

Religious Education Parent-Student Handbook

St. Mary of the Assumption

St. John the Baptist

St. James the Less

St. Boniface

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Our family of churches does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the parish's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, and Title IX, of the Civil Rights Laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 is directed to contact the pastor.

WHAT IS CATECHESIS

Our children are the greatest treasure of our church. To help you in their faith formation, the Catholic Church shares with us the following:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes John Paul II from *Catechesi Tradendae* as he describes what is entailed in the ministry of catechesis:

"Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life." (CCC5)

The National Catechetical Directory further clarifies what elements should be a part of a catechetical program:

"Like other pastoral activities, catechetical ministry must be understood in relation to Jesus' threefold mission. It is a form of the ministry of the word, which proclaims and teaches. It leads to and flows from the ministry of worship, which sanctifies through prayer and sacrament. It supports the ministry of service, which is linked to efforts to achieve social justice." (NCD 32)

Guided by the principles found in the documents of the Church on the ministry of catechesis the catechetical program in our parishes will include the following elements:

Message: The story of Scripture and the teachings of the Church will be communicated within the context of the faith story of each student and signs of the times in society and the world.

Community: Efforts will be made to form Christian community among the students through interaction and faith sharing.

Prayer and Worship: The participants will be exposed to many forms of prayer and worship to help them become pray-ers, persons who have a close relationship with God that is expressed in prayer and worship and especially the Eucharist.

Service and Justice: Participants will be exposed to the call to service and justice, which is inherent in the message of Jesus and the teachings of the Church.

MISSION STATEMENT

The faith formation program mission is to encourage and aid each family in developing an active faith by providing instruction, and enabling each member to live the doctrines of the Catholic tradition.

GOALS

To promote and encourage:

- An understanding of and appreciation for the Catholic faith and its doctrines.
- Worship of God through private and liturgical prayer
- Service to the community
- Parents in their role as primary catechists of their children

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FEES

\$35.00 per child per year, payable before the 1st class to help cover the cost of instructional materials. If this is a hardship for your family, please contact your pastor. All teachers volunteer for this ministry.

CURRICULUM

The following texts are used in our Religious Education Program:

Grades 1-7 Ignatius Press “Faith and Life”

Confirmation Program: Dynamic Catholic “Decision Point” and Augustine Institute “Formed”

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Faith Formation Staff along with the pastor believe parents are the primary educators in the faith formation of young persons.

As primary catechists of your children, you teach by the word and example of your everyday lives. It is important that you model the behavior and example you want your child/children to display. They need to know and experience ongoing Scripture study, regular participation in the Mass and Sacraments, care for the needy, and service to the community as an important part of your life.

In addition, a parent who would like their child to attend the program...

1. Should be a registered, active, contributing member of the parish.
2. Is responsible for providing the parish with information regarding the child's baptism and other Sacraments as applicable. Children being enrolled in the religious education program for the first time must present an official copy of their Baptismal certificate. Please inform the office staff if your child was baptized at one of our parishes, in which case it is not necessary to present a certificate.
3. **Attends Mass weekly with his/her child.**
4. Takes responsibility for his/her role as primary catechist.
5. Collaborates with the catechists in the program by sharing faith with the child at home and by making sure the child does any required follow up to the lessons taught in class.
6. Teaches their child the traditional prayers of the Church at home.
7. Maintains an open line of communication with their child's catechist.
8. Brings their child to class at 7:00 pm and picks them up at 8:00 pm in West Point.
9. When the child is dropped off for class, makes sure that their child enters the building where classes are held. When the classes are over, a parent must come into the building to pick up the child.

10. Brings his/her child to class dressed neatly and modestly, ready to participate with enough rest and nourishment and makes sure the child has gone to the bathroom, if needed, before class.
11. Attends parent meetings when requested.
12. Is supportive of the catechist especially in the area of discipline.
13. Reads this handbook, completes and turns in the forms necessary for registration.

As stated in **The Catechism of the Catholic Church** No. 2226:

"Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place of the catechesis of children and parents."

As parents, we ask you to:

Stress to your child the importance of learning about his or her faith by talking about and taking an interest in what was done in the Religious Education Class. Model learning behavior by participating in adult education opportunities.

Help your child actively practice his or her faith by attendance at weekend Mass and daily prayer.

Accept primary responsibility for the religious education of your child/children. Religious education classes are a support to what is happening in the home to nurture the faith of your child/children. When books are sent home, they must be returned each week along with any assigned work.

Reinforce the religious education teacher's attempt to maintain a teachable atmosphere in the classroom. The religious education teacher has a right to the respect of your child and proper conduct in the classroom.

Encourage attendance at religious education classes.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

All students need to have 2 consecutive years of religious education when preparing for Sacraments. Students should be enrolled and actively participating in classes for one year prior to the year he/she prepares for the celebration of the Sacraments. This policy is subject to the discretion of the pastor.

A child must be baptized and practicing the Catholic faith in order to receive the Sacraments of the Church. They are typically received in this order: Reconciliation, Holy Communion, then Confirmation.

Any parents or child who would like to inquire about becoming a member of the Catholic Church should contact the Director of Religious Education.

Children in the second grade will be preparing for and receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Because of the extreme importance of the sacraments in the life of the child, parents need to be actively involved in this preparation. **At least one parent, or a responsible adult, is expected to attend each Sacrament preparation meeting.**

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a two-year process for children in 8th and 9th grade. The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred on students in grade 9. Adult involvement is important. **At least one parent, or responsible adult, is expected to attend the Sacrament preparation meetings.** **Involvement by the Confirmation Sponsor is also strongly encouraged.**

The meeting dates and times for Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation will be established each year and notification will be emailed and text to the participants.

FAITH FORMATION SCHEDULES

Religious Education for grades 1-7 students are held during the academic school year Wednesday evenings from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in West Point at the J.A. Wagner Building or, as an alternative, on every other Sunday morning from 8:00 am to 9:30 am in the basement of St. Boniface in Farmington.

Confirmation Classes encompass a two-year program for any student 8th grade or above. Classes will be held on Wednesday evenings from 7:00pm to 8:00 m at J.A. Wagner Building.

CANCELLATION OF FAITH FORMATION SESSIONS

If one of the area public schools has cancelled classes due to severe weather, Religious Education Classes and Confirmation Classes are automatically cancelled.

If severe weather occurs after public schools dismiss or is predicted for the late afternoon and evening, parents will be notified before the starting time if classes are cancelled.

ABSENTEE POLICY

For your children to benefit the most from our programs, attendance each week is necessary. For the religious education students, only **three** absences will be allowed. Absences exceeding **three**, will be made up on Friday evening. If not made up, the student will need to repeat the year. For the Confirmation students, only **two** absences will be allowed.

Faith development is an ongoing process and children need the consistency of attending classes on a regular basis throughout their school years. To ensure the safety of our children, attendance is taken within the first ten minutes of class time.

Please notify the Coordinator if your child will not be attending class. It is the responsibility of the parent to gather information on what assignments need to be completed. If your child needs to leave early, you must call the office and advise us in advance. Upon arrival for an early pick up, please call the Coordinator as the building is locked after students have arrived for safety reasons.

When your child must miss a class due to illness or family emergency, please call the Coordinator even if it is after the class has been missed.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

The education goals, philosophy, and policies of the parishes teach responsibility and self-discipline. This is the key to good conduct, consideration for others, and learning. Therefore, the following rules are to provide a Christian setting and a learning environment that will benefit each person in the parish community:

General Rules:

- Keep hands, feet and bodily fluids (e.g. spit) to oneself.
- Respect persons in authority in all areas of the parish.
- Respect each other.
- Behave in a courteous manner.
- Take good care of property and possessions. Articles belonging to others are not taken.
- Walk in the halls in a quiet and orderly manner.
- Settle matters without violence. Therefore, no fighting, kicking, or use of inappropriate language is allowed. (As members of a Christian community, we try to settle our differences in a respectful and peaceful manner.)
- Children should treat Religious Education and Confirmation with behavior they would use in church. Therefore, children will not chew gum or wear hats in the building.
- If your child brings a cell phone it needs to be checked in with the Coordinator.
- Before bringing any food to share, please clear with the Coordinator due to allergy concerns.

In the Classroom:

An orderly classroom is essential to learning.

- No student will interfere with another student's right to learn and a catechist's right to teach.
- Students will keep classroom rules set in cooperation with their teacher.
- Students will, at all times, respect all property in the classroom they use.
- Students are expected to do the assignments given by teachers. Accountability for assignments will be handled by each classroom teacher.
- Keep hands, feet and objects to oneself.

Parish Property

- Show respect and courtesy to one another.
- Stay on the parish grounds at all times unless given permission to do otherwise.
- Follow safety rules set up by the Director of Religious Education, Catechists and Pastor.

Drugs and Alcohol Statement:

The use or distribution of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs in any form by students is prohibited. (Possession of matches and cigarette lighters is also prohibited.) If there is any violation of this rule, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified.

Weapons Statement = Zero Tolerance

Any student found to be in possession of a firearm, knife, or other weapon will be immediately dismissed.

Parents will be called for students who violate these policies, and who demonstrate other inappropriate conduct or conduct unbecoming a Christian student. The student may be suspended or expelled from the Faith Formation or Confirmation Program.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

In case of concerns, questions or complaints regarding the religious education program, the following procedure is followed:

1. Confer with the child's catechist if the issue involves the classroom learning environment.
2. For other issues or if satisfaction is not reached, your issues should be put in writing and submitted to the Coordinator, who will work to address them.
3. If satisfaction is not reached, submit a written complaint to the Pastor.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of weather emergencies or fire, catechists will follow predetermined procedures as reviewed in teacher training.

- **In the event of fire:** Children will be led to safety in accordance with teacher training. Attendance is to be taken to determine that all students are accounted for.
- **In the event of severe weather:** The children will be led to a predetermined safe place, and be prepared to place themselves in a safe, covered position.

PROTOCOL

The Purpose of our Religious Education Safety Plan is to provide an environment in which our students are in a safe and caring facility so that they will have the opportunities to grow and learn, and integrate Gospel values in their lives.

A protocol is an event that occurs which results in the need for students to stay in classrooms with teachers. The event may range from an intruder in the building, to a drug seizure, to a medical emergency.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents will be notified and asked to sign a form granting permission for field trips. Parents have the right to ask that their child not participate. Any child not participating in the field trip is asked to remain home during the event. Students whose prior behavior does not meet required standards will be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

Planned parties at certain times during the year (i.e., an end of the year party) and celebrations used to teach the religious meaning of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and special feasts of the liturgical year may be held and include food and drink. It is your responsibility to **report in writing** if your child has any food or drink allergies that could cause a problem.

VOLUNTEERS

The Catholic faith community welcomes and encourages participation in our religious education programs. Each of us has gifts from God that can be shared with others.

QUALITIES OF CATECHISTS

The National Catechetical Directory has established the ideal qualities for a catechist:

- A. **RESPONSE TO CALL** Catechists are called by God through the Church to the ministry of catechesis, not only to give time and talent for re-echoing the faith but to be open to one's own deepening, understanding and living of the Catholic faith.
- B. **WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL** Catechists are called to believe and witness the gospel and its power to transform life. Catechists are persons with an ongoing commitment to God's Word, in their mind, in their hearts and in their lives.
- C. **COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH** Catechists are called to be ministers of the Word and representatives of the Church. They are called to teach what the teaching authority of the Church proclaims, and when teaching any subject must always teach what the Church teaches, regardless of personal beliefs or opinions.
- D. **SHARES IN COMMUNITY** Our God is a community of persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Made in the image and likeness of God, we are called to be God's people a community of faith. Catechists are therefore called to foster and build a faith community in their classrooms and in all aspects of the parish.
- E. **SERVANT OF THE COMMUNITY** Catechists are called to serve the Christian community in the spirit of Jesus and the prophets. This service means not only seeking to meet the needs of individuals within the parish but also in the larger local and global community. This challenges the Catechist to be aware of Church teaching and actions in terms of peace and justice. Catechists need to be open to receiving the service and care of others in order to truly be of service to others.
- F. **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS** Catechists are called to prepare for this important ministry by acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate gospel values and Church teachings effectively for different age groups.

SAFETY

For the safety of our students, the following guidelines are to be observed by everyone:

For liability reasons, all religious education classes are held at parish facilities.

All students arriving and departing from religious education classes by automobile are to be dropped off no earlier than 10 minutes before class and picked up promptly. Upon arrival, the child should go directly to the gathering area and wait until the Coordinator dismisses them to the classrooms. Should a child arrive more than 10 minutes early, or not be picked up promptly, the Coordinator may contact the parent/guardian and remind them that this is not permitted. If after such a reminder, the child/children continue to arrive early or not be picked up within 10 minutes after the class/program, the child/children may be dismissed from the program. Due to all the activity at the time for class, we do not have the personnel to provide for care of children outside of the class periods. (I feel 15 minutes is a long time to be supervising these kids since catechists may not arrive that early due to their personal schedules!)

Please notify the Coordinator if you will be delayed in picking up your child/children, and inform them of any arrangements you will make.

Please notify the Coordinator if anyone other than a parent or guardian will be picking up your student.

Further, the parish catechetical program respects the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will feel free to provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Coordinator with an official copy of the court order. In addition, if a child is NOT to be released to a non-custodial parent, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to notify the Coordinator in writing and provide the Coordinator with a "certified" copy of the custody section of the divorce decree.

Students who are waiting for older brothers or sisters are expected to stay in the Religious Education facility under adult supervision.

Contact Information:

Pastor:	Rev. Daniel Dorau	Cell: (319) 371-8474
Director of Religious Education	Liz Linnenbrink	
Coordinator Religious Education	Becky Moran	PH: (319) 837-6808 office
		Cell: (309) 251-7331
Confirmation Catechist	Nicole Herdrich	PH: (319) 470-1250
Youth Minister	Deacon Mike Linnenbrink	
Administrative Assistant:	Jennifer Merschman	PH (319) 837-6808

READING AND UNDERSTANDING OF PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

We have received and reviewed with our child/children the Parent/Student handbook for the Religious Education and Confirmation Programs. We understand the policies, rules and regulations stated therein and intend to abide by them.

Signature of Child

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Photo Release: Pictures of my child/legal dependent taken during Religious Education events may be used in print or electronic media to promote the program, unless I indicate in writing to the contrary.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

OPTIONAL PARENT REQUEST FOR GIVING MEDICATION AT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

I request that the person in-charge, sees that my child,

_____, receives the following medication:

Medication _____ Amount _____

Time(s) of day to be given _____

Duration (number of days) _____

Illness/condition requiring medication _____

Prescribing physician _____

The medicine is to be furnished by me and labeled with the child's name.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date