

# CATECHIST HANDBOOK

2019-2020



## Catechetical Theme:

**“Stay with us”**

*“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.”*

*- Instrumentum Laboris, #18*

### PASTOR

Rev. Richard Rusk

### OFFICE OF CATECHESIS

Phyllis Baker / Mauricia Nacamuli  
Director of Religious Education (DRE)

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Dear Catechists,

As the St. John Neumann community embarks on another year of catechesis, we welcome and thank you for volunteering to proclaim the Word of God to our children.

Whether you are a professional teacher or not, we all feel inadequate at times when it comes to knowledge of our faith. Let me invite you to have confidence in God! By volunteering to be a catechist, I believe that each and every one of you has been called to this ministry by God. If God calls you, he will also give you the gifts you need to do his work.

Rely on the Holy Spirit in preparing for and teaching your class. Listen to and obey his promptings. Don't be dismayed that you didn't cover your planned lesson, but be *open to these blessed moments*.

As a catechist you will continually have opportunities for your own formation and growth in faith. The lesson plans you receive have adult background on the Scriptures you will be exploring with your students. Doctrines of our faith related to the Scriptures will be explained. Be ready to learn along with your students!

To be an effective catechist, you need a personal relationship with Jesus, have the desire to follow Jesus and help others to know him. This requires that a catechist cultivate a life of public worship and private prayer. If you have been unable to participate in the weekly celebration of the Eucharist or your prayer life is lacking, rededicate yourself to being energized and supported by worship in communion with your parish family. May God bless our efforts.

*Phyllis Bakerr | Mauricia Nacamuli*  
*Directors of Religious Education*

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## 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 Publications

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION TEXTS

Reconciliation/Eucharist:

God's Gift Sacramental Preparation

Loyola Press Publications

Confirmation:

Called to be Catholic

Loyola Press Publications

Confirmed in the Spirit

RCL Benziger Family Life

## ATTENDANCE



**Catechists are required to keep good attendance records.** An attendance register will be found in your catechist folder which will be distributed at the beginning of each class. These folders should be returned with the attendance register after each class. **Make sure you take home any other material you find in your folder.**

- **No more than one (1) absence for the monthly program.** The DRE or Pastor will contact the family to inquire about the circumstances and need for assistance from our office.
- Please set aside any material the child missed that should be completed at home .



## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL MONTHLY FAMILY FAITH SESSIONS

### SUNDAY SESSION:

Sunday K-8 students, parents, and catechists should report to the Church Center. **Catechist folders** will be on the table in the church. Return your folder to the table after dismissal.

After closing prayer and clean up, families will be dismissed from the Church Center.

**Always proceed with extreme caution  
when parking or leaving.**

## MONDAY SESSION:

Monday K-8 students, parents and catechists should report to the Church Center. **Catechist folders** will be on the table in the church. Return your folder to the table after dismissal.

After the family activity and closing prayer, all families will be dismissed from the Church Center.

**ALL MONTHLY FAMILY FAITH STUDENTS ARE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THEIR PARENTS DURING ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL.**



## DRIVING POLICY:

The official policy of St. John's is that catechists **should not** transport any students except their own children to and from Religious Formation classes. In case of an accident, not only would you be legally liable, but so would the parish.

## CALENDAR



Class schedules for the current year are mailed home at the end of August along with each child's class assignment and the name and phone number of their catechist. Catechists receive their class lists and calendars at the Catechist Meetings before sessions start. Calendars can also be found on our parish website: [www.ccsjn.org](http://www.ccsjn.org) under the **Formation/Calendars tab**. You will be notified of schedule changes through 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.
- For the Religious Formation classes held in the Office Center and the Church Center, students should be respectful of the areas in which they meet.
- Students are not permitted to bring gum, toys, food or beverages to class. The catechist should confiscate these items and return them at the end of class.

## 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.
- Those who violate any of the cell phone rules will forfeit their privileges of bringing them to class.
- Any cell phones or electronic devices used during Religious Formation classes will be confiscated by their catechist and can be returned at dismissal. If a second infraction occurs, parents will need to pick up the confiscated device from the Office of Catechesis.

## 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.

## DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be developed in a positive Christ-like manner. Remember, the teachers we loved the best disciplined us with firm love and were consistent, clear and fair. Notify the DRE of any disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior will be handled on an individual basis. The DRE or the Pastor will contact the family. It is our hope to work in partnership with the family to resolve any conflict.

## SUPERVISION

Catechists and Assistant Catechists must clearly understand their responsibility to supervise their students at all times. Children can not be left unattended. This includes the time before and after class, as well as during class. Should it be necessary for you to leave the class **in an emergency**, please notify the nearest Catechist or Assistant Catechist who can supervise in your absence.

## ACCIDENTS OR ILLNESS

If a student gets hurt or is ill during class, the DRE should be notified immediately. A First Aid kit is available at every session. If the child looks like they are about to throw up, the Catechist or Assistant Catechist should accompany the child to the restroom.

## CHILD ABUSE POLICY

New Jersey State Law requires that all **suspected** instances of child abuse be referred to the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. **Catechists are legally obliged to report a suspected case of child abuse to DCPD (1-877-652-2873) and are also required to immediately notify the DRE.**

## PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

The Catholic dioceses of the U.S. are all participating in Protecting God's Children, a program meant to prevent sexual child abuse. All volunteers and employees that work in the Metuchen diocese are required to be fingerprinted in order to run background criminal checks. All are further required to have training in recognizing and preventing child abuse.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

Note that your class list contains a Special Needs column which will list any special needs or circumstances of your students i.e.) physical handicaps, allergies, learning disabilities, or custody restrictions. This is **confidential** information which is only meant to help you teach.

## SUBSTITUTE CATECHISTS

Notify the DRE **as soon as you know** that you will not be able to teach your class, so the DRE can arrange for a substitute. If you have an adult Catechist Assistant, ask them to substitute for you first, and then inform the DRE.

## 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 within the family.

## SPECIAL DATES

<b>Confirmation:</b>	Determined by the Diocese
<b>First Reconciliation:</b>	List on the parish web site and GIFT Calendar
<b>First Eucharist:</b>	List on the parish web site and GIFT Calendar
<b>First Eucharist Retreat:</b>	List on the parish web site and GIFT Calendar
<b>CP III Day of Reflection:</b>	List on the parish web site and GIFT Calendar





## WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Each family is asked to use Remind for email/text notification.

Visit [www.remind.com/join/stjohnsre](http://www.remind.com/join/stjohnsre)  
Our class code is @stjohnsre

Cancelations –Notifications will be via Remind App.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In case of fire or other emergency, all catechists should evacuate their class in an orderly fashion, bringing along their attendance register.

**For All Classes that meet in the Church Center and Office Center:**

Use the nearest exit to your class to evacuate. All classes and parents should meet on the grassy area between the Church and Valley View School near the pathway to the school. Be aware that emergency vehicles may be entering our parking lot and driveway. Once all students are accounted for, the DRE will provide further instructions.

## FAMILY FAITH SESSION GATHERINGS AND LOCATION

### **Sunday Family Catechesis**

Grades K-8 12:00PM-2:00PM

Church Center and Office Center

### **Monday Family Catechesis**

Grades K-8 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Church Center and Office Center

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## REGISTRATION

Registration forms will be distributed to all families of the parish with children entering grades K through 8. Completed registration forms should be returned to the Religious Education office at the end of May.

**New families** in the parish may register anytime 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

A fee of \$90 for the first child; \$75 for the second child; and \$60 for the third child will be assessed to cover the costs of the program.

Sacramental fees are \$65 for First Eucharist/ Reconciliation, and \$65 for the Confirmation Program Fee, which is payable in eighth grade. The Confirmation sacramental fee includes an overnight retreat and the St. John Neumann Shrine trip.

No child will be refused religious education due to the financial ability of a family to pay the fee. We offer a tuition payment plan. Please contact Susanne Erz in the Finance Office at 832-2513.

## TRANSFER OF RECORDS

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

## **SACRAMENTAL FORMATION**

**Eucharist:** It is the policy of the Diocese of Metuchen, Office of 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. Typically, the celebration of Reconciliation occurs in December and the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist will be celebrated the following May.

**Confirmation CP I (6th Grade):** Confirmation preparation is RCIA based. In the second half of sixth grade, children will be invited to prepare for Confirmation (CPI level).

**CP II (7th Grade):** During the Period of Formation CP II level (7th grade) and Period of Reflection CPIII level (8th grade), the teens continue to attend faith formation sessions, which not only include 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. Their preparation for Confirmation culminates in a retreat and Youth Mass prior to the celebration of Confirmation. The date of Confirmation is determined by the Diocese.

**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. Parents are expected to help their 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*. As catechists, we can not do the profound work of sacramental preparation without the commitment of parents to be actively involved and participating in the faith life of their 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. Rick.

## **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.



## CATECHIZING

“The Church awakens and discerns this divine vocation and confers the mission to catechize. The Lord Jesus invites men and women, in a special way, to follow him, teacher and formator of disciples.”

- *General Directory for Catechesis #23*

### I. PLANNING

K through 5th grade catechists receive grade level Pflaum Gospel weekly readers, *What the Church Believes and Teaches*, as well as notes from *Celebrating the Lectionary* which include Scripture backgrounds, activity sheets and resources for each class. Confirmation Preparation catechists receive curriculum guides for the year. The Confirmation textbook has a detailed outline for each lesson which is a great tool for planning. Please read them thoroughly at home in order to be comfortable with the material. It helps to read this material way ahead of time and let the Scripture or concepts ruminate. Ideas for class can come out of your everyday experiences. To enrich the class session, utilize online resources. **It is very important to be well prepared!**

### II. LESSON PRESENTATION

Begin each lesson with a prayer ritual that focuses the children and grabs their attention. Each class will have a **Prayer Box**, this box contains instructions for a prayer center. This is a liturgical aid that will enhance the class session and reinforce prayer. Your lesson should start and end with a prayer that is age appropriate and is part of the Religious Education Curriculum. Use pictures, posters, video and the chalk or whiteboard whenever you can. Visual elements help children learn and remember. **Please let the Religious Education Office know if materials are needed for a session.**

### III. SKILLS, TIPS AND PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR PLANNING AND PREPARATION

**Get to know your text.** Review the material prior to class to develop a plan for the lesson which include key topics to cover.

**Examine the Weekly Teaching Guides or Catechist Notes.** They will provide you with ideas and step-by-step instructions. The more familiar you are with the lesson, the better able you will be to implement your plan.

**Make adjustments to fit the needs of the students.**

**Know your learning objectives –** Know what the students are supposed to learn from this lesson.

**Follow a Catechetical Process**

***Engaging the life experience of the students.***

***Exploring the concepts to be taught.***

***Reflecting and integrating the concepts with lived experiences;***

***Responding with a new way of living.***

*Above all relax and let the Holy Spirit guide you!*

## RESOURCES FOR PREPARATION

**[www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)**

Offers a wealth of information and resources for Catholic catechists

**[www.pflaumweeklies.com](http://www.pflaumweeklies.com)**

Offers resources related to the Gospel Weeklies

**[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)**

The official web site of US Catholic Bishops

**[www.catechistsjourney.com](http://www.catechistsjourney.com)**

Joe Paprocki shares experiences as a catechist

**Remind App**



## HIGHLIGHTS OF PARENT AGREEMENT

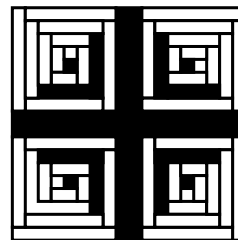
**As a parent, God has given me the important vocation to be the primary teacher of my child and I realize that the catechists and our church community support and work with me in this effort.**

### 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 encouraged to participate in Children's Liturgy of the Word, which takes place at 10:30 a.m. Mass.

- **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.**
- **Attend Family Faith formation.**
- **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.**



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

**398 County Road 513  
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Califon, NJ 07830**

**Office: 832-2513  
Religious Education: 832-2162**

**Website: [ccsjn.org](http://ccsjn.org)**

**Come celebrate with us:  
Masses: Saturday 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.**