

theGoodnews

The Official Newsletter of The Good Shepherd Catholic Cluster



"As a Catholic faith community we strive to unite as a people of God whose life is centered in the Eucharist. We seek to live the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, called to be faithful stewards of God's gifts, growing in faith and attending to the spiritual and social needs of all."

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My brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we look to start another academic year within our cluster, there are a couple of needs for which we need to pray. First, we need to pray with and for all our families of young people within our parishes. It is easily forgotten that the first means of education, the primary education of each of us, from children to parents to priests, is the weekly Sunday Mass. Let us beg God that all of us may allow God to form us by obeying His command to attend Mass every week and on Holy Days (if not more). All other forms of education and spiritual connection depend on this one. Christ rose from the dead on Sunday; if we are really people of the resurrection to eternal life (and not to eternal death), may we express our fidelity to God on Sundays so God may be faithful to us in all His promises.



Second, we need to pray for and support our teachers, DRE, staff, and all who work for education in the faith for our community. The most important knowledge, more important than math, English, history, or any other subject, is knowledge of God and His family the Church. Without knowledge of God, what does anything else gain us? May God fill us with knowledge of Himself. May God find us willing to make sacrifices to make room for God. And may God bless our teachers and staff who dedicate themselves, in big and small ways, to completing this task. Good teachers are like angels blowing trumpets before the God of Heaven, making everyone aware that God and His love really is here. Pray for our education personnel.

Third, let us pray to God that our parish may be a parish of prayer. This is the divinely ordained three-fold education plan of God: weekly Mass, parish education, and family prayer. May all our families be families of prayer where God isn't only mentioned on Sundays or in times of trouble, but daily in every time and place. May our parents be holy parents; may our grandparents be holy grandparents; and may our children have a hunger, openness, recognition, and fire for God in all things. Holy children effect their parents; holy parents effect their children. May God bring this holiness about profoundly and overwhelmingly in every soul.

Finally, if you have time after all of the above, please pray for your poor pastor. He's quite something; but I can tell you he hungers for your spiritual success more than for his own. You are his joy and crown. Please, if you have an extra 3 seconds, raise a prayer up for him.

May God bless you, each and all, as we enter this harvest season, so that God's harvest of love, peace, joy, and beautiful souls may be over-flowing and super abundant. Amen.

Fr. Chris Podhajsky

HOLY HUDDLE



GOOD SHEPHERD CLUSTER

FAITH FORMATION 2025-2026 GAME PLAN

Calling ALL K-8th Graders!

It's a brand-new season of
Faith Formation!

Just like in sports, we need time to huddle up, learn the game plan, and grow our skills. Faith Formation is our practice time to strengthen our hearts, our minds, and our love for God—so we're ready to live out our faith every day. So register TODAY!



But a great team needs more than just players—we need coaches, helpers, and encouragers! From the pre-game meal to helping teach and assist in classes, we need YOU to help make this season a win for our kids and families.

Reach out to the Parish Office or Tara Underwood and come be part of the Holy Huddle and help us kick off a great year!

 Faith Formation
Game Plan 

2nd Wednesday of the Month

5:00 – 5:45pm

 Pre-Game Meal -Optional Free-will donation dinner for Faith Formation kids & families. Fuel up before the huddle!

Weekly on Wednesdays

5:45 – 6:00pm

 Suit Up

Make your way to the Church and get ready for the Holy Huddle.

6:00 – 6:45pm

 Holy Huddle

All grades K-8 gather to learn, grow, and practice our faith.

6:45pm

 Final Whistle

Classes wrap up—take what you've learned and live it out all week!



Good Shepherd Cluster 2025-2026 Faith Formation Game Plan

Date	Session	Special Event
September		
Wednesday, September 3,		Catechist & Catechist Aide Meeting
Wednesday, September 10,	PRE GAME MEAL & Session 1	
Wednesday, September 17,	Session 2	
Wednesday, September 24,	Session 3	
October		
Wednesday, October 1,	Session 4	7-8 Youth Mass Signup
Wednesday, October 8,	PRE GAME MEAL & Session 5	7-8 Youth Mass Practice
Sunday, October 12		7-8 Grade Youth Mass @ 10am
Wednesday, October 15,	Session 6	
Wednesday, October 22,	Session 7	
Wednesday, October 29,	Session 8	
November		
Wednesday, November 5,	Session 9	5-6 Youth Mass Signup
Wednesday, November 12,	PREGAME MEAL & Session 10	First Reconciliation Retreat
Saturday, November 15		5-6 Youth Mass Practice 5-6 Grade Youth Mass @ 4pm
Wednesday, November 19,	Session 11	First Reconciliation Event
Wednesday, November 26,	THANKSGIVING Break	
December		
Wednesday, December 3,	Session 12	
Wednesday, December 10,	Session 13	
Wednesday, December 17,	Session 14	
Wednesday, December 24,	CHRISTMAS Break - No Class	
Wednesday, December 31,	NEW YEARS Break - No Class	
January		
Wednesday, January 7,	Session 15	
Wednesday, January 14,	PRE GAME MEAL & Session 16	3rd & 4th Youth Mass Signup
Wednesday, January 21,	Session 17	3rd & 4th Youth Mass Practice
Sunday, January 26		3rd + 4th Grade Youth Mass @ 8am
Wednesday, January 28,	Session 18	1st & 2nd Grade Youth Mass Signup
February		
Wednesday, February 4,	Session 19	1st & 2nd Grade Youth Mass Practice
Sunday, February 8		1st + 2nd Grade Youth Mass at 10am
Wednesday, February 11,	PRE GAME MEAL & Session 20	
Wednesday, February 18,	ASH WEDNESDAY	
Wednesday, February 25,	Session 21	
March		
Wednesday, March 4,	Session 22	Kindergarten Youth Mass Signup
Wednesday, March 11,	PRE GAME MEAL & Session 23	Kindergarten Youth Mass Practice
Saturday March 14th		Kindergarten Youth Mass @ 4pm
Wednesday, March 18,	Session 24	Stations of the Cross for Faith Formation
Friday, March 20,	6pm - Whole Cluster Shadow Stations of the Cross by the Faith Formation Students	
Sunday, March 22		Iowa Catholic Youth Conference for grades 6-8 in Cedar Rapids
Wednesday, March 25,	Session 25	First Eucharist Retreat
April		
Wednesday, April 1,	EASTER BREAK - No Class	
Wednesday, April 8,	PRE GAME MEAL & Session 26	
Sunday, April 12		Good Shepherd Cluster First Communion at 1pm
Wednesday, April 15,	Session 27	
Wednesday, April 22,	Session 28	
Wednesday, April 29,	Session 29	Final Session Event

From Gladys' desk:

God's blessings on a Beautiful New Day. I am back at the office, my foot is well on the mend, and "Thank you" to everyone for all your well wishes and prayers, I know they helped me heal faster. How exciting! There are some wonderful changes coming to the Faith Formation program, and to the Archdiocese, and there are many opportunities for each of us to get involved and participate more fully. The time for Small Group Sessions is coming fast, we typically start the first week of October, so be thinking of what you'd like to do and who you would like to invite to share those sessions with. I have a study program on the Gospel of Luke with DVD and study guide, and I'm looking into how to present the 5th Season of The Chosen. New and interesting suggestions are always welcome from anyone in the Pastorate.

Stop by the Office on the corner of Court and Maple or call 641-394-2105 Or give me a call anytime, Gladys Christoph 641-330-9223

Confirmationnews

Confirmation Sunday, September 21, 2025

10: 00 AM Mass at Holy Family with Archbishop Thomas Zinkula

A Journey of Faith and Conversion

Have you felt a stirring in your heart... a desire to know God more deeply? The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is the Church's pathway for those seeking to encounter Christ, grow in faith, and enter fully into the Catholic Church.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the OCIA is for:

- Those never baptized who wish to become Catholic.
- Christians baptized in another tradition who seek full communion with the Catholic Church.
- Uncatechized Catholics who were baptized but never received First Communion and/or Confirmation.
- Children age 7+ who have never been baptized.

This journey includes:

- Liturgical – Celebrating meaningful rites that mark your steps along the way.
- Catechetical – Learning and embracing the truths of the Catholic faith.
- Pastoral – Walking alongside a faith-filled community and a personal sponsor.

Whether you're curious about the Catholic Church, returning after time away, or ready to take the next step toward the Sacraments, the OCIA invites you to say "yes" to God's call.

Your journey of faith starts here.

We will begin the OCIA on September 28, 2025, at Holy Family Parish in the Gathering Space, New Hampton.

If you have questions or are interested in starting this journey, please contact Deacon Vic DeSloover at 563-429-2773.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING
CATHOLIC?

The Archdiocese of Dubuque is holding 34 regional informational sessions for parishioners to learn more about the Journey in Faith process. These sessions will further explain information about what will be released at dbqjourneyinfaith.org in early September. **What will be the focus of these meetings?**

Participants will learn more about:

- Rationale, process, and timeline for Journey in Faith
- Importance of prayer and synodal listening in this process
- Proposed pastorate models as possible new groupings of parishes for the future
- Ways to listen, learn, ask questions and provide insights throughout the process include engaging in your parish's October and November local meetings and providing written feedback via the Journey in Faith website.



**Journey
in Faith**

Trust. Transform. Together.

Why should I attend?

Attending these meetings will give you the background about the challenges we face and the opportunities we have to be honest, courageous, faithful, and hopeful. Your ideas about how we can have vibrant and sustainable parishes focused on evangelization for the next 25+ years are very important as future plans are developed. While these September meetings are information focused, they set the stage for parishioners to provide thoughtful verbal feedback at local parish input sessions in October and November and written feedback via the Journey in Faith website.

How do I know which meeting to attend?

Parishioners should attend a meeting held in their Regional Planning Area (RPA).

When and where are the meetings?

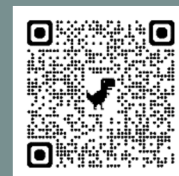
You are welcome to attend any one of the Region 2 meetings. They are at the following times:

- *Tuesday, September 23 @ 6 PM - 9 PM. Location is Immaculate Conception Church, Charles City*
- *Wednesday, September 24 @ 1 PM - 4 PM. Location is Holy Family Parish, New Hampton*
- *Friday, September 26 @ 1 PM - 4 PM. Location is Sacred Heart Church, Osage*

How do I sign up to attend?

In order to assist us in our planning, we ask that parishioners RSVP using

<https://tinyurl.com/JIFSeptSignUp> or the QR code:



What if I'm unable to attend a September regional meeting or registration in my region reaches capacity?

If you are unable to attend a September regional meeting, you are urged to review all of the information on the website including videos, maps, and spreadsheets that will be released on September 2nd. This will enable you to have background prior to attending your own local parish's meetings in October and November. Registration is capped at approximately 500 per event due to capacity of Churches.

If you have any questions, please contact the Pastoral Office at 641-394-2105. Please watch the bulletin and our social media for our October and November meeting dates and times.

WE LOVE HAVING YOU AS

a part of
our Flock!



*Keep in touch with us via
email and text!*



TEXT
THEGOODSHEPHERD
TO 84576



OR CONNECT WITH US ONLINE AT:

goodshepherdcluster.flocknote.com

Text STOP to 84576 to stop txt notifications at any time. Text HELP for help. There is no charge for this service, but your carrier message and data rates may apply. View full privacy policy & terms at flocknote.com/txt.



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