

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2024-2025



Christ the Teacher University Parish  
Newman Catholic Student Center  
512 Normal Road, Dekalb IL 60115  
[www.newmanniu.org](http://www.newmanniu.org)

815-787-7770

## LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are excited to welcome your children for Faith Formation for 2024-2025 here at Newman! I consider it an honor that you entrust our dedicated catechists and RE program to aid you in the formation of your child's faith journey. You are the primary teacher in your child's life, and we are here to support you!

As parents, you set the example by your attendance at Mass, by frequently receiving the sacraments (Eucharist and Reconciliation), praying with your children, and participating in the programs throughout the year. You are a witness in the world for your family by orienting your day according to the teachings of the Catholic Church all week long. Thank you for giving your child this precious gift of faith!

Please take a few minutes to look through the information contained in this year's handbook, as items have been updated from the previous year. Pin our calendar to the fridge (it's the last page and easy to pull off!)

Lastly, I ask for you to please pray for our program, the catechists, and all our children enrolled this year. We will likewise keep you and your families in our prayers too.

I look forward to spending this time together with your families!

May God's peace be with you,

Rachel Johnsen

Coordinator of Religious Education

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*Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The Religious Education Program will attempt to keep you informed of all changes as soon as practical.*

## PARISH LIFE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Role/Title</i>	<i>Email</i>
Father Robert Gonnella	Parochial Administrator	frgonnella@newmanniu.org
Father Sean Grismer	In Residence	frgrismer@newmanniu.org
Deacon Jim Dombek	Deacon	jjd10634@aol.com
Rachel Johnsen	Religious Education Coordinator	faithformation@newmanniu.org
	RCIA Coordinator	rcia@newmanniu.org
Jenny Gray	Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Coordinator	goodshepherd@newmanniu.org
Veronica Jeronimo	Youth Ministry Director	youthminister@newmanniu.org
Lauren Morris	FOCUS Team Director	lauren.morris@focus.org
Caleb Gray	Music Ministry Director	music@newmanniu.org
Christine Reynolds	Administrative Assistant	assistant@newmanniu.org
Michaela McMahon	Office Manager	officemanager@newmanniu.org
Birdie Welsh	Business Manager	bwelsh@newmanniu.org

### Weekly Sacramental Schedule

Mass	Reconciliation	Adoration
Monday—Friday 12:05pm Wednesday 9:00pm Saturday 4:30pm Sunday 8:00am, 10:30am, 8:00pm*	Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm 8:30pm-9:00pm Saturday 3:00pm-4:15pm Sunday 7:30pm-8:00pm* First Fridays 8:00am-12:00pm	Monday 11:00a-12:00pm Tuesday 9:00am-9:00pm* Wednesday 8:00pm-9:00pm Thursday 11:00am-12:00pm Friday 11:00am-12:00pm  *when NIU is in session

### Holy Days of Obligation

Tuesday, August 15, 2024	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Friday, November 1, 2024	All Saint's Day
Wednesday, December 25, 2024	The Nativity of The Lord
Wednesday, January 1, 2025	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

# CATECHETICAL PLAN

## Mission Statement

The mission of Christ the Teacher religious education program is to glorify God by faithfully transmitting the fullness of the Catholic faith to our young people. Our goal is to encourage and support them so that they may come to know, love, and serve God the Father in union with His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

## Vision for 2024-2025

To create an environment where every student and family can encounter Jesus Christ and deepen their relationship with Him and with one another. To encourage and aid parents in fulfilling their baptismal promises to teach about God in the Catholic tradition. To facilitate a loving relationship with the Lord through evangelization, catechesis and living out faith in their daily lives.

## Curriculum

- Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th grade students: *Gospel Weeklies* by Pflaum

## Sacramental Preparation

- 2nd grade, *Received & Renewed* by Ascension Press
- 7th & 8th grades, *Decision Point* by Dynamic Catholic

For our 2nd grade students we will celebrate the Sacrament of First Reconciliation in early December, and First Holy Communion on Sunday, May 4, 2025. Additional information will be given to your student as their preparation continues.

For our Junior High (7th& 8th gr) youth we celebrate the *Sacrament of Confirmation* every other year.

The 2024-25 term is a year of Confirmation preparation for us. If your student is coming in as a new 7th grader, this is year 1 of prep. If they were confirmed April 2024, thus a returning 8th grader, this is year 2 of their preparation.



*If you have a child that is out of sacramental sequence, please talk to the Coordinator of Religious Education to schedule preparatory classes.*

## PARENT & FAMILY

**“Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches  
all other forms of catechesis.”**

(Catechesi Tradendae 68) Saint John Paul II

### Parental Role

The church has always considered the parents as the primary teachers of their children. Our aim is to support and aid the parents in their role as religious educators. Reminding us of our pledgee at our child’s baptism “to accept the responsibility of training them in good practice of the faith and...bring them up to keep God’s commandment as Christ taught us, loving God and our neighbor.”

Parents together with their children are expected to participate in the Catholic Community of Christ the Teacher Parish, by joining in celebration of Mass and partaking of the Sacraments. Parents you are the most visible representation of faith for your family. Your example through prayer, worship and sacramental celebrations is vital. Our main curriculum this year is centered around the weekly Gospel reading. There is wonderful opportunity here to discuss the liturgy with your child(ren) each week! Taking this time to share and build a faith relationship with your child will benefit them as they mature their own relationship with God.

### Ideas to incorporate the faith life at home:

- assist your child in memorization of basic prayers, ask them “how can I pray for you today?”
- cultivate family prayer habits, regularly say grace before meals, each morning offer the day to the Lord, say a Guardian Angel prayer on the way to school, ask for protection and guidance, a weekly family rosary
- create a religious environment through art and décor following the liturgical calendar. Photographs of favorite Saints, The Holy Family, a Catholic wall calendar
- perform a home blessing each year at Epiphany
- celebrate baptism anniversaries and feast days with a special meal or treat



# Living the Truth of Our Creation

## *Guiding Principles on Human Sexuality For the Diocese of Rockford*

Effective August 6, 2021

We, as Catholics of the Diocese of Rockford believe in the Divine teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, passed on to us through the Holy Catholic Church. And so, we know and believe that we are creations of God. We know too that God created us – the human person – in His image. The human person is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. (CCC 363)

In His Divine Plan, God gave us the great gift of being created male and female. We understand and believe in the mystery and beauty of being man and woman thus possessing the dignity equal to each other and made to complement each other for the continuation of all humanity.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church so beautifully teaches us what God intended, “Man and woman were made “for each other” – not that God left half-made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be “helpmate” to the other, for they are as equal persons (“bone of my bones . . .”) and complementary as masculine and feminine. In marriage God unites them in such a way that, by forming “one flesh,” they can transmit human life: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator’s work. (CCC 372)

One of our great challenges as believers and as Catholics in our modern age is to be willing to testify to the truth. Jesus clearly spoke to His followers about the truth telling us, “If you remain in my word you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:31- 32).

And in the dark hour of His passion, Jesus said before His earthly judge, “For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth” (Jn 18:37).

It is with this understanding of truth that we are guided in our belief and our practice as human beings made in the image of God.

Therefore, we live the truth of our creation guided by a policy that is committed to spreading the Gospel values and forming the diocesan faithful in Christ’s teachings in conformance with the Magisterium.

1. The Diocese of Rockford, its parishes, schools, departments, ministries, and facilities will only condone or promote a view of sexual identity that is consistent to the Church’s teachings in regard to gender and sexuality. As faithful partners in that teaching, parents, students, legal guardians, and families will be expected to conduct themselves and live in accord with the Gospel values we seek to impart.
2. The Diocese of Rockford, its parishes, schools, departments, ministries, and facilities will, at all times, act toward and refer to a person in accordance with his or her biological sex at birth. In all cases we will act in accord with all Christian charity.
3. At all times, employees, volunteers, students, and children and youth participating in parish, school, or Diocesan activities, as well as their parents or guardians, will conduct themselves in accord with their biological sex at birth.

We must continue to commit ourselves to love all our brothers and sisters with whom we share the earth. And we must do so by reminding ourselves and them of the truth that encompasses every human person. In this case, it is that, as part of God’s plan, we are gifted in the identity given each of us by God at birth as being male or female. Because, as the Book of Genesis tells us, “God has looked on all that He made and saw that it was good” (Gn 1:31).

## TUITION & PAYMENT

1 child	\$125
2 children	\$200
3 children	\$275
4 or more	\$300

Payments may be made in full or in 3 equal installments due on 10/1/2024, 11/1/2024, 12/1/2024.

**To pay via credit/debit**, please visit [GIVE CENTRAL](#)

**To pay via check/cash**, payments can be dropped off to the Parish Office, dropped into the collection basket during Mass or mailed to:

Christ the Teacher/Newman,  
512 Normal Road, Dekalb IL 60115.

Please mark **ATTN: Faith Formation** on your payment/envelope.

\*Current catechist pay half price tuition.

\*For information regarding scholarship assistance, contact Rachel at [faitfomation@newmanniu.org](mailto:faitfomation@newmanniu.org)

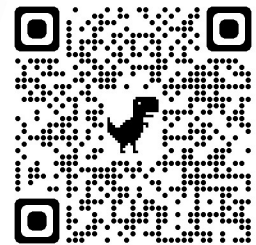
## COMMUNICATION

Regular communication between the parish and family is essential for a successful program. Parents are asked to keep the Coordinator of Religious Education informed of any special needs or situations in your family as they pertain to the child's involvement in our program and their overall well-being.

Communication will be sent via email, Flocknote and through the parish bulletin as a means to keep you informed of any changes to the calendar, special events and inclement weather cancellations.

To signup for Flocknote: <https://newmanniu.flocknote.com>

To signup to receive our weekly bulletin via email, scan the QR:



Additional ways to find communications are posted on our website, [www.NewmanNIU.org](http://www.NewmanNIU.org), via social media on Facebook at "Newman Catholic Student Center at NIU", on Instagram @NewmanAtNIU and @NewmanCatholicYM



## ATTENDANCE

### **CLASS TIME IS SUNDAY FROM 9:15AM-10:15AM.**

It is expected that children and their families attend Mass and Religious Education class each week. Since occasional absences affect a student's progress, we appreciate cooperation in keeping instances to a minimum.

If your child(ren) will be absent from class please notify the Coordinator of Religious Education. A note stating their name, the date and reason for the absence should be emailed to [faithformation@newmanniu.org](mailto:faithformation@newmanniu.org). If your child misses or is late for 2 consecutive classes, without notification, you will be contacted by the RE Office. It is expected that any assignments missed during their absence may need to be completed.

Any child **missing 6 or more classes** may be asked to repeat the grade level.

If a situation arises that your child is not able to attend class regularly, please call the Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss the many ways we can help accommodate for their continued catechesis. Our goal is to support you!

*Attendance for Sacramental classes:* it is essential that children that are preparing for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation be present for all classes and sacramental preparation activities.

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

### CHILDREN GRADES PRE-K—4TH GRADE:

In compliance with Diocesan policy,

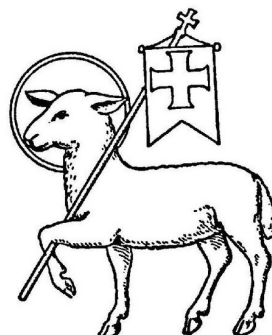
**this age group must be escorted to and from the building by an adult.**

They will then be escorted from the Knox Room by their catechist to their classrooms. If they arrive after 9:15a, they are to be walked directly to their classroom by the parent and signed in. When class ends a parent or designated adult will need to sign them out of their classroom as well. They will not be dismissed from their rooms alone.

Arrangements for alternate adult pickup must be given in writing, to the Coordinator of Religious Education or the catechist. This includes arrangements for older siblings escorting younger students Pre K– 4th grades.

### CHILDREN 5TH-8TH GRADE:

May leave once their class is dismissed.



# SACRAMENTAL POLICY

## **EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS**

### *Requirements for First Holy Communion in the Diocese of Rockford*

#### Norms

1. The Church asks that baptized children who are to celebrate First Holy Communion have celebrated the Sacrament of Penance; Note: This is the norm for the Diocese of Rockford. It is stated in the Catechism (#1457): "Children must go to the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time."
2. In order to receive First Communion the student must:
  - Desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist
  - Recognize the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist
  - Understand that in the Eucharist, bread and wine are changed into the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ.
  -

#### Program Content

1. See Diocese of Rockford Program Content Guidelines

### *Requirements for Confirmation in the Diocese of Rockford*

#### Age

1. Bishop Malloy's official decree dated May 19, 2013, states, "The age of those to be confirmed in the Diocese of Rockford will be established as norm for individuals who are in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade."

#### Confirmation Name (required)

1. If the student is already named after a Saint, he/she may use their baptismal name or may select another Saint's name to honor that person.
2. If the student was not named after a Saint, he/she must select one for their Confirmation name.
3. The name selected must be one the student admires or appreciates, one who shows a particular spiritual strength or gift, perhaps someone who took a strong stand for their faith, a commitment to serving the poor, a prayerful life, or a dedication to social justice. It should be a Saint, a Blessed, or a biblical hero.
4. The name does not have to be gender-specific.

#### Confirmation Sponsor (required)

1. The sponsor witnesses the commitment to Christ the student is making. Ideally, the sponsor should be one of the Baptismal sponsors / godparents.
2. The sponsor must be at least 16 years of age and already received the sacrament of Confirmation, as well as be a practicing Catholic.
3. The sponsor cannot be a parent.
4. The sponsor does not have to be the same gender as the candidate.

# GUIDELINES & POLICIES

## Basic Expectations:

- To be attentive and respectful in class. To treat fellow students and catechists with respect and dignity.
- To assist in keeping the classroom in order. To respect others' property and possession.
- To have a good attitude! Be kind as we aim to be more like Jesus, including taking turns speaking and listening.
- To participate and engage in class discussions and activities to the best of their abilities.

## Dress Code:

Appropriate attire is expected for class and all church functions.

**No** clothing that includes imprints, symbols, names of supporters of death, drugs, violence, racial slurs, or sex will be permitted. Clothing should be modest in nature. The wearing of hats (inside the building), pajamas, bare/midriff/crop shirts is prohibited. Shoes should be worn at all times.

## Electronics:

- Cell phones, iPods, iPads and other electronic devices are not to be used in class. If they are brought to class they should remain silenced in the students bag or pocket, unless otherwise directed by the Catechist.
- There may be days (specific to Confirmation preparation classes) where they may use a device for research, if they are used for things other than the intended purpose (i.e. games, texting, social media, scrolling) the device will be confiscated and returned to the parent following class.

## Bullying:

Any action, word or behavior which harasses, intimidates, or causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another student or students is strictly prohibited. This prohibited conduct also extends to the use of technology ("cyber bullying") as a tool to harass or cause harm.

**Under no circumstances will bullying be allowed in class, within the building or on church property.**

Should an instance occur, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.



Empowering God's Children Program:

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2018, requires parishes and schools to provide formation for children in the areas of safety and dignity of their persons

The Teaching Safety – *Empowering God's Children Program* will now be completed by all grade levels throughout the Diocese of Rockford. This program provides the required training for all grade levels with specific themes which build on basic concepts of safety, boundaries and awareness throughout the program.

Students will be trained annually by grade levels each lesson plan explaining the basic principles and objectives with references to The Catechism of the Catholic Church and background information. These lessons are taught at an age appropriate level and repeat over a three year cycle. As in the past, an opt-out option will be made available should parents choose not to have their children participate in the classroom training.

**This year our training will be during our regularly scheduled class on November 17, 2024.**

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Inclement Weather Cancellation:

If an instance should occur that causes Mass to be cancelled then in turn Faith Formation will be cancelled as well. This information would be broadcast via Flocknote and Newman's Facebook page.

### Fire Safety:

In the event of a fire alarm, students will be escorted outside the building to the rectory lawn, across the parking lot. They will be released to their parent/guardian. A fire drill is scheduled each fall to help prepare the children and catechists.

### Tornado Safety:

In the event of a tornado alarm, students will be escorted by an adult to the closest "safe zone." For most students this will be in the lower hallway outside of the Knox and Ahles Rooms. They will be returned to their classes and/or their parents when church staff receives an "all clear" regarding the tornado threat. A tornado drill is scheduled each spring to help prepare the children and catechist.



# PRAYERS TO LEARN BY GRADE LEVEL

## Kindergarten & 1st grade

Sign of the Cross  
Angel of God  
Glory Be  
Grace at meals  
Hail Mary  
Our Father

## 2nd Grade

All listed before  
I Confess (Confiteor)  
Act of Contrition  
Nicene Creed  
Holy, Holy, Holy  
Lamb of God

## 3rd & 4th Grade

All listed before  
Morning Offering  
Apostles Creed  
Oh My Jesus  
Hail Holy Queen

## 5th & 6th Grade

All listed before  
Act of Faith, Hope, and Love  
Queen of Heaven (Regina Coeli)  
Angelus  
Memorare  
Rosary



## 7th & 8th Grade

All listed before  
Beatitudes  
Magnificat

## 7th & 8th Grade cont:

*\*have experience with*  
Stations of the Cross  
Divine Praises  
Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Litany of the Saints  
Latin Prayers: Kyrie eleison, Sanctus,  
Angus Dei

Printed copies to use at home of the above prayers are available from the Faith Formation Office.