



St. John Neumann Religious Education
Parent Handbook 2023-2024

St. John Neumann Catholic Church
12125 SW 107th Avenue
Miami, FL 33176
305-255-6642

Pastor: Father José N. Alfaro
Parochial Vicars: Fr. Nicholas Toledo
Fr. Gustavo Santos

Religious Education Staff

Damis L. Gonzalez, Coordinator of Religious Education
damis@sjn-miami.org ext. 2008

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 must be walked to the classroom and be seated by 10:10 AM. Parents can 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 rooms E & F immediately following the 9 AM Mass or before the 11 AM Mass for fellowship.

Tuesday 4 PM Classes: Students must be walked to the classroom and be seated by 4 PM. Parents can pick up their children directly from the classroom at 4:45 PM.

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

Dismissal: Dismissal will be at the classroom door. Parents or guardians must pick up their children; siblings who are minors are not authorized. The laminated authorized pick up card issued upon registration must be used for student pick up. This card must be presented to the teacher every time the child is picked up from the class. **No child will be dismissed without this card.** Anyone without the pick-up card must go to the Religious Education office and show a photo ID to verify authorization. If you're late picking up your child, you must go to the Religious Education Office, present the card and sign them out. Excessive tardy pick-ups will be subject to a late fee. Consult the back of your pick up card for details.

Tuesday Night Confirmation Classes: Classes start at 7:00 PM. You may drop your child off either in person or via parent drop off line. They will then walk to their classrooms or congregate in the hallways until class begins. Once dropped off, they are not permitted to leave the hallways for any reason. **Dismissal is at 8:15 PM.** Parents can pick up via parent pick up line in front of the CCD Office by the gates. Those parents that do not wish to use the parent pickup line can park their cars and walk up to the gates to wait for their child. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WALK TO THE PARKING LOT FOR THEIR SAFETY.**

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.** Parents will also be able to visit the CCD kiosk and sign in manually. Once signed in or checked in, that Mass attendance will be recorded and linked to the individual CCD Student. Each student is allowed **no more than 1 missed Mass every month in order to be promoted to the next level.**

If the family goes out of town and attends Mass at a different parish, we kindly ask that a bulletin be brought back signed by a priest or a deacon from that parish. Please be sure to turn in the signed bulletin to your teacher when you return to class so that your Mass attendance can be recorded accordingly.

For those students attending our CCD program but are registered and attend Mass at a different parish, a letter from the parish asserting their weekly Mass attendance will be required toward the end of the CCD year in order to continue to the next year of preparation. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide the CCD office with **this letter at least two weeks before the last 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 in September. 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. All teachers are entitled to respect and proper behavior from all students at all times. 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 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.

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 Ed. 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, 2023. A Baptismal certificate must be submitted at the time of registration.
3. Students must attend CCD classes regularly and cannot be absent more than **5 times during the CCD 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 which 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)

Monday, August 28, 2023
@7:00PM in Resurrection Hall
OR

Tuesday, August 29, 2023
@7:00PM in Resurrection Hall

Mandatory Parent and Child Retreat
(SECOND YEAR COMMUNION FAMILIES ONLY)

Saturday, November 4, 2023
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
In Resurrection Hall

Interactive Church Tour
(FIRST YEAR FAMILIES ONLY)

Saturday, December 2, 2023
@ 1:00 PM in Main Sanctuary
OR

Saturday, December 9, 2023
@ 1:00 PM in Main Sanctuary

Benediction and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
(SECOND YEAR FAMILIES ONLY)

Wednesday, March 13, 2024
@ 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 CCD 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 CCD and also 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 normally received in the eighth grade. However, if your child did not attend religious education classes in the seventh grade or did not attend a Catholic school for the seventh 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 second 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 specific information about the second year requirements will be provided during the second week of class. **The essay, community service hours and youth retreat must be achieved in order to receive Confirmation.**

ONGOING FAITH FORMATION

The primary purpose of our religious education program is faith formation. Faith formation is an ongoing development of the whole person into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, Discipleship. To use the image of St. Paul “we put on Christ” so that Christ is the center of our lives. All Catholics are on the journey of faith formation. Our program does not stop with the reception of First Communion. We begin this life-long journey in the waters of Baptism. The end of this journey is eternal life with Jesus in heaven. Please consider registering your children for ongoing faith formation.

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. 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 **2023-2024**

First Day of Class: September 10, 2023

Last Day of Classes: May 5, 2024

Holidays & Breaks

Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 19, 2023 – Nov. 26, 2023

Christmas: December 24, 2023 – January 7, 2024

Martin Luther King: January 14 & 15, 2024

President's Day: February 18 & 19, 2024

Spring Break: March 24 – 31, 2024