

# Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Conquest Club Teaches Boys About Leadership and the Catholic Faith

Conquest is a national network of leadership programs, clubs and camps for boys, and it provides a great way to teach Catholic young men about faith and values. At St. Raphael, the Conquest Club for boys in second through fifth grades allows them to have fun while creating bonds with their fathers and peers, as well as growing in their faith and in leadership.

The program was developed by Regnum Christi, an apostolic movement related to the Legionaries of Christ that has created several youth and family programs. John Hull discovered Conquest in 2012, after his wife attended a meeting for Familia — another Regnum Christi program — and encouraged him to go on a Conquest retreat with his son.

“My wife came home from a meeting, and she said, ‘There is going to be a retreat, and you’re going,’” John says. “I went with one of my sons, and we had a fantastic weekend. Fathers and sons are bonding these days through sports mostly, and there’s no real faith component to a dad coach-



ing his son’s team. Conquest gives dads and sons the opportunity to bond and learn about our Catholic faith while having fun!”

Inspired by the experience, John told his friend, Jeff Shepard, about the program. Both men are now working to inspire others.

“I felt the same need, that we had a hole in the ministries regarding the father-son formation,” says Jeff. “We looked around for quite some time to find the right club — we took our time to make sure it was a right fit for us. The dads very much own this group. We shape and form it underneath the structure that they give us. We also have spiritual advisors; two priests that can visit us on demand.”

St. Raphael’s Conquest Club, currently made up of five boys and five dads, has just completed its second year. The club runs three six-week “campaigns” each year, meeting every other Sunday from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Each campaign focuses on a specific saint and a complementing human virtue — for example, the club recently studied St. Joseph and the virtue of hard work. The club members participate in several competitive activities to motivate them and help them to remain involved. They also play sports and pray the Rosary together.

“For the first two weeks, we read a book about the saint,” says John. “At the conclusion of the number of pages we’re supposed to read, the kids split into teams and are quizzed, and they get points for answering questions right. The boys are also asked to make a commitment each week to the virtue — how they will display the virtue to God, their parents, teachers, siblings and friends. In the remaining four weeks, the boys make posterboards of the saint, along with a story or two

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## We Have Begun!

*The sites of the residence on the corner and the former rectory have been cleared in preparation for construction of our new worship space.*

*See Page 8 for an update on the Capital Campaign.*



## Conquest Club *continued from front cover*

that most represents the virtue of hard work. The following week, they act out the posterboard in a skit."

Then, as the campaign comes to a close, the fathers and sons share in several fun activities.

"The final week, we have an awards ceremony, where we recognize the boys for the growth they've made over the course of the campaign," John says. "We've had ice cream, we've had a laser tag event with pizza. We also give out religious gifts."

"It's worked out very well," says Jeff. "It's been a great group of kids and a great group of fathers. We've seen a lot of development in the kids — they would come in kind of shy, and now they're proudly presenting presentations. It's definitely challenged them to grow in several ways."

Indeed, programs like Conquest are an important resource, helping to give young Catholics a strong faith foundation.

"I think that the current culture is moving people away from faith and more toward the self," John says. "We need

to fight against that using these types of programs to help kids understand that God is here for them, their fathers are here for them, and the stuff that you think is important isn't really that important. Your faith is what you'll always have. I think this is a program that helps you understand that it's not weird, it's actually cool and fun, to believe in God."

Fathers and sons in our parish community are encouraged to get involved and participate together in Conquest.

"We just want more dads and sons involved in this," says John. "And of course, if there is a boy that wants to come and doesn't have a full-time dad in the house, they are welcome too. I think that Conquest helps them to feel like they have a purpose. At the retreat I went to, we saw teenage kids who knew they had a purpose more than to consume, and instead to serve others. The younger kids were looking up to these older kids — and that's what it's all about."

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