

HANDBOOK 2025-26



*"A Community of Joyful Disciples
Grounded in Prayer, Presence, Proclamation"*

1200 South Warrior Lane | Waukee, Iowa 50263

Faith Formation Office: 515-850-1883

Parish Office: 515-987-4597

Dear Faith Formation Families,

Thank you for registering your children and youth in the Evangelization and Formation program. Our prayer is that they form new friendships, grow in faith, and become joyful disciples.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* # 2225 explicitly states that “Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children...(and they are expected) to initiate them at an early age into the mysteries of the faith and serve as the “first heralds” of the good news. The catechetical formation St. Boniface Parish offers will deepen the love for Christ and the Church your children already receive at home.

Our program places a special emphasis on Evangelization and discipleship. We invite each parent, catechist, and child to encounter Christ in an authentic way and become a bold witness at home, in the parish, and in the community. Using the Emmaus Model of Accompaniment in Luke 24: 13-35, we want to meet where families, children, and youth are, listen to their stories of life and struggles in faith, draw them to the truth, beauty, and goodness of God, and set their hearts on fire for Christ and His Kingdom.

Praise God for bringing a joyful team of staff committed to Youth Evangelization, Formation, and discipleship. They embody a real love for Christ and the Catholic Church. I ask for your prayers for the whole formation team—staff, catechists, and all the volunteers!

May the Blessed Mother and St. Boniface intercede for us!

Father Chinna Devaraj
Father Chinna Devaraj
Pastor

Megan McCarthy
Megan McCarthy
Administrative Coordinator

PARENT'S ROLE

- ◇ **PRAY AS A FAMILY:** Pick a time that works for your family's schedule. Begin with the sign of the Cross, review the day together, acknowledge God's blessings, and close it with Our Father, Hail Mary, and a Glory Be. You could also pray the rosary, and try listening to Family Mass Prep on the Hallow App.
- ◇ **ATTEND MASS REGULARLY:** The Holy Eucharist is the SOURCE and SUMMIT of our faith as Catholics. There's nothing more powerful than the participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Making an intentional commitment to attend Mass regularly changes your lives in ways you can never imagine.
- ◇ **TALK ABOUT THE CATHOLIC FAITH:** Children want explanation for the Catholic faith. Family dinner is a great time to share your story of salvation—that is, how you have come to love Jesus and the Church and how the Catholic faith guides your personal and professional life every day.
- ◇ **GO TO CONFESSION REGULARLY:** The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a perennial source of love and peace. No matter what burdens your soul, you should not be afraid of bringing them to the Lord for His transformation and mercy. Growing in holiness as a family will draw you to the depths of God's mercy.
- ◇ **SHARE YOUR TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE:** Faith Formation Program is a volunteer-driven one. Without committed stewardship of time, talent, and treasure from you—parishioners, it will be simply impossible to run this program. Thank you for your sacrifice—and for joyfully sharing your love for Christ.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE:

♦ CATECHIST AND CO-CATECHIST:

- Facilitate sessions for children and youth in grades K-12.
- You will receive training and materials, and ideally work with a co-catechist and accompany a small group of youth.
- You are asked to share the faith and model how it is lived out, and are NOT required to be an expert in theology.
- Teens may serve as co-catechists alongside an adult

♦ CHILDCARE LEAD/ASSISTANT:

- Lead/Assist in providing childcare for catechists' children during formation sessions

♦ OFFICE ASSISTANT:

- Assist in setting up and cleaning up Parish Hall and the classrooms with session materials. IMPORTANT: Material preparation can be completed at home

♦ CHILDREN/YOUTH CHOIR:

- This calendar year, we will be intentionally forming the children/youth choir for weekend Masses; if you are gifted in music, please help us lead the choir.

♦ HOSPITALITY:

- Parent and Family Formation Sessions require help with preparing the parish hall, setting up the place, serving a meal, clearing the tables, etc.

♦ CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:

- Lead or assist with Children's Liturgy of Word on Sundays at 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM Masses

♦ CHILDREN'S CHOIR/CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:

- Lead/assist with Children's/Youth Choir (2nd & 4th Sunday of the month at 10:30 AM Mass) and serve as a core team for Christmas Pageant (December 17, 2025)

♦ **TECHNOLOGY/PHOTOGRAPHY:**

- If you are good at technology/photography, please volunteer and support us with taking pictures of YEF Events

FORMAT FOR FORMATION SESSIONS:

- ♦ **SMALL GROUPS/CLASSROOM SESSIONS:** The children/teens will be placed in small groups with a lead catechist and a co-catechist. The purpose of being in small groups is to create an opportunity for your children/youth to BELONG, BELIEVE, and BECOME joyful disciples.
 - a. **Grade K-5 sessions** will meet in a classroom with their assigned small groups.
 - b. **Grade 6-12 sessions** will gather as a whole group in the Parish Hall for welcome and short catechesis. Then they break into their small groups for discussion and prayer.
- ♦ **FAMILY FORMATION SESSIONS (PARENTS WITH CHILDREN):** On these evenings, family as a whole gathers in the Parish Hall for a fun-filled session of catechesis. Siblings under the age of five are always welcome to join this session. These sessions occur during your child(ren)'s regularly scheduled session. Families will learn together the riches of the Catholic faith, and it is to empower parents to evangelize their children.
- ♦ **PARENT FORMATION SESSIONS (PARENTS ALONE):** Parents will gather together in the Parish Hall for the sessions. The sessions will have a speaker, prayer, and share with others about different ways of sharing the Catholic faith to your children. Youth will attend regular K–8 sessions during this time.

CURRICULUM

- ♦ **KINDERGARTEN** will use the early childhood program *Allelu!* to form a personal relationship with God and to learn about the riches of the Catholic faith. The program utilizes multi-sensory, hands-on activities like art, music, and dramatic play to engage young learners. It covers sacraments, the Church year, and the importance of faith in daily life including prayers, Scripture, and stories of saints.
- ♦ **FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION:** (Grade 2): The *Renewed and Received* and *Encounter with Christ* curriculums are being used for this year. It is designed to foster an understanding of the Catholic faith, gain knowledge of the Bible and Christ, and learn more about loving and relating to Him. *For more information, refer to the Sacramental Handbook.*
- ♦ **ELEMENTARY** (Grades 1-5): The children will use *Alive in Christ* to help form a personal relationship with God and to learn about the Church's teachings. It provides a strong catechetical foundation, presenting the Church's teachings in developmentally appropriate ways. *Alive in Christ* has an evangelistic emphasis: it wants to lead children, youth, and parents to become missionary disciples.
- ♦ **MIDDLE SCHOOL** (Grades 6-8): The middle school youth will utilize the *EDGE* curriculum from LifeTeen. It follows "GATHER—PROCLAIM—BREAK—SEND" format. Through fun-filled activities, games, small group discussions, and with personal prayer time, the program aims at leading the youth to Christ and to set their hearts on the discipleship journey. The program will be supplemented with social nights, service trips, retreats, etc.

- ◆ **CONFIRMATION PREPARATION (Grades 9–10):** The program uses Youth Alpha Series in Catholic Context, Never Alone: Life with the Holy Spirit (YDisciple), and IGNITE: Discipleship through Discussion (TorchBearer Ministries) to create an opportunity for experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit. *For more information and details, refer to the **Sacramental Handbook***
- ◆ **YOUTH GROUP (Grades 9–10):** Immediately following the 5 pm Mass on Sunday, youth meet together until 7 pm. Please contact **CAITLIN BURNS**: cburns@stbonifacechurch.org
- ◆ **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** Families who have children and youth with special learning needs are encouraged to contact Megan McCarthy (YEF Administrative Coordinator) for assistance with creating a plan for evangelization and formation.

LITURGICAL ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the evangelistic catechetical sessions, we have many opportunities for you to grow as joyful disciples. The Weekend Masses, Weekday Masses, First Monday Holy Hour with praise and worship, Tuesday Adoration, First Friday devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, First Saturday devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Advent and Lenten Parish Missions, and Confessions provide the children and youth to continue to learn and grow in the Catholic Faith. Children and Youth can be engaged in service within the parish liturgy and life as Greeters, Gift bearers, Lectors, Altar Servers, Cantors, Musicians etc.

- Once a month, there will be Youth/Family Mass where grades K–8 will lead in serving at the 10:30 AM Mass.
- A Youth Mass is celebrated at 5 pm on Sunday evenings, where high school youth will serve as Greeters, Altar Servers, Lectors, Cantors, Musicians, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers etc.

The following training will be implemented into the curriculum to encourage participation and growth in the understanding of the mystery of our faith.

- ◆ *Learning about the true presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist—grade 2*
- ◆ *Introduction to the sacrament of Reconciliation—grade 2*
- ◆ *Practicing the sacrament of Reconciliation—grade 3–12*
- ◆ *Altar server training—grade 4*
- ◆ *Lector training—grade 7*
- ◆ *Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion training—grade 10*

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

1. **CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD** (Ages 4-7): This is a worship experience for children and is offered as part of Sunday Mass. It mirrors the worship experience of the larger community, with a style that is engaging and interactive. We invite children ages 4-7 (and ages 2-3 with a parent) to participate in the Children’s Liturgy during the 8:30am and 10:30am Sunday Masses.
2. **FAITH THROUGH ARTS:**
 - **CHILDREN’S CHOIR (Grades 1–5):** Children who love music and want to be part of Children’s Choir, please contact **Milan Hale**: mhale@stbonifacechurch.org
 - **YOUTH CHOIR (Grades 6–12):** Youth who love music and want to be part of Youth Choir, please contact **Milan Hale**: mhale@stbonifacechurch.org
 - **VISUAL ARTS (Grades K-12):** Children and Youth who want to explore and learn about the 7 sacraments through the arts (painting, coloring, drawing, etc.), please contact **Megan McCarthy**: mmccarthy@stbonifacechurch.org

- **GRACE WITHIN (Grades 1–12):** GIRLS in grades 1–12 meet on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. The girls come together to pray, dance, and enter the path of holiness. For details, please contact Monica Vanorny: gracewithin@stbonifacechurch.org

SUMMER FORMATION OPPORTUNITES:

Vacation Bible School: (Ages 4 through those entering 4th grade):

Children are welcome to register for VBS. We require many volunteers (adults and high school youth) to run the program. In January of 2026, Youth Evangelization and Formation Office will have more details for you about the programs and dates.

Catholic Youth Camp (St. Thomas More Center, Panora, IA): It is a great opportunity for youth to grow in faith, create memories, and build friendships. STMC will release the details in January 2026.

FEES

For the 2025-26 fiscal year, the fees for youth in grades K–9 are:

- ⇒ 1 Child \$180
- ⇒ 2 Children \$280
- ⇒ 3 or more children \$380

As you register, please prayerfully consider renewing your tithing commitment to the parish or add an additional tithing towards Youth Evangelization & Formation.

IMPORTANT:

No child will be turned away because of financial reasons.

If you need financial assistance, please contact Brittany Finley (Parish Accountant): bfinley@stbonifacechurch.org; Or, you can contact Father Chinna Devaraj in the Parish Office.

FEES ARE OPTIONAL for Catechists, Assistant catechists, and Child-care attendants. However, your donation helps others in need and supports our evangelization and catechetical program.

REGISTRATION

Registration in the Faith Formation Program is open to families registered in the parish. If you are not a parishioner and desire to register in the program, we will invite you to become part of the parish.

IMPORTANT DATES/TIMES:

- ♦ **2025-2026 Faith Formation Sessions:** From September 24, 2025 through April 15, 2026

ELEMENTRAY (K – 5 grades)

Wednesdays 4:30-5:30 pm (1st Session)
5:45-6:45 pm (2nd Session)

FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST COMMUNION: See: [First Eucharist Sacramental Preparation Calendar 2025-2026-2.pdf](#)

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6 – 8 grades)

Wednesdays 7:00-8:15 pm

HIGH SCHOOL (9 -12 grades)

Sundays: 5:00 pm Youth Mass

Confirmation: 5:00 – 7:00 pm

9th graders begin October 12, 2025

Youth Group: 5:45–7:00 pm

COMMUNICATION

Youth Evangelization and Formation Office communicates with parishioners through **FLOCKNOTE** emails/texts. Please make sure your email and mobile number are current and that they are set to accept Flocknote emails/texts from us. It is the family's responsibility to provide current contact information during the registration process, to keep the information updated throughout the year, and to read all communications from our office. Sessions may be cancelled because of weather conditions. The standard rule is: when Waukee schools are closed, faith formation sessions are automatically cancelled. In the event of a late afternoon storm, watch for an email or text message.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there a home study option?

Evangelization and Formation require a community. Children and youth need to be surrounded by people who embody the love they have for Christ, the Sacraments, and the Church. We strongly discourage parents wanting home study unless there is a pastoral need. In such situations, please contact **Megan McCarthy** directly.

What if my child has to miss a session?

If your child misses a session, please review the weekly Flocknote newsletter and discuss the content at home with them. We will contact the parents if a child is absent for multiple sessions. If your child needs to be dismissed early, please notify both your child's catechist and the Youth Evangelization & Formation Office in advance.

Email: familyfaith@stbonifacechurch.org

Phone: 515-850-1883

Can I send a snack with my child?

Please do not allow your child to bring gum, candy, or food unless an arrangement is made with your child's catechist. Some of our youth have severe food allergies; therefore, please refrain from bringing foods containing peanuts or tree nuts.

Will pictures be taken?

Many group and individual photographs and videos of the activities youth are participating in will be taken throughout the year. Those pictures/videos may be posted in St. Boniface. If you do not want your child's photograph taken, please indicate at registration.

Can my child bring a friend?

It is our policy that formation sessions are for registered families of St. Boniface parish. However, at the middle school and high school sessions, youth are encouraged to invite a friend with the expectation that the Youth Evangelization and Formation Office is notified, emergency contact information is given, and all Youth Evangelization and Formation guidelines are followed.

YOUTH EVANGELIZATION AND FORMATION

Megan McCarthy

YEF Administrative Coordinator (Interim)

Elementary Formation (K–5 grades)

Formation through Arts

Christmas Pageant

VBS

Email: mmccarthy@stbonifacechurch.org

Sarah Kelly

Middle School (6–8 grades)

Confirmation Preparation (9–10 grades)

Email: skelly@stbonifacechurch.org

Dominica Bean

Children's Liturgy of the Word (Early Childhood)

First Reconciliation/Communion Preparation (2 grade)

Family Formation Sessions (K-8 grade)

Altar Server Ministry

Email: dbean@stbonifacechurch.org

Caitlin Burns

Youth Mass (Sunday 5pm Mass)

Youth Group (9–12 grades)

Email: cburns@stbonifacechurch.org

Monica Vanorny

Grace Within Coordinator (1-12 grades)

Email: gracewithin@stbonifacechurch.org

Milan Hale

Music and Liturgy

Email: mhale@stbonifacechurch.org