

St. John Neumann Religious Education
Handbook
2015—2016



From cradle to grave

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ST. JOHN NEUMANN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Parents,

Long before your children were old enough for school or any formal religion program, they were already beginning to grow in faith. They already had been living and growing in the midst of a community of faith – their family.

In his 1994 **Letter to Families**, Pope John Paul II reached out to families. He wrote: “**Parents are the first and most important educators** of their own children, and they also possess a **fundamental competence in this area: they are educators because they are parents.**”

The letter continues: “What I offer, then, is **an invitation**: an invitation addressed especially to you, dearly beloved husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. It is an invitation to all the particular Churches to remain united in the teaching of the apostolic truth.”

The Church views the role of parents in the religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. When you presented your children to the Church to be baptized, you were clearly reminded that you have the responsibility “of training them in the practice of the faith.”

The General Directory of Catechesis emphasizes the tenderness and respect that parents bring to this vocation of training children in the practice of the faith. It is through the living witness of parents that children first experience the faith. This experience is irreplaceable and lasts throughout life. It is this religious formation that is the foundation of all other forms of religious education a person receives. This responsibility of parents is a true ministry. Through Matrimony parents receive the ministry and the grace to share their faith with their children so that their family life is a true journey of faith for them and their children.

We are here to support you in this ministry of educating your children. It is our role as catechists to help you help your children understand both what we believe as Catholics and also how to live out those beliefs. This is the process that Jesus used to teach his disciples. When the disciples lived the teachings of Jesus, they discovered the difference that faith made in their lives and in the lives of others. We believe:

- Faith is both a gift from God, and our free response to God.
- Faith includes not only an intellectual understanding of doctrine, but also a conversion of heart and the adoption of a way of life.
- Faith grows and develops throughout all of life.
- Faith is to be lived and is best lived in community.
- Being a person of faith means looking at our actions and the world in a way different from the way nonbelievers do.
- All of life changes when we see things and people through eyes of faith.

We are privileged to share our faith with you and your children. This is our ministry and our calling, and we gladly invite you to experience your faith with your children.

God Bless You.

Your child’s catechists, aides and hall monitors.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. Parents should bring the children to the front of Most Blessed Sacrament upon arrival and pick them up while in the carpool line upon dismissal. This procedure is for the safety of the children. Traffic monitors are on duty to protect the children, please abide by their instructions.
2. Appropriate and respectful behavior is expected of the students and parents at all times.
3. Students are expected to arrive in the classroom **ON TIME** in an orderly manner. They should be appropriately dressed for a learning environment.
4. Students should be prepared each week with completed assignments and their book (unless the catechist chooses to keep the books in the classroom). They should be prepared to give their full attention to the material prepared by the catechist and fellow students.
5. Attendance is required. Early dismissal is discouraged. If this is necessary, written parental notification/email is required, including verification of pick-up individual.

ATTENDANCE

Regular Attendance: Sharing our faith with our children is of utmost importance to all of us. You, our parents, share your faith with your children at home and we do likewise at Religious Education classes on Sundays. Therefore, your child(ren)'s regular attendance at Sunday classes is extremely important. Consistent attendance is necessary for your child to experience the lessons, the sharing among classmates and catechists, and the understanding that comes from working together. As a result, we ask you to do everything in your power to have your child(ren) present for every class.

Absence: We realize there will be occasions when your child(ren) just cannot be present for class. Illness and family needs that place you out of town on the weekend are understandable as legitimate reasons to miss Religious Education classes. Please call or email the office to let us know ahead of time if an absence is necessary. **New this year is a maximum allowance of THREE absences.** Makeup sessions will be during the summer months and dependent on grade level.

Make-Up Work: When absence is necessary, you/your child must make the effort to gather the information needed to make up the missed lesson. Your child's catechist is readily accessible through email or phone provide at the beginning of the year. We ask that you take the time to complete the work, to ensure your child's preparation for the following week. Completing this make-up work is necessary for the understanding and completion of the concepts expected for each grade level.

CALENDAR

An annual calendar is provided to each family at the beginning of the year. The calendar includes the dates of classes, Sacramental Preparation classes, and special celebrations throughout the year. It may also be found on the parish website.

COMMUNICATION

The Religious Education Office will normally communicate through REMIND, an electronic form of text messaging, and /or email. When you receive an invitation to REMIND, please respond with YOUR NAME. Notices, invitations, newsletters and reminders will be sent via REMIND when necessary. Email is also the best form of communication for you to use in reaching the office. ngroves@stjnrc.com In some circumstances, a phone call or the post office may be used.

DISCIPLINE

The idea of discipline with Religious Education is to enable students to move from externally imposed discipline to self-discipline to discipleship. In respect of this goal our classes use the following guidelines:

1. Rules are set within each class.
2. Admonition within the classroom occurs after an infraction of these rules.
3. Repeated infractions may necessitate administrative and/or parental involvement.

FIRE DRILLS

An important measure of safety during class time, is the knowledge and practice of fire drills. Direction and procedure of fire drills is posted in each room. Classes will practice the evacuation of the building once during the year.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Cancellation of classes due to inclement weather is announced in two formats:

1. WBOC-TV will list the closings.
2. You will receive a message through REMIND informing you of the closure.
3. Call 410-208-2854 and listen to message. If regular message then we will not be closing.

MEDICAL NEED OR INJURY

If a child is injured or becomes ill, parents will be notified immediately. Appropriate first aid care will be given to insure the comfort of the child until parents arrive.

CURRICULUM

The Diocese of Wilmington has designed the curriculum for Religious Education by grade level. The materials provided to our catechists assist them with instructing and sharing the faith with your child(ren). It is necessary for your child(ren) to learn and understand the material in order to progress from one grade level to another. You are asked as the child's parent to assist the catechist by studying the required material with your child(ren). Listed here is a simplified form of the curriculum:

PRAYERS

Kindergarten: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer,
Bedtime Prayer. Begin study of Hail Mary.

Grade 1: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and
Bedtime Prayer
Study: Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals

Grade 2: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and
Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals
Study: Act of Contrition, Angel of God

Grade 3: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and
Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals,
Angel of God
Study: Apostles Creed, Act of Contrition,
Basic understanding of the Rosary

Grade 4: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer, and Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals, Act of Contrition, Angel of God, Angelus
Study: Apostles Creed, Rosary, Angelus

Grade 5: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals, Act of Contrition, Angel of God, Angelus
Study: Nicene Creed, Rosary, Magnificat, Acts of Faith, Hope & Love

Grade 6: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals, Act of Contrition, Angel of God, Angelus, Magnificat
Study: Nicene Creed, Rosary, Acts of Faith, Hope & Love, Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Prayer of St. Francis

Grade 7: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals, Act of Contrition, Angel of God, Angelus, Magnificat
Study: Nicene Creed, Rosary, Acts of Faith, Hope & Love, Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Prayer of St. Francis

Grade 8: Review: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Morning Prayer and Bedtime Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before & After Meals, Act of Contrition, Angel of God, Angelus, Magnificat
Study: Nicene Creed, Rosary, Acts of Faith, Hope & Love, Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Prayer of St. Francis

CONTENT

Pre K/Kindergarten: Great Commandment

Grade 1: Names of Seven Sacraments, Great Commandment, study of Baptism

Grade 2: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and names of other 4 sacraments

Grade 3: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Holy Trinity, Seven Sacraments, Four Marks of the Church, Respect for Life

Grade 4: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Holy Trinity, Seven Sacraments, Four Marks of the Church, Respect for Life
Study: Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy, Beatitudes

Grade 5: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Holy Trinity, Four Marks of the Church, Respect for Life, Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy
Study: Stronger understanding of Seven Sacraments, Beatitudes, Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope & Love

Grade 6: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Holy Trinity,
Seven Sacraments, Beatitudes, Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope &
Love, Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy
Study: Precepts of the Church, Cardinal Virtues

Grade 7: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Holy Trinity,
Seven Sacraments, Beatitudes, Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope &
Love, Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy
Study: Precepts of the Church, Cardinal Virtues,
Basic Teachings of Social Justice

Grade 8: Great Commandment, Ten Commandments, Holy Trinity,
Seven Sacraments, Beatitudes, Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope &
Love, Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy
Study: Precepts of the Church, Cardinal Virtues,
Basic Teachings of Social Justice

ASSIGNMENTS

There may be times when the children will be expected to complete some assignments at home. This is necessary to ensure the completion and understanding of the concepts taught in class on Sunday. The assignments will assist your child(ren) with applying and understanding their faith in everyday circumstances. We ask your assistance and support with studying and reviewing concepts with your child(ren) and completing any assignments given by the catechists.

EVALUATION

The Catechist and DRE are responsible for the ongoing evaluation of the student's progress. Testing will be done in early April. Such information will be shared with the parents and guardians by way of progress reports and test results.

SACRAMENTS

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Attendance at Sunday Mass with our family, including our children, is an expectation of all Catholics who follow the commandment to "Remember the Lord's Day". Our children learn from us and follow our example, and therefore, they also learn to pray and celebrate the Eucharist with the parish community when we celebrate the Sunday Mass together as a family. We encourage you to take your child(ren) to Mass with you so they can better understand and experience the sacrifice of the Mass with you.

A significant part of celebrating the Mass is our participation in the celebration. The parish needs parishioners to get more involved by becoming lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, adult and youth choir, and altar servers. We encourage you to accept this invitation for yourself and your children.

On a weekly basis at the 11:30AM Mass we will have a Liturgy of the Word for Children. Prior to the readings the children will be invited to go into the library with a facilitator and aides to do the readings from a children's lectionary and then talk about how it relates to their lives. An activity may also be included.

Financial support of our parish is also a responsibility for each family. Consider using your church envelopes, and help your children to learn to support the church through creating and using an envelope of their own.

Children do what we do:
they follow our example
by attending Church on Sundays,
by becoming involved in its ministries,
and by financially supporting the Parish.

RECEPTION OF SACRAMENTS

The usual grade level for the reception of the Sacraments of **First Reconciliation** and **First Eucharist** is second grade.

The reception of **Confirmation** takes place in eighth grade.

Children who are preparing to receive one of these sacraments are required to attend Religious Education classes at least one year prior to the year of receiving the sacrament.

Immediate catechesis of children is done primarily by their parents. A comprehensive formation program for parents is provided by the parish to help them in preparing the children and renewing themselves. Materials are provided for both classroom and home use.

It is a requirement of the program that parents and children attend each class associated with the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament (except Confirmation where only a few sessions have required attendance of the parents).

All students in a sacramental prep year must get a bulletin signed by the priest after Mass each week. Place the bulletin in the designated box located on the countertop to the left as you enter the library. Please make sure that the child's name is on the bulletin.

SAFETY

FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

The Wilmington Diocese has implemented a program entitled: "For the Sake of God's Children" in order to assure a Safe Environment for all children. Details of the program are on file in the Parish Office and the Religious Education Office. There are five areas of particular interest to Religious Education:

1. Criminal background checks are required for individuals currently employed or volunteering, being hired, or beginning their ministry if they have regular, recurring contact with minors or young people. This includes Church personnel. Volunteers under 18 will not be required to have a background check, but will always be supervised by an adult when working with minors.
2. All Church personnel will review the Diocesan Standards for Ethical and Behavioral Norms and sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt Form.
3. Volunteers will annually review and sign the Volunteer Covenant.
4. An update will be required every five years.

VOLUNTEERS

CATECHISTS, AIDES AND HALL MONITORS

Parish volunteers serve as Catechists, Aides and Hall Monitors. Participation in a Diocesan sponsored and/or approved Catechist Certification process is required of all catechists who teach or administer in the Religious Education program.

Our catechists, aides and hall monitors participate in the formal educational opportunities of a religious nature throughout the diocese and within various individual parishes to further their knowledge and faith development.

Volunteers who wish to serve as Catechists, Aides or Hall Monitors are asked to contact the Religious Education Office at 410-208-2854.

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