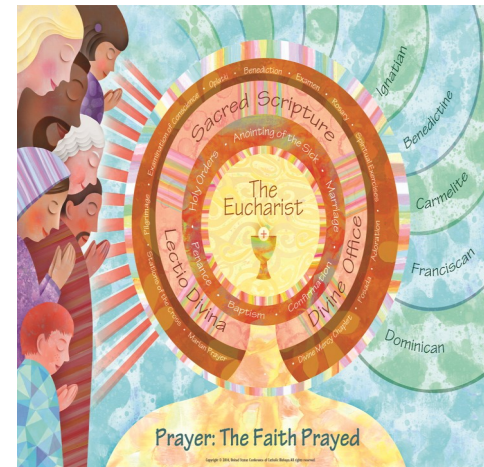


CATECHETICAL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017



Catechetical Theme:

*“Prayer: The Faith
Prayed”*

**The Catholic Community of
St. John Neumann**

“The Word of God, contained and transmitted in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and interpreted by the Magisterium, is the principal source of catechesis.”

- National Directory of Catechesis, No 18

“The New Evangelization is an opportunity, a pilgrimage (journey) to rediscover the joy and confidence of believing in the Triune God and to enthusiastically profess that faith as “a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions which lead to his encounter between the person and Jesus Christ.”

-Intrementum Laboris, #18

PASTOR

Rev. Abraham Orapankal, Ph.D.

OFFICE OF CATECHESIS

Renee Ciszewski

Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Jo Ann Jarvis

Religious Education Administrator

HOURS

Monday—Friday

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Office of Catechesis —908-832-2162

Office Center—908-832-2513

Church Center—908-832-6343

Fax: 908-832-7618

Email:

jjarvis@ccsjn.org—Jo Ann Jarvis
renee@ccsjn.org—Renee Ciszewski

HIGHLIGHTS OF PARENT AGREEMENT

*As a parent, God has given me
the important vocation to be the primary teacher of my child
and I realize that the catechists and our church community
support and work with me in this effort.*

I AGREE TO:

- **Celebrate Mass with my child on weekends and Holy Days since the primary instruction of the Catholic family takes place at Mass.**

Please Note: In Lectionary-based catechesis, parents are expected to actively catechize their child on weekends Religious Formation classes do not meet. The Pflaum Gospel Weekly is provided for this use. In addition, K through fifth grade children are required to participate in Children’s Liturgy of the Word.

- **Share my faith with my child.** Pray at home, talk about the scripture, do service together, etc., remembering that *my example of living a Christian life is what will affect my child the most.*
- **Give my child frequent opportunities to receive the sacraments of *Holy Eucharist* and *Reconciliation*.**
- **Bring my child to classes conscientiously.**
- **Check the web site for the Religious Education Newsletter, “Faith and Family Connection,” for faith based articles.**
- **Take time to review the material sent home by my child’s catechist and help my child with any home activities.**
- **Teach my child any lessons they missed due to an absence.**

PARENT VOLUNTEERS



Parent volunteers are essential to the success of our programs. We expect parents to volunteer as catechists, assistant catechists, class parents, etc., sometime during their child's religious formation. Besides enhancing your child's experience, it will enrich your family and community life at St. John's.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES



In the event that a catechetical gathering is cancelled due to inclement weather, you will be notified by your child's class parent through our phone chain. Each family will receive one call only, no matter how many children are enrolled in that gathering. If a second residence should also be notified, please inform the Office of Catechesis. **Cancelations will also be listed on St. John Neumann Home Page at www.ccsjn.org**

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

If a catechist or the DRE suspects a child has been abused, New Jersey State Statutes require that the Division of Youth & Family Services be notified directly.

All our adult catechists are trained and fingerprinted through the Protecting God's Children program. This is a nationwide diocesan program aimed to protecting our children from sexual abuse.

Dear Parents,

We welcome your family to an exciting year of faith formation! Along with you, we are looking forward to being part of your family's spiritual growth.

Religious education is much more than attending classes. It is about *formation*. The life of every Catholic is about being formed into the image of Christ. This process is life long and can not simply occur during class time. For our faith to grow, we must spend time participating in weekly Mass, in daily prayer, conversing about Jesus and reading Scripture. All practices which will help you live out your vocations as Christian parents! As parents, you are the first educators of your child in the ways of our faith. You accepted this awesome responsibility at your child's baptism when you promised to make their growth in faith your constant care. The community of St John's is here to support you and help you in this vocation.

The catechesis of all members of our parish is lectionary based, and for good reason. *The primary instruction of the Catholic family takes place at Sunday Liturgy.* We live in a world of conflicting values and need the Eucharist to help us stand firmly with one another in faith and nourish us for the mission of bringing Jesus to our world. For these reasons, it is imperative that you understand registering your child at St. John's for religious formation means much more than committing to monthly formation classes. *First and foremost, it is a commitment to celebrating Sunday Liturgy.*

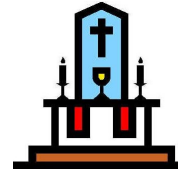
Please read this handbook carefully, sign and return the enclosed agreement in the center of this booklet with one of your children on the first day of class. Keep this handbook in a convenient place for future reference.

God bless,
Renee Ciszewski, DRE

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SERVING MASS



At St. John Neumann have the wonderful tradition of “Altar Families.” It is a very meaningful sign of participation to see each family serving at the Holy Mass. **Each family is asked to participate as an Altar Serving family at least one time during the calendar year.** This will enrich your celebration of the Mass. It has not only a great witness value to others, but also a much needed formative value to your children. As part of their Class Mass, students will participate as Altar Servers.

ATTENDANCE AT MASS AND LITURGY OF THE WORD WITH CHILDREN

The Liturgy is the *source and summit* of Christian life (Lumen Gentium 11). You have the opportunity to help your child recognize and appreciate the true beauty of the Mass and you alone can instill the importance of attending Mass each Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

At our weekend liturgy we are fed through God’s Word and the Eucharist. The Liturgy is essential in the faith formation of our children. In service to their needs the **Liturgy of the Word with Children** will be celebrated on Sundays between their biweekly scheduled classes at the 10:30 AM Mass (see monthly bulletin calendar). ***Children of Kindergarten age through 5th grade are required to participate in Liturgy of the Word with Children.***

It is our hope and prayer that your attendance at weekly Mass will strengthen and secure the bonds of your family and bring great blessings to your life.



CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

Ideally a sponsor is someone who already has been involved in the spiritual formation of the candidate, such as a godparent, catechist or some member of the local parish. When possible, the Baptismal sponsor should be chosen to show the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. **A sponsor:**

- Must belong to the Catholic Church and be fully initiated, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- Should be sufficiently mature (at least 14 years of age) in his/her faith commitment and be **ACTIVELY** expressing it within the Christian community.
- May be the same sponsor the candidate had at Baptism.
- May be either male or female for any candidate.
- May **NOT** be the child's parent.
- Must obtain a statement of eligibility witnessed by his/her pastor.
- If married, must be in a marriage recognized by the Roman Catholic Church.

RECONCILIATION

Children should have the opportunity to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the year, particularly during the Seasons of Advent and Lent. We encourage families to participate in the **Community Reconciliation Services held on December 16 and March 16**. The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers much grace and peace to your family.

MISSION STATEMENT

Catholic Community of St. John Neumann

FOUNDED on the teachings of Jesus Christ,
NOURISHED by the hospitality of the Califon Christian Communities,
FORMED with a commitment to Social Ministry, and
STRENGTHENED by the Holy Spirit
The Catholic Community of St. John Neumann
is a jubilant people
on a continuing spiritual journey of hope:
TO CELEBRATE AND DEEPEN our faith
TO SHARE our unique gifts, talents and treasures
TO CHERISH all life
TO LIVE in openness, acceptance and love.

LECTIONARY BASED CATECHESIS

Celebrating the Lectionary — Liturgy Training Publications
Pflaum Gospel Weeklies/What the Church Believes and Teaches —
Pflaum Publishing Group
Grade 6 Finding God Loyola Press Publication

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION TEXTS

Reconciliation/Eucharist:	Welcome Home/Welcome To The Table Tabor Sacramental Preparation
Confirmation:	Called to Be Catholic Confirmed in the Spirit Loyola Press Publication RCL Benziger Family Life

ATTENDANCE



While we recognize that the children are involved in many wonderful activities, ***religious formation must have priority***. A child should not miss class for sports, plays, band practice or competitions.

- **No more than one (1) absence per school year in the monthly program.** The DRE or Pastor will contact you to inquire about the circumstances and need for assistance from our office.
- **No more than two (2) absences per school year in the Jr High Program.** The DRE or Pastor will contact you to inquire about the circumstances.
- If your child is going to be absent, **please email Renee Ciszewski at renee@ccsjn.org** with your child's name, teacher, class and reason for absence. You may also call the Office of Catechesis at 832-2162 and leave a message.
- ***Make up work will be assigned by the catechist or DRE.***



ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

In September, **Sunday K-6 students, parents, and catechists** should report to the Valley View School gym. On arrival, pickup your **catechist folder** on the table in the foyer. Return it to the table after dismissal.

After closing prayer and clean up families will be dismissed from the school.

All **Catechists** should park in the VV or Church parking lot. **Always proceed with extreme caution when parking or leaving.**

tion is celebrated shortly after this at Mass sometime in October.

Parents: All parents have the right and responsibility



to take an active part in their child's preparation for Sacraments. Parent Meetings will be held to help parents participate more fully in their child's preparation. It is required that at least one parent or guardian attend the meetings. Please note that *parent meetings for Confirmation preparation include the child who is preparing for Confirmation*. These meetings are for the candidates as well as the parents. Please help your child gain an understanding of the Sacraments by educating them at home in the truths of the faith and *by taking them to Mass each Sunday*. We cannot do this profound work without your active involvement and participation in the faith life of your child.

Your child should approach the sacraments with an awareness of the love and sacredness to which the Lord is drawing them. As part of Confirmation preparation, each student will have an informal meeting with Fr. Abraham.

Confirmation CP I (6th Grade): Confirmation prepara-



tion is RCIA based. In the second half of sixth grade, children will be invited to prepare for Confirmation (CPI level). This Period of Invitation ends with a Day

of Discernment for the children and their parents followed by a Rite of Entrance witnessed and affirmed within the parish community's celebration of the Mass.

CP II (7th Grade): During the Period of Formation CP II level (7th grade) and Period of Reflection CPIII level (8th grade), the teens attend the Junior High Gathering which not only includes classroom formation but spiritual and community building experiences. At the end of CPII, Confirmation candidates, parents and sponsors participate in a Day of Discernment followed by the Rite of Covenant where the candidates promise to actively live their faith and the parish community pledges to support their ongoing faith journey.

CP III (8th Grade): CPIII Confirmandi are required to participate in many faith and community building experiences, such as a trip to St. John Neumann's shrine, celebration of the Seder meal and Holy Thursday Liturgy, the Living Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and a Day of Reflection, planned and run by their parents. Their preparation for Confirmation culminates in an overnight retreat and a Youth Mass in mid-September of their first year of high school. Confirma-



All **Junior High** students should be discharged and picked up in front of the Church. ***At dismissal, no Junior High student should leave the front entrance area of the Church until their parent arrives. Teens and parents should exercise extreme caution in the parking lot and cooperate with traffic control volunteers.***



Please be prompt for all our catechetical gatherings. Our catechists are volunteers and we are indebted to them. Please show your gratitude by arriving and picking up your child on time. If an **early dismissal** is required, parents should contact the DRE.



CALENDAR

A calendar of dates is mailed to each family in August. Calendars for all Catechesis Gatherings can be found on our parish website: **ccsjn.org** under the Faith Formation/Calendars tab. You will be notified of schedule changes through class parents, mail or email.

CODE OF BEHAVIOR

As Christians, our behavior should be loving, kind and respectful:

- **Students are expected to respect all catechetical personnel, obey their instructions and refrain from any conduct which disrupts the learning process. No inappropriate language or behavior will be tolerated.**
- **Catechists** should establish a set of rules of order for their classroom which fosters respect, kindness and cooperation.
- We ask **parents** to remind their child to give their utmost attention and respect by behaving in class and by being careful of the buildings they are meeting in, including the Office and Church grounds.
- Diocesan anti-bullying policy www.policebully.org

Disruptive behavior will be handled on an individual basis. If necessary, parents will be contacted for assistance.

SESSION GATHERINGS AND LOCATION

Sunday Monthly Morning	Grades K-6	8:00 AM-10:15 AM	VV
Sunday Jr. High	Grades 7-8	6:00 PM-8:00 PM	CC
Monday Monthly Catechesis	Grades K-5	6:00 PM-8:00 PM	CC/OC
CC- Church Center		OC- Office Center	

VV-Valley View

Special Needs Catechesis

SACRAMENTAL FORMATION

Eucharist: It is the policy of the Diocese of Metuchen, Office for Catechesis, that children preparing for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation are required to prepare for a period of two years **and** that Catholic school children



prepare and receive these sacraments within their parish community. Please note that Kindergarten is not a required year and cannot be counted as year one of this preparation. Therefore, to prepare for First Eucharist, a child must attend the first level of Religious Formation classes **before** enrolling in Reconciliation/First Eucharist classes during their second year of Religious Formation.



Reconciliation: Typically, the celebration of Reconciliation occurs in December and the sacrament of Holy Eucharist will be celebrated the following May.

REGISTRATION

Registration forms will be distributed to all families of the parish having children entering grades K through eight in April. Please return completed registration forms to JoAnn Jarvis in the Religious Education office at the end of May.

New families in the parish may register for Religious Formation classes after registering in the parish. **A copy of each child's baptism certificate must accompany your registration forms.** Also, enclose a copy of their First Eucharist/Reconciliation certificates if your child has celebrated these sacraments.

FEES

Religious Education fees are \$90 for the first child, \$75 for the second child, and \$60 for the third child.



Sacramental fees are \$50 for First Eucharist/Reconciliation and \$160 for the Confirmation Program, payable in eighth grade. The Confirmation sacramental fee includes an overnight retreat and the St. John Neumann Shrine trip.

No child will be denied religious education due to the financial inability of a family to pay the fee. *We offer a tuition payment plan.* Please contact the Office of Catechesis at 832-2162.

STUDENT CELL PHONE USAGE



Cell phones may be brought to Religious Formation classes and scheduled events under the following conditions:

- Phones must be turned **OFF** and kept out of sight for the entire duration of the gathering or event.
- No cell phones may be used for picture taking or recording.
- No harassment or threatening of persons via cell phone is permitted.
- Cell phones may not be used for texting, game playing, internet or email access.
- Catechist have the right to collect cell phones and electronic devices from children/adolescents as they gather together if the rules are not adhered to. Collected phones/devices will be returned at the end of the gathering.
- An agreement to cell phone/electronic devices guidelines needs to be sign and returned (if applicable).

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Cigarette smoking is **not** permitted anywhere on the St. John Neumann Church or Office Center grounds.
- Drugs are **not** allowed in the Church or Office Center buildings or grounds. If a student is found to be in possession, the student will be detained until the police are notified.
- A student will not be sent home with a driver who is visibly impaired. The DRE reserves the right to contact the emergency number provided on your child's registration form for assistance.

FAMILY HOME ACTIVITIES



The goals of home activities are to aid parents in the continuous formation of their child within the family, to reinforce foundational material of classroom lessons and/or to prepare families to celebrate upcoming liturgies. Home activities should be a family affair and be an opportunity for faith sharing with your child.

TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Permanent records of your child's attendance will be kept in the Office of Catechesis. If a family moves, at your request, a letter will be provided outlining your child's record.

SPECIAL DATES

Confirmation:	October of 9th Grade
First Reconciliation:	Sat., December 3, 2016, 11:00 AM
First Eucharist:	Sat., May 6, 2017, 11:00 AM
First Eucharist Retreat:	Wed., May 3, 2017, 4:00-6:45 PM
CP I Day of Discernment:	Sat., June 10, 2017, 3:00 PM <i>Followed by Rite of Entrance Mass</i>
CP II Day of Discernment:	Sat., May 20, 2017, 3:00 PM <i>Followed by Rite of Covenant Mass</i>
CP III Day of Reflection:	Sat., May 13, 2017, 2:30 PM <i>Followed by Confirmandi Mass</i>