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Date: September 17, 2018

To: Pastors, Parish Catechetical and Adult Formation Leaders

From: William L. Clarke, Associate Director of Professional Development,
Office of Formation and Discipleship

Re: Available Presentation –Grandparent’s Role in Family Faith
Formation

“Young Catholics are leaving the faith. The interviews with youth and young adults who left the Catholic faith revealed that the typical age for this decision to leave was made at age 13. Nearly 63% said they stopped being Catholic between the ages of 10 and 17.” - Our Sunday Visitor, 2016

The obvious question is, “Why?” There are many reasons, but one of the most prominent is the lack of building a solid faith formation in the home. Parents are the first and primary source of faith development. Unfortunately, many parents today are preoccupied and too busy to spend quality time with their children in their formative years instilling in them the principles of our faith, especially in the post-Confirmation years, which for many youth represents their last formal religious instruction.

What is different about the newer generations of parents? There are several striking contributors.

- 62% of families are now dual income with both parents working (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017)
- 34% of families are single parent (Pew Research 2014)
- 50% of marriages ending in divorce (Pew Research 2014)

There has been a dramatic change in the family structure. The traditional family with the father as the breadwinner and mother as the heart of the home now represents 26% or one in four families. One of the first things to suffer in today’s busy lifestyle is time spent within the family on faith formation. We cannot change the reality of the new family structure – but we must learn to deal with it. As a result, many grandparents are now taking a much more active role in helping their sons and daughters care for their children, both

practically with child care and spiritually by assuming part or all of the parental faith formation obligation within the family.

This raises the next question, “What is the grandparent’s role in family faith formation?” Many grandparents wonder what they can or should do. What is the Church’s position? How does a grandparent go about fulfilling this role? What happens if the parents resist? What are grandparents like today?

These questions and more will be addressed in a new presentation from the Office of Formation and Discipleship entitled, “The Grandparent Role in Family Faith Formation.” We’ve received positive feedback from presentations at other parishes. This highly relevant and vital need exists in many families. The target audience is parents, grandparents and seniors of all ages.

For questions or to arrange a presentation at your parish, please contact me at 404-920-7635 or wclarke@archatl.com.