Winter Retreats 2012

Dear Parents,

Winter has a certain quiet magic all its own and calls for warm places to gather together as family and community and reflect. We know that it is good for us, and especially teens, to gather together as a spiritual community and remember God's role in our lives and our spirits. We hope to take time to think about the change Christ brought to the world and how we can best follow that example in our own lives. A retreat has a certain magic all its own because it is a chance for our teens to slow down, something that's hard for all of us to do. So just as Christ chose to 'retreat' to the mountains or desert, we know this is good for teens to take this time before confirmation. Of course, it is not all serious business and there is plenty of time for a few laughs, music, games, etc. Teens need to be aware before they go on a retreat that we'll follow the example of Jesus and for one 24-hour period not bring our cell phones, i-pods, electronic devices to our mountaintop experience. We've found that God's voice is much clearer without earplugs inserted in ears or eyes fixed on ipods or fingers texting others. I expect parents to please enforce that with your teen.

In this letter you will find pertinent information for your son/daughter who will be attending the Year II Confirmation Retreat. Our Peer Ministers are preparing and are anticipating a great experience for our 10th graders! Another important aspect of this retreat is our affirmation letters. We are asking that all parents write a letter to your child which we will give to him/her on the retreat. Brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles or other important people can also be invited to write. A letter from their Confirmation Sponsor would be especially appropriate. ***THESE LETTERS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE A SURPRISE – PLEASE TRY TO KEEP IT SECRET***! In this letter simply affirm your child and let him/her know you love them. You could enclose pictures from their growing up or a favorite memory or quality of your child. These letters are a very powerful part of the retreat weekend, so please write one! Letters can be dropped off in the office or sent by mail but please make sure at least one of them reaches us two weeks prior to the retreat.

To give you an idea of the importance of this retreat, most confirmands listed this retreat as the highlight of their two-year confirmation process! **Please make sure to have your permission slip and code of conduct form turned in to the office with $65 (covers two meals, lodging, transportation, etc.) and a letter of affirmation two weeks prior to your son/daughter's retreat.** No one will be turned away if payment is a struggle. Just indicate this on your registration or payment installments are fine too.

Finally, if you are a parent who would like to attend this retreat as a chaperone for all or part of the retreat please let Denise know as we are required to have background checks on all those attending. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (651) 784-3015 or reach me by email DeniseW@saintjosephsparish.org. Until then, God's peace during this season and always!

Denise Walsh
Coordinator of Confirmation and Youth Ministries

Retreat Dates:
January 7-8 or February 18-19

The Details

When: Arrive at St. Joe's on Saturday at 10:30AM and we'll return Sunday at noon. The retreat dates are Jan. 7-8 or Feb. 18-19. We assign your small group to a retreat date but let us know well in advance and we'll be happy to switch it for you.

Where: Camp Wapogasset in Amery, WI. (www.campwapo.net)

Travel: We will be taking school buses to get there.

Who: Tenth grade Confirmation students

Chaperones and retreat leaders: Denise Walsh (Confirmation Coordinator), Peer Ministry Adult team, Peer Ministers, and Confirmation Leaders.

Cost: $65

What to bring: **SACK LUNCH FOR SATURDAY!** Snacks to share, warm clothing and outdoor gear, towels for showering, overnight articles as needed, sleeping bag and pillow (we'll sleep on beds, but no bedding is provided). They have a sledding hill (with plenty of sleds) so a change of clothes has been a great idea in the past.

What not to bring: **C**ell phones, headphones, DVD players or electronic devices of any sort. Remember, the point is to *retreat.* When Jesus went off into the wilderness he didn't have those things with him and God still got through loud and clear.

Reminder: Please remember we will be meeting at 10:30 on Saturday but no lunch is provided. Please bring a sack lunch.