is why we are launching **IGNITE**.

WHAT IGNITE IS

IGNITE is a new venture in family faith formation, undertaken together by St. Bartholomew and Holy Family. For some time now we have called ourselves “sister parishes”; this year we are making that kinship real. We have already merged our efforts to form our middle-school youth and to prepare our young people for Confirmation through our shared ministry, *Duc In Altum*. Now we turn, hand in hand, to our youngest families — and reimagine Sunday-morning formation from the ground up.

Beginning in the fall of 2026 and running through the spring of 2027, our elementary formation — what many of you have known as PSR — will take on an entirely new shape. It is designed for families whose children will be in *first through fourth grade* and *who are not enrolled in the Academy of St. Bartholomew or Holy Family parish school*.

Here is the first surprise: we will gather only **once a month**, not every Sunday. And here is the second: rather than dropping your child off, the whole family — mom and dad together with your children — will come and be formed together. (If only one parent can make it, we understand entirely; life is full.)

We will meet on nine select Sunday mornings, September through May, in the Rectory Meeting Room (Door A) at St. Bartholomew, 14865 Bagley Road. Doors open around 9:30 with a light breakfast — coffee, juice, and something sweet — and we begin in earnest at 9:45, wrapping up by 10:45. Your children will go with an age-specific catechist to the Academy classrooms, where passionate teachers will draw them into the faith through the *Word of Life* series from the Augustine Institute, the very curriculum now used at the Academy of St. Bartholomew. Meanwhile, you will remain with us for an engaging presentation — most often from Dr. Matthew Jordan, a husband, father, and convert who

serves as Vice President of Academic Affairs at our Diocesan seminaries in Wickliffe, along with other gifted speakers. Each talk will open up one of the great, essential themes of the Catholic faith.

WHY FEWER SESSIONS?

Let us name the concern you may already be feeling: if we meet less often, will our children really be formed well?

Allow us to reframe the question. What is it that most truly hands on the faith — the kind of faith that becomes a lifelong love of the Lord and His Church? For decades, parishes have assumed the answer is instruction: teach them the faith, and the classroom is where it happens. But that is not quite true. The most important room in your child's formation is not the classroom; it is the family room. It is your home, and the warmth of the culture within it.

Every serious study of the matter tells the same story. Religious practice matters — Mass, the sacraments, formation, all of it. But the thing that makes those practices take root and stick is whether a child sees the faith making a real, tangible difference in the love between their parents and in the life of their home. The faith lived at the kitchen table, spilling over into how you forgive, how you pray, how you love one another — that is the single most powerful factor in forming your children. We are convinced that equipping you to live the faith at home will bear far richer fruit than simply scheduling more classes.

SO HOW WILL WE HELP YOU DO EXACTLY THAT?

We will send you home with three gifts.

First, every family will receive a copy of *The Story of All Stories*, the beautiful children's Bible from Word on Fire. It is not a watered-down retelling but a stunning synthesis of the whole of Scripture, written so that even young children can grasp *the* story — and, in knowing it, come to love it. The illustrations are gorgeous and the narrative is compelling. We simply ask that you read a chapter or two at bedtime. Let it become your new nighttime story and prayer.

Second, Fr. Patrick has prepared a resource called *Family Mass Preparation* to help you ready your hearts for Sunday. It gathers each week's readings, a short reflection, a word or phrase worth pondering, age-specific reflections and discussion questions for the children, and a piece of sacred art chosen to open up the Scriptures. This is not homework — please hear that. It is simply a gentle help toward the good habit of arriving at Mass already awake to what the Lord wishes to say.

Third, every month you come to IGNITE you will leave with a simple activity or challenge drawn from the living liturgical life of the Church. In November, for instance — the month the Church devotes to praying for our beloved dead — you will receive a votive candle on which to write the names of those who have gone before you, a small light for the center of your table when you pray before dinner. This is how the domestic church is built: not with grand gestures, but with small, faithful ones.

A SPECIAL WORD FOR PARENTS OF SECOND GRADERS

If your child is in second grade and preparing for the two great sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, this is a landmark year, and we intend to treat it as one. In addition to our monthly gatherings, we will offer four mini sacramental retreat days — two in the fall and two in the spring — crafted to engage your whole family and to open your child's heart in powerful and beautiful

ways. You will receive additional materials and details separately. We have no interest in merely checking boxes; we want to give you and your little ones encounters that are meaningful, memorable, and worth every minute.

OUR 2026–2027 CALENDAR

Date	Session Theme
September 13, 2026	<i>Raising Kids for Eternity: Shifting the Mindset</i>
October 11, 2026	<i>Beginning with Awe and Wonder</i>
November 8, 2026	<i>What Really Is the Good News of Christianity?</i>
December 6, 2026	<i>The Beautiful, Simple & Messy Reality of Family Prayer</i>
January 10, 2027	<i>The Difference Being Catholic Makes & the Power of the Sacraments</i>
February 14, 2027	<i>Divine Mercy and the Beauty of Forgiveness</i>
March 14, 2027	<i>Keeping the Sabbath Holy & Recovering Shalom in the Home</i>
April 11, 2027	<i>Walking with the Lord and Growing in Your Faith</i>
May 2, 2027	<i>The Home Is the Domestic Church</i>

All sessions meet from 9:30–10:45 AM in the Rectory Meeting Room (Door A) at St. Bartholomew.

TO REGISTER

To register your child and family, please *either* fill out the enclosed registration forms by hand and drop them off at the parish office of St. Bartholomew *or*, using the QR code below, fill out the registration forms online. You may also pay online as well using the QR code. All checks should be made out to St. Bartholomew, and in the memo line indicate “IGNITE”.

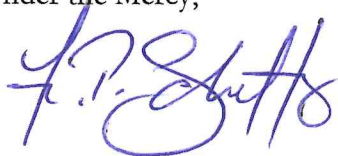
COST

The IGNITE fee is \$75.00 per child, and only \$25.00 for an additional child, with a family maximum of \$100.00. These fees cover the cost of hospitality, *The Story of All Stories*, printing and preparing the Sunday Mass Family Preparation resource, and any of the Domestic Church materials needed.

A CLOSING WORD

The name we have chosen is as much a prayer as a title. We long to see something catch fire — first in your own hearts, mothers and fathers, and from there in the hearts of your sons and daughters. Transformed parents transform their homes; transformed homes transform a parish. That is the whole of our hope, and we are convinced the Lord Himself is eager to meet you in it. We cannot wait to begin this journey with you.

Under the Mercy,



Fr. Patrick Schultz

Pastor, St. Bartholomew Parish, Middleburg Heights



Fr. David Stavarz

Pastor, Holy Family Parish, Parma

QR Code to Access the Online Registration Form for IGNITE

