



**St. John Neumann Religious Education**  
**Parent Handbook 2024-2025**

St. John Neumann Catholic Church  
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Dear Parents and Guardians:

We extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to you as you register your children for our Religious Education Formation program. We are truly grateful for your decision to prioritize their spiritual growth and entrust us with their religious education. We are here to serve and assist you in their formation from Pre-K through High School. As primary educators of your children, you play an essential role in the shaping of this sacred journey. We invite you to actively participate in their formation, attend parent workshops, engage in conversations about faith at home, and join us for special events and celebrations throughout the year.

*Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. (CCC 2223)*

Beautiful words to live by! We look forward to working together through the grace of God to Overcrowd Heaven as we nurture your children's faith and create future disciples. May Our Lord bless you abundantly as we walk together in faith!

## **OUR PARISH CULTURE**

At St. John Neumann, we strive for a rich culture that revolves around unceasing prayer, healthy teamwork, and active discipleship, all working together to develop the spiritual growth of our community. Through religious education programs, youth groups, and dedicated catechists, we endeavor to instill in our children and community a deep understanding of their faith and encourage them to become active participants in the Church. It is through this collective commitment that we create an environment where individuals can grow in their faith, find support and encouragement, and experience the transformative power of God's love.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

**Sunday Classes:** Students are to be escorted to the classroom and be seated by 10:10 AM. Parents pick up their children directly from the classroom at 10:55 AM. Parents are encouraged to wait for their children in the complimentary parent lounge in Resurrection Hall immediately following the 9 AM Mass or before the 11 AM Mass for spiritual growth and fellowship.

**Tuesday 4 PM Classes:** Students are to be escorted to the classroom and seated by 4 PM. Parents pick up their children directly from the classroom at 4:45 PM. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to make the most of their waiting time by joining our special prayer group called Together in Prayer, where they can gather and pray the rosary while waiting for the children. This is a unique opportunity for spiritual growth, unity and support within our community.

**For all students Pre K-6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Please make sure students use the restroom before entering the classroom.

**Dismissal:** Dismissal will occur at the classroom door, where parents or guardians are required to pick up their children. Minors are not permitted to pick up students. To collect a student, the laminated authorized pick-up card issued on the first day of school must be presented to the teacher on each occasion. **No student will be released without this card.** Individuals without the pick-up card must proceed to the Religious Education office and provide a photo ID to confirm authorization.

In the event of tardiness in picking up a child, parents or guardians must visit the Religious Education Office, present the pick-up card, and sign out the child. Excessive delays in pick-

up times may result in a late fee. Please refer to the information provided on the back of your pick-up card for further details

**Tuesday Night Confirmation Classes:** Classes start at 7:00 PM. You have the option to drop off the student either in person or via the parent drop-off line. Upon arrival, student will either proceed to their classrooms or gather in the hallways until the start of class. Once dropped off, students are required to remain in the hallways/class and are not permitted to leave for any reason.

Dismissal time is at 8:15 PM. Parents can pick up the student via the parent pick-up line located in front of the CCD Office by the gates. Parents who prefer not to use the pick-up line can park their cars and walk up to the gates to wait for the student. **It is important to note that students will not be allowed to walk to the parking lot for their safety.**

We encourage parents to wait for their children at our dedicated Bible Study, which is specifically tailored for you while your children attend confirmation classes. This is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth and fellowship.

### **CLASS TARDIES AND ABSENCES**

Attendance is recorded at the beginning of each class. *Perfect attendance will be awarded at the closing of the year in May for those students who are present for the full CCD calendar year.* We have a limited time with the students and it is of extreme importance that they attend class every week. Each student is allowed **no more than 5 absences per year in order to be promoted to the next level.** Tardies are disruptive to the class as well as providing a hindrance to your child's formation progress. **Two (2) tardies will count as one (1) absence.** Unfortunately, due to scheduling differences, students cannot make up classes on different days.

### **MASS ATTENDANCE**

One of the most important parts of our religious education program is Mass attendance. Families are asked to attend Sunday Mass weekly. **Each family will have to download the Pocket Platform app to check in when attending Mass. If the Pocket Platform app is not yet available by the first day of class, then families will have to check in to Mass weekly by scanning the QR Code "Ticket to Jesus" in the loggia and completing a short form.** Once signed in or checked in, that Mass attendance will be recorded and linked to the individual student. Each student is allowed **no more than one missed Mass every month in order to continue onto the second year of preparation.**

If the family chooses to attend Mass at a parish other than our own, we kindly request that they submit a bulletin, signed by a priest or deacon from that parish, to the student's teacher upon their return to class. Please ensure that the student's name and teacher's name are written on the bulletin to ensure proper acknowledgment.

For students enrolled in our program who are registered and attend Mass at a different parish, a letter from that parish confirming their weekly Mass attendance will be necessary towards the end of the year to proceed to the next year of preparation. It is the responsibility of parents to furnish the Religious Education/CCD office with this letter at least two weeks before the final CCD class.

The fundamentals of our Catholic faith are presented each week at Mass. Catechism classes are not a substitute for attending weekly Mass. Participating in every Sunday Mass and attending religious education classes should be top priority for every family. Attending Sunday Mass regularly is our gateway to spiritual growth.

### **COMMUNICATION**

All religious education communications will be channeled through **Flocknote**, the official parish communication service. Flocknote will be presented and discussed in detail during our parent orientation meetings. It will be the parent's responsibility to monitor messages regularly and keep up to date with our scheduled events. Hard copy reminders will not be provided.

### **DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

We endeavor to teach and to give all students a loving experience of God in our religious education program. Our catechists are volunteers who have committed themselves to our parish children. It is important that the students show proper respect and appreciation for this gift of time and talent. Please encourage your student to behave in a proper and courteous manner each week. In the rare occasion that a child has become disruptive, we will contact the parent to discuss strategies and ensure everyone has a positive and enriching experience.

No toys, electronic devices, headphones, earbuds, or personal entertainment devices will be permitted. If your child brings a cell phone, it must be turned off during class and kept in their pocket or purse. Cell phones in use during class will also be confiscated and returned to their parents after a meeting. Students may use the office phone if necessary for emergency purposes, and parents may contact the office as well. No food or drink in the classroom will be permitted.

## DRESS CODE

Students are to dress in a manner that reflects our Catholic values. While we encourage comfort, attire should be respectful and appropriate for a learning environment. Hoodies, short skirts and short shorts are not permitted. Tops should be modest, no crop tops, halter, strapless tops or spaghetti straps. T-shirts with inappropriate pictures or words are not allowed. Hats and caps are not to be worn indoors.

## PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

In keeping with the Archdiocese of Miami's commitment to protect every child from abuse, children enrolled in grades Kindergarten through Confirmation Preparation will be taught two classes on touching safety. Dates of these classes will be announced in advance. Information regarding the content of these classes is available in the Religious Education office. Additionally, our staff and volunteers all have been background checked and fingerprinted to ensure the safety of your children. They participated in the Virtus: Protecting God's Children program and receive periodic updates to their training. Your child's safety is our utmost concern. Adults are not permitted to use children's restroom. There is an adult restroom in the religious education office that teachers, aides and parents may use. Alternately, adults may also use the bathroom in the church or those adjacent to the parish office.

## FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION PREPARATION

1. Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion is a consecutive two-year process and begins when the child begins first grade. (Does not include Kindergarten) Children in older grades will receive religious formation classes at their grade level and will receive the sacrament after two consecutive years.
2. First Reconciliation and First Communion students must be registered by September 2024. A Baptismal certificate must be submitted at the time of registration.
3. Students must attend classes regularly and cannot be absent more than **5 times during the school calendar year.**
4. Tardies are disruptive to the class as well as providing a hindrance to your child's formation progress. **Two (2) tardies will count as one (1) absence.**
5. Family Mass attendance is required to participate in the program. See Mass Attendance above for more details.

**FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION PREPARATION**

**FAMILY REQUIREMENTS**

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion is a family affair at St. John Neumann. As such, your attendance is required at various gatherings that are an integral part of our Sacramental preparation program. **Attendance to these meetings is mandatory, and we will not offer make-up sessions. Please calendar the dates listed below:**

**Parent Orientation - (MANDATORY FOR ALL)**

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

@7:00PM in Resurrection Hall

OR

Monday, September 16, 2024

@7:00PM in Resurrection Hall

**Interactive Church Tour - (FIRST YEAR FAMILIES ONLY)**

Saturday, November 9, 2024

@10 AM in Main Sanctuary

OR

Saturday, November 16, 2024

@10 AM in Main Sanctuary

**Mandatory One Parent & Child First Communion Retreat  
(SECOND YEAR COMMUNION FAMILIES ONLY)**

Saturday, December 7, 2024

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

In Resurrection Hall

OR

Saturday, January 25, 2025

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

In Resurrection Hall

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament  
(SECOND YEAR COMMUNION FAMILIES ONLY)**

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

7:00 pm in Main Sanctuary

## GENERAL FAMILY REQUIREMENTS

Parents are their children's first teachers and examples of faith; with that in mind, we ask the following:

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and go to Confession frequently (see bulletin or website for times).
2. Discuss the Sunday readings with your children before or after attending Mass.
3. Help your children pray by praying regularly with them.
4. Please assure your children's attendance to all classes.
5. Show interest at what happened in your child's class. Take some time to discuss what they learned.
6. Join your children in participating in service opportunities that help others.
7. Foster an attitude of respect and cooperation within your child for religious education and for the catechists and assistants that share their faith.
8. Please, commit to memory the catechists name and room assigned to your children.

## CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Confirmation is a two-year process and is received in the ninth grade. However, if your child did not attend religious education classes in the eighth grade or did not attend a Catholic school for the eighth grade, he or she will be required to attend the first year of preparation and will be prepared for Confirmation during their second year.

**First Year Confirmation Preparation:** During the course of the first year of preparation all students are required to complete a **short essay and 20 community service hours**. A detailed contract will be provided to the students on the third week of class. All hours must be dated after the first day of classes, and must adhere to the guidelines provided. Additionally, there will be a **Confirmation exam which will be administered at the end of the year. The essay, community service hours and a passing grade on the exam must be achieved in order to continue onto the second year of preparation.**



**Second Year Confirmation Preparation:** During the second year of preparation all students are required to **complete a short essay, 15 community service hours and participate in a St. John Neumann youth retreat in order to receive Confirmation.** More information about the second year requirements will be provided during the third week of class. **The essay, community service hours and youth retreat must be achieved in order to receive Confirmation.**

### **ONGOING FAITH FORMATION**

Our religious education program is aimed at nurturing faith. Faith formation entails the continual growth of individuals into the likeness of Jesus Christ, embodying discipleship. To use the image of St. Paul “we put on Christ” so that Christ is the center of our lives. Every Catholic is engaged in this ongoing journey of faith formation, which commences with Baptism and culminates in eternal life with Jesus in heaven.

It is important to note that our program does not conclude with the reception of First Communion; rather, it initiates a lifelong journey. We invite you to enroll your children for continuous faith formation. Our classes, held on Tuesday afternoons and Sunday mornings, cater to students of various grade levels, ensuring a tailored educational experience. Please consider registering your children for these enriching opportunities to deepen their faith and spiritual growth.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We are always in need of caring and enthusiastic volunteers. Anyone interested in volunteering may contact our office at 305-253-3081 or by email at [ccd@sjn-miami.org](mailto:ccd@sjn-miami.org). As mandated by the Archdiocese of Miami all adult volunteers (18 and over) **MUST** submit to a background check, sign and uphold the Volunteer Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment, and complete and maintain Virtus training. There is no cost associated with completing these requirements. Our volunteers receive free tuition for their children’s religious education classes.

**Religious Education**  
**2024-2025**

First Day of Class: September 8, 2024

Last Day of Class: May 11, 2025

**Holidays & Breaks**

Professional Planning Day: Tuesday Nov. 5, 2024

Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 24, 2024 – Dec. 1, 2024

Christmas: December 22, 2024 – January 7, 2025

Martin Luther King: January 19-21, 2025

President's Day: February 16-18, 2025

Spring Break: March 23 – April 1, 2025

Palm Sunday: April 13, 2025

Easter: April 20, 2025