

2026-2027



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Parent Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook contains information about the Religious Education program mission statement, policies, formation plan, sacramental guidelines, calendar, volunteer sheet and more.

Please keep access to this handbook for future reference.

Parents, you are the primary education of the faith, therefore, you are the most important models of faith for your child/ren. Your influence on your child's faith development is more significant than any other person or experience your child will ever have.

The Religious Education staff and catechists are in partnership with you as you raise your children to become a strong disciples of Christ who are empowered to go out and share faith with others. The catechists who teach each week are volunteers who willingly give of their time. Any support and words of gratitude are deeply appreciated.

We, the Religious Education team of St. Margaret Mary Parish, united in partnership with parents, assist in guiding children in becoming faith-filled, loving Catholic Christians. Guided by the Spirit of Jesus, we provide formation in the Catholic faith, formation in the Gospel way of life, and prayer experiences that invite spiritual transformation.



Our staff

The Religious Education team is made up of the director, office helper, and catechists who work with the children and youth in each grade level. The director is always open to your questions and concerns. She can be reached anytime by voicemail, email, or in person by appointment.



Amy Bolle

Director of Religious Education
Coordinator Grades 1-10 Religious Education
Coordinator of Confirmation, 2nd Grade
Sacraments, and OCIA

Office Hours:

Sunday 1:00pm-8:00pm
Monday 8:00am-4:00pm
Tuesday 8:00am-4:00pm
Wednesday 8:00am-8:00pm
Thursday 8:00am-4:00pm

Phone: 729-4560, Ext. 4112

Email: abolle@smcatholicschools.org

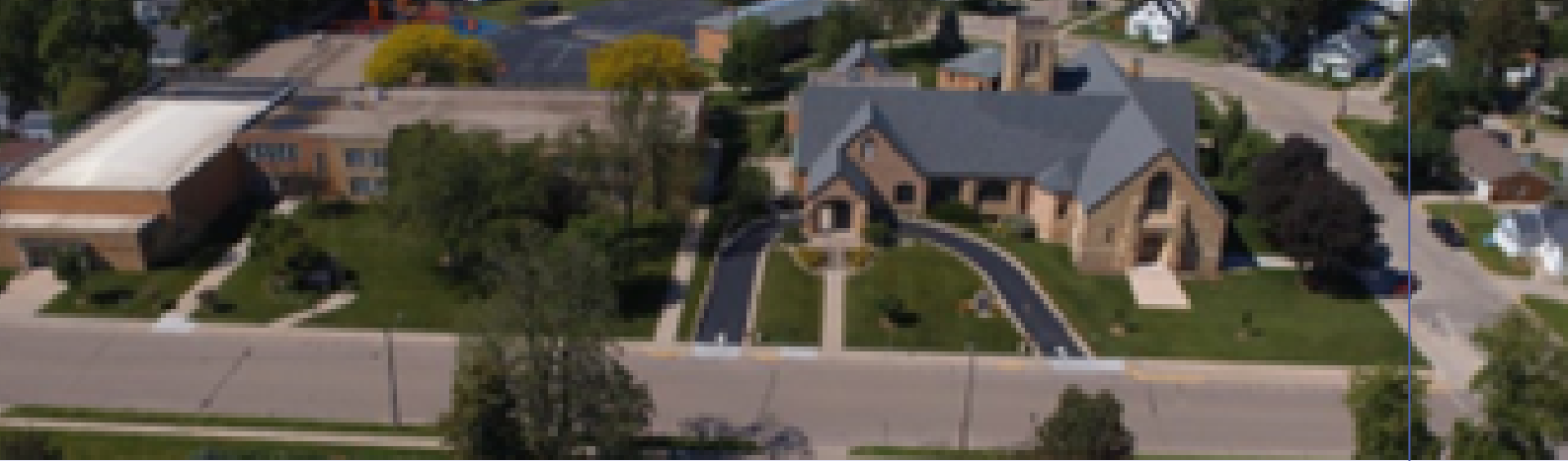
Please note that the RE Office is **closed** on Fridays.

”I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations.“

Mahatma Gandhi

We believe that the presence of Jesus makes the ministry of Religious Education effective, so that young people may respond to the message through growth in faith, worship and Christian service





ATTENDANCE

Please make Religious Education a priority when arranging your child's/teen's involvement in extracurricular activities.

We are trying make Jesus a priority and not give him our left overs. Youth are expected to attend all scheduled sessions and complete all In Home sessions.

The Diocese of Green Bay has established 30-35 hours of Religious Education required of any child participating in Religious Education classes. St. Margaret Mary offers 33 hours of Religious Education.

Unless notified, we will contact the families of absent youth to verify that they are safe at home. When it is impossible to attend a given session, if the parents wish to request it, the director will be happy to supply materials for completing the class work at home. Your youth is encouraged to participate actively in discussions and activities during Religious Education sessions.

MISSING A CLASS

Should your child/youth need to be absent please text the number below or email Amy Bolle, DRE, to notify of the absence.

Text:
920-372-2326

Email:
abolleesm Catholicschools.org

LATE ARRIVAL or EARLY DISMISSAL

If your child may be late for a session or if it is necessary to take your child out of a session early, please call or email the Director in advance. The Catechist will be notified and arrangements for entering or exiting the building will be made.

Emergency Procedures



LOCKED DOORS

In an effort to increase security during Religious Education sessions, all exterior doors will be locked. Access to the school will be available 15 minutes before and after sessions begin and end.

CANCELLATIONS

When weather conditions are hazardous on campus sessions will be cancelled. All cancellations will be notified by email and our Religious Education Facebook pages.

FIRE EMERGENCY

Fire emergency directions are posted in each classroom near the doorway. Catechists will be asked to familiarize themselves and their students with the necessary procedures.

TORNADO EMERGENCY

Tornado emergency directions are posted near the doorway in each classroom. Each classroom is assigned a safe area within the building. Catechists will be asked to familiarize themselves with the necessary procedures.

BOMB THREAT

If a telephone bomb threat is received, the Director will inform the police immediately, and follow the directions of the police concerning the course of action to be taken. If the police order the building to be vacated, the building will be evacuated by fire drill procedures, unless to do so would place the youth in danger. In that case, an alternate route will be led by the Director/Coordinator.

PROCEDURE

ZERO TOLERANCE for HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the educational programs governed by the Diocesan Board of Education to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from any type of harassment. No employee, volunteer, or student associated with these programs shall be subject to any type of harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, volunteer or student to harass another employee, volunteer or student.

Each Director shall be responsible for promoting understanding and acceptance of, and assuring compliance with local, state and federal laws and board policy and procedures governing harassment within the educational/catechetical program or office. Violations of this policy or procedure will be cause for disciplinary action.

WEAPONS POLICY

Firearms, weapons and other dangerous objects are not permitted in schools or Religious Education buildings. The possession or use of such by employees, volunteers, or students is not permitted on the grounds or property used or operated by the parish, school or Religious Education program.

Police shall be notified immediately if an assault or battery occurs resulting from use or threatened use of a firearm, weapon, or dangerous object. When possible, such dangerous objects shall be taken from the person. Parents of students found in possession of such dangerous objects shall be notified immediately.

Any students in possession of a firearm while participating in any school, parish, regional or diocesan program shall be immediately suspended.

PROCEDURE

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Parish and Religious Education personnel are in a unique position to observe and identify potential cases of abused and/or neglected children. Responsible action by Religious Education personnel and catechists can be achieved through the following; recognition and understanding of the problem, knowing the reporting procedures, and acting accordingly as specified by state law.

Religious Education personnel are required to follow the requirements of civil law and the guidelines as set forth by the Green Bay Dioceses. Such guidelines should make personnel aware that by state statute they are immune from civil and/or criminal liability when reporting suspected child abuse cases. Failure to report may result in legal action which may include a fine, imprisonment or both.

BACKGROUND CHECKS & ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

The Bishop's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Articles 12 and 13, states: "Dioceses will establish 'safe environment' programs, and evaluate the background of all diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors." The Diocese of Green Bay has determined the following persons are covered by this charter and will participate in a Protecting God's Children Adult Awareness Session

- All employees
- Any volunteer who has contact with children/youth/individuals at risk and encounters said person(s) more than four (4) times in a program year and/or
- acts as a chaperone on an overnight event and/or
- is the adult driver in a vehicle transporting said person(s) and/or spends an average of one (1) or more hour(s) a week in any given four (4) week period with said person(s) and/or
- is not under the direct/immediate supervision of a parish/educational/catechetical employee.
- Persons serving in ministries which may involve children/youth/individuals at risk.

Important Information

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Mass Attendance:

All children enrolled in the Religious Education program are expected to attend Mass on Saturday or Sunday each week. Whatever is learned in the formation sessions will have more impact if your family is actively practicing the faith at home. Building a strong foundation in their faith is the most important and meaningful gift you pass on to your child. Children notice by our words and our actions how much (or how little) our faith means to us. We ask all parents to be good examples of discipleship at home.

Mass Times:

- 5:00pm Saturday;
- 7:30am & 9:30am Sunday

Discussion:

As you talk with your child/ren about what was learned in each session, share with your child/ren what you believe about the topic discussed.

Help your child/ren connect God, religion and faith with what they observe through various media and the world around them. We believe that God is with us in this world, help your child/ren seek God in his or her everyday life.

WEB LINK TO CALENDAR

<https://www.smmneenah.org/re-parent-info>

FORMED

St. Margaret Mary parish subscribes to FORMED, an online streaming service for wholesome family entertainment, Catholic education, and enrichment programs for the whole family (available in English & Spanish). We invite you to check out the over 4000+ quality offerings with FORMED. Follow the instructions below to sign up today!

There are 3 easy steps for new parishioners to Sign Up on FORMED:

1. Visit <http://signup.formed.org/>
2. Enter our parish zip or name
3. Enter your name and email



GENERAL CURRICULUM

IN-HOME RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In-Home Religious Education is a session that is held in your home. Parents lead the In-Home sessions with the online material that is provided by the Parish Religious Education team. Once the lesson is completed there is a survey that the family takes to show accountability. The In-Home sessions count towards the 30-35 hours required by the Diocese of Green Bay.

<https://www.smmneenah.org/blog/in-home-religious-education>

FORMAL PRAYERS

Young people will find it easier to memorize formal prayers. They learn these prayers and teachings better if parents work with them. We propose this plan for memorization:

- Grade One—The Sign of the Cross, The Glory Be, The Our Father, The Hail Mary.
- Grade Two—Act of Contrition, The Our Father
- Grade Three—The Apostle's Creed and The Rosary
- Grade Four—The Ten Commandments and Nicene Creed
- Grade Five and Beyond—All of the Above

FAMILY FAITH NIGHTS

FAMILY FAITH NIGHTS will be held two times in the year. These nights are part of the total hours of Religious Education for your child/ren and therefore are not optional, but part of the curriculum. A Sign Up Genius invitation will be sent for an RSVP for each of the Family Faith Nights which will include a simple dinner.

Each Family Faith Night will include dinner and some family catechesis centered around a certain theme for each evening.

GRADES 1-4 CURRICULUM

Grade 1

The focus is on our loving God and the love and mercy of Jesus our friend.

Grade 2

God's Gift—Reconciliation, Loyola Press is the text used in preparation for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for second graders in the fall half of the Religious Education year. This book emphasizes the fact that God calls us friends; that Jesus saves, forgives and heals us; that the Holy Spirit guides us; and, that God is always with us. The ideas in the text are covered through a partnership between parents and catechists

God's Gift—Eucharist, Loyola Press is the text used in the preparation for First Communion. This program is designed to actively involve the family, catechist and parish community in the child's preparation. The basic actions of the Eucharist determine the eight program themes: Belonging, Gathering, Reflecting, Listening, Preparing, Remembering, Receiving and Journeying. A special feature of the series is "My Own Mass Booklet," which the children can use at Mass.



Grade 3

The main focus is on the four marks of the Catholic Church: We are ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, and APOSTOLIC. Third Grade disciples learn what it means to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic in the 21st century.

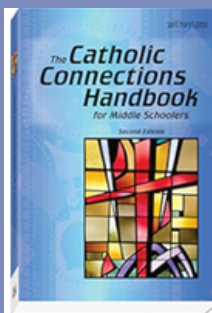
Grade 4

Disciples will learn about how to be in service of others in the name of Jesus. They will learn how to perform the Works of Mercy age appropriately: they will learn how to live out God's Laws (the 10 Commandments); and they will learn how to live happily through the Beatitudes.

GRADES 5-10 CURRICULUM

Grade 5-8

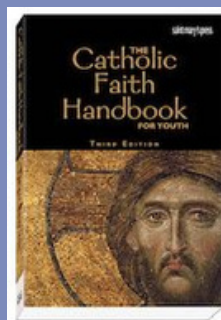
The curriculum aims to strengthen each participant's Catholic identity; inspire them to participate more fully in the Church's mission; encourages them to find connections with their faith and daily life. Each session is interactive—with short breaks that make space for group activities and discussion in small groups.



Supplemental session materials include, *The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers* and the video series *3 minute Catechism*.

Grade 9 & 10

The curriculum teaches the essentials of the Catholic Faith. It helps strengthen the understanding of key topics and doctrine in preparation for Confirmation. The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, guides youth with a practical way to learn, live and share the Catholic faith through a holistic approach and reflects the Catechism of the Catholic Church.



Supplemental session materials include, *The Catholic Faith Handbook*, *The UCAT* and *The Catholic Faith Youth Bible*.

Sacramental information

In order to ensure that our students are thoroughly prepared to receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation, we require parents to enroll their children in Religious Education beginning in the First Grade and continue through until Junior year of high school. This provides the necessary background of Catholicism so that the sacraments are understandable to the young person in the context of our Catholic beliefs and practices.

Formal preparation, and first reception, of Reconciliation and Eucharist will take place in the Second Grade at St. Margaret Mary Parish. Confirmation will take place in the Junior year of high school. Information regarding parent sessions, events and celebrations will be emailed directly to the families who have children in Second Grade Religious Education and Junior year in high school.

**Please see additional handout for
Sacramental Preparation specific dates.
<https://www.smmneenah.org/re-parent-info>**

All children in a sacramental grade must be baptized in order to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. If your child/ren are school aged and need to be baptized, please contact the Director of Religious Education at 920-729-4560.



Have you ever wondered what the letters OCIA stand for when you see them? They are an acronym for Order of Christian Initiation for Adults. OCIA is a process of growing deeper in faith, worship (Mass), and service in our Catholic Community through the reception of the sacraments of Baptism (if needed), Communion, and Confirmation. Contact Amy Bolle at abolle@smcatholicschools.org



**St. Margaret Mary
Parish Office
439 Washington Ave.
Neenah, WI 54956**

920-729-4560

www.smmneenah.org

Parent Information Page:

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