



LNMV RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION PROGRAM

2023-2024
CATECHIST HANDBOOK

Contents

Volunteer Positions	2
Class Start Time – Catechist Arrival Time	2
Class Release Time	2
For Catechists in grades 1-4	3
School Security Procedures	3
Mail Folders – Communication	3
Volunteer Training Requirements	4
ENHANCED ESSENTIAL 3 (EE3)	4
Protecting God’s Children for students	5
Website	5
Student Text Books	6
Grades 1-8	6
Confirmation Classes Year I and II (Gr. 9 & 10)	6
Resources and Classroom Supplies	7
Making Copies	8
Attendance Policy	8
Welcome your Students	8
Classroom	9
Discipline Policy	9
Human Sexuality and Identity	10
Student Expectations	12
Special Events	13
Prayer Testing	14
Name tags- plates	15
Weather cancellations	15
Contact Information	16

Volunteer Positions

Catechist: Prepare weekly lessons. Evangelize and share the love of Christ while teaching. Help each child to build a loving and lasting relationship with Jesus.

Co-Catechist: Team teaches with another adult by either rotating weeks or sharing teaching each week.

Classroom Aide: Be present in the classroom to aide the Catechist in classroom management and other classroom tasks.

Class Start Time –Catechist Arrival Time

Classes begin at 6:30 on Wednesday evenings. **We ask all our Catechists and aides to be here at least 10 minutes before class begins.** At least one adult needs to be in the room before children can enter; if both will be late, please notify the office before 6:15. Please instruct your students that they should not be in the room without their aide or catechist in the room. Opening prayer over the all-school speaker system will begin promptly at 6:30pm. Please have your class stop what they are doing, listen to the saint of the day/week and then participate in the prayer when prompted. Afterwards, feel free to engage the kids in prayer and stories on the saint.

Class Release Time

Class dismissal times will be staggered: 7:45pm for grades 1-4, 7:50pm for grades 5-8, 7:55pm for Confirmation 1 and 2.

Please keep your students in the room until the proper dismissal time. If some classes are let out early, it can make it difficult for other catechists to finish their lessons when the halls are busy. Please **close your class with prayer** before sending them home.

For Catechists in grades 1-4:

Parents are instructed that **they must pick up their child from your room** or make arrangements for an older sibling to pick them up. Carpools are common; parents have been instructed to arrange that

ahead of time with you, so you know to whom you are releasing the child. This is for the child's safety. If you have a late parent, please feel free to walk the child to the office area to wait for their ride.

School Security Procedures

While we enjoy a familiar and safe rural environment, we still must prioritize student safety. All our volunteers in the building have had the essential 3 checks (background check, safe environment training and code of conduct). In continuing with our safe environment, we have implemented building security procedures.

The doors of the school will be locked at 6:35pm and re-opened at 7:38pm. All parents coming to pick up their children are asked to remain in the hallway in front of the office until 7:40 pm and once in hallway by classrooms we ask that they whisper to keep from distracting the classrooms. All parents who wish to visit a classroom with their child or be in the hallways to walk in a late student after 6:35 must sign in at the office prior to going to the classroom.

Mail Folders – Communication

Communication is always tricky when everyone is dropping off and picking up children at the same time. We are asking all Catechists to check their grade's mail folder which will be in a Communication Cart just outside of the main office each week BEFORE class. Notices of absences, handouts and communication letters will be placed in them each week. The hanging folders on the door will have mostly Confirmation blank forms and one for students to turn items in. There will also be one pocket marked for the RE Office. Using this folder assures that it does not get set aside in the business of the evening. Your folders will also be checked each week. Communication is important. If you have questions, contact information will be posted on the last page of this booklet. Regular forms will be in a hanging folder system on the office door.

Volunteer Training Requirements

Protecting God's Children Safety program is a requirement by the diocese for any volunteer who has a regular presence with minors. They must complete what is known as **The Essential 3**. All parishes must comply with the program. Before regular contact with children, volunteers must complete three requirements.

First Requirement: Attend a Virtus training class. Virtus training is done online.

To register for a VIRTUS session, please follow these steps:

1. Go to www.virtus.org
2. Click on the "First-Time Registrant" link in the left-hand column
3. Select "Begin the Registration Process"
4. Select "Saint Paul and Minneapolis (Archdiocese)" from the drop-down box

Follow the screen prompts to continue the on-line registration.

Second Requirement: Read and sign a Code of Conduct Form and watch the training online, needs to be renewed every 3 years.

Third Requirement: Complete background check online and watch any required PowerPoint\video through the Virtus.org website.

ENHANCED ESSENTIAL 3 (EE3)

Essential 3 requirements now require to be renewed every three years by all clergy, chancery, parish and Catholic School employees, and volunteers who have either regular or unsupervised interaction with minors or vulnerable adults. The Enhanced Essential 3 re-credentialing process consists of a background recheck, newly signed Code of Conduct, all done through Virtus.org website along with completing the viewing of different online videos. You will be notified individually if there is any action you need to complete. Thank you for doing all you can to protect our children.

Protecting God's Children for students

Archbishop Hebda is committed to fully meeting the expectations of the US Bishops because protecting children is part of our rich and long Roman Catholic tradition as summarized in the "Principles for Child Protection Catechesis" In keeping with the requirements of the US Bishops, every parish is to provide safety formation annually at each grade level. Because the archdiocese expects full participation from every student registered in our programs, we need to take extra care to take attendance on the evening designated as the week we do the safety teaching as noted on the calendar. These classes are taught by our catechists and the lesson materials will be given to each catechist two weeks prior to the class. Each class will receive a sheet of correlating Catholic principals to incorporate into their lessons. We have the evenings listed for each grades lessons – but if your class absences are too high (5-6%), please talk with the DRE to possibly reschedule for another evening or if a make-up session should be offered for those who were absent.

Website

The LNMV Religious Education website is www.lnmvre.net. We are hoping to improve communication and have access to all forms you may need. You will notice a separate page for weather updates as well as links to the Bible and Catechism of the Catholic Church. There will be a page for Catechists where we will have some common forms as well as other information. Please let me know if you have any requests of items to be on the website. When weather is questionable, please follow us on the weather page. We will post if class is still on or if there is a chance that it may be cancelled.

Student Text Books

Grades 1-8

We use the Faith and Life Series by Ignatius Press for grades 1-8. The Student Textbooks are NOT to be written in as we re-use them each year to save costs. We order activity books for students to write in and to be used in the classroom or as homework

assignments. These activity books the students can bring home with them at the end of the year. Please take time to understand the Teacher's manuals as they give well laid out lesson plans and suggestions for weekly teaching. The Ignatius website also provides well laid out lesson plans along with quiz and unit test files. **The quiz and unit test files require a parish password which is: EKX83LF** The website is: <http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/FaithAndLife/downloads.htm>

Confirmation Classes Year I and II (Gr. 9 & 10)

Both Year I and Year II Confirmation Classes will be assigned a classroom. Each student will have their own bible, and there will be several Catechisms of the Catholic Church available as well as other resources needed for the night. Confirmation catechists will be getting weekly lesson sheets with key points, conversation starters and an outline of what is to be covered in the evenings' class, including scripture and CCC resources. We ask catechists to review the lesson plan and be ready to lead small group discussions. The evening will start with students in their classrooms as assigned, the Catechist with help lead their students in the All-school prayer at 6:30pm, take attendance and make and give out any announcement and reminders and collect assignments or folder work, etc. This is a time to check in with the students on their week with God, assignments and activities related to the program, etc. At 6:40pm you should present and start the lesson presentation according to the worksheet. Catechist should help keep the students focused. The lesson presentations will vary throughout the year, mostly we will be using the CHOSEN Confirmation program video for Year 1. The class syllabus will outline when guest speakers or class presentations are scheduled. Lesson plan Worksheets will be distributed ahead of time. The lesson plan will provide instruction of what needs to happen for the evening. Catechists should encourage students to look up references in their Bible as well as underline key passages or from the CHOSEN program. The catechists can also help them to learn how to utilize the Catechism and guide conversation to help them understand the objectives of the lesson plan, helping them make applications in their own lives of living out or defending their faith, using the worksheets as a discussion tool. Catechists should

assign any lessons for the next week. **Father VanDenBroeke** will be the principal catechist in Year 2. Small group discussions will take place as Father directs. Lessons will be taken mostly from YDisciple and the first 5 weeks will be on the Holy Spirit and then they will move to Hot Topics. The evening should always wrap up with a prayer. As the group gets more comfortable with each other, encourage prayers of petition praying for the needs of the world, community, class and individuals.

Resources and Classroom Supplies

FORMED is one of the key resources for yourself, as well as for using lessons in the classroom. **Please take advantage of this wonderful resource!** Other resources, books, and DVDs are available for you. Because of storage, making arrangements at least two days in advance will assure they will be available for you. We should have enough crayons, glue sticks, children's scissors, rosaries, paper, and some markers in each catechist's box. Please let us know of any particular classroom supplies you would need or want and we will work on having that available for you. If you have a suggestion for a resource that would be of value for the curriculum, please submit the request in writing to the DRE for a budget and resource review. If you are looking for a resource that fits your lesson plans, please ask the DRE and we will see what we can do to obtain it.

Making Copies

The copy machine at the school is available for our use. To keep track of paper and copy costs, our program has its own code for the copy machine. That code is 6434. Please do not share this code with anyone except catechists. It is always helpful if you are able to plan ahead to make sure your copies are available. If you have something in a word document or scanned, please feel free to e-mail lnmvre@holycrossschool.net by 3pm on Wednesday with how many copies you need. We can make sure copies are waiting for you in your communications folder on Wednesday evening. If you must make copies the night of religion class, I would like to suggest coming a little earlier. We will also have volunteers who will be in the office to help make copies. If there is a line up for copies, please

leave it with them and WRITE down which grade and room you are in so they know where to deliver the copies. NO Students are allowed in the workroom. Be aware of copyright laws if you copying anything you bring that we may not have licenses for.

Attendance Policy

Each room is to take attendance each week. We will be asking for you to put these records into your communications folders each week after class. This is helpful when parents report an absence to the office prior to class as I am able to just mark the attendance record right in your folder. Occasionally you will have an unexcused absence, but a parent called in and left a message after class time began. We can change that absence to excused and keep accurate records. We will have electronic filled attendance sheet for you and updates to your list may be done during the first two weeks. These records are very helpful for us in managing the program.

Welcome your Students

No matter how good the content we teach, if we do not establish good relationships with our students and their families, the lessons we teach will stay just that – lessons – and won't change their lives. One easy way to begin this welcoming and open relationship is to send something home in writing to the families of your students, introducing yourself, expressing how excited you are for the year and opening a space for future conversation.

Parents, when calling in absences, sometimes do not know the name of their child's teacher. Parents are the first teachers of their children and if there is good communication between the classroom teacher and home, there will be greater success in learning. If you would like help drafting a note or letter, please let the office know.

Classroom

Those teaching in a regular classroom have the chance to get to know the daytime teacher in the classroom as well as the students. We would like to foster a stronger connection between the day and

evening students. Please make a letter of introduction from you, as the Catechist, using the room for religious education in the evening (you can use the sample provided).

Some suggestions would be:

- Say a prayer together with the class for the daytime class room,
- let the daytime class know on a note you said a prayer for them each week let them know what you are studying
- Ask one or two questions of the daytime class on how their day was.

Building a bridge between daytime and evening classes makes it more personal for the students and a stronger respect for the space they are sharing. Please leave your classroom in the same order you found it. If extra chairs or tables have been set up for your class, please have the students help at the end of the class time by stacking the chairs and folding the table up before they leave. A map of the building will be in your Catechist folder at the in-service.

Discipline Policy

Some students after being in school all day, come to class unprepared to sit and learn. This can be a challenge for Catechists who are coming to teach and pass on the faith. One of the things a Catechist can do is to set the tone by setting high and clear expectations the first evening. Be firm to start with, it is your starting point. Disorderly and disrespectful conduct to catechists-teachers or peers is not acceptable. Resolution will depend upon the severity of the problem and frequency. WE STRONGLY encourage you to use the guidelines below. General guidelines are listed below.

- The classroom aide or catechist will verbally correct the erring student by directing the student to stop the unacceptable behavior and conform to the expected behavior.
- A verbal correction may be followed up with a letter to the parents letting them know there was an issue. A copy of this letter is provided for the Catechist and should be sent home

with the child in a sealed envelope. If the behavior continues, step two can be followed.

- Step two involves the student being sent to the DRE in the office to discuss the behavior and come up with a plan for the rest of evening.
- Student may return to the classroom upon Catechist and DRE approval. There will be follow up with a notification of parents. If behavior problems continue we move to step 3.
- Step three involves the student doing seat work in the office the remainder of class time. The DRE will contact the parents about the issue and together determine the proper resolution of the problem which could result in the dismissal of the student from the program. A plan for continued education of the student will be completed with the help of the parents.

Human Sexuality and Identity

(From guidance by the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, 2019)

The LNMV Religious Education program is committed to providing a safe environment that allows students to flourish academically, physically, and spiritually. Catholic religious education programs are obliged to provide an education and resources consistent with Catholic teaching. The starting point for Catholic education is a deeply held understanding that affirms the God-given irrevocable dignity of every human person.

Catholic teaching permeates and shapes the ethos of LNMV Religious Education. Therefore, we are guided by the following principles to ensure that the immeasurable dignity of every child is protected and respected, particularly as it relates to foundational beliefs of the Catholic Church:

- God created each person body and soul “in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27). The dignity of each person and the

source of his or her most important identity is found in this creation in the image and likeness of God (CCC §364).

- God uses the body to reveal to each person his or her sexual identity as male or female (Compendium §224). A person's embrace of his or her God-given sexual identity is an essential part of living a fulfilled relationship with God, with oneself, and with each other (Laudato Si §155).
- The harmonious integration of a person's sexual identity with his or her sex is an expression of the inner unity and reality of the human person made body and soul in the image and likeness of God (CCC §364-65).
- The physical, moral, and spiritual differences between men and women are equal and complementary. The flourishing of family life and society depend in part on how this complementarity and equality are lived out (CCC §2333-4).
- All students and families deserve interactions with Catholic school communities that are marked by respect, charity, and the truth about human dignity and God's love (Deus Caritas Est §20).

Application of Principles

1. All religious education policies, procedures, resources, employee training, and assistance given to families are consistent with the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person, including human sexuality.
2. Student's name and pronouns usage will correspond to his/her sex (see definitions).
3. Student access to facilities will align with his/her sex.
4. Participation in single-sex curricular and extracurricular activities is based on the sex of the child.
5. Expressions of a student's sexual identity are prohibited when they cause disruption or confusion regarding the Church's teaching on human sexuality. Our dress codes are intended to underscore the Church's teaching on the difference and complementarity of the two sexes.
6. Students and families in the LNMV Religious Education program can expect that we acknowledge that God has created each person as a unity of body and soul, as male or female, and that God-designed sexual expression and

behavior must be exclusively oriented to love and life in marriage between one man and one woman.

7. We will communicate with parents or guardians about their child's behavior and inform them of any concerns relating to the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health, safety, or welfare of their child, except when advised otherwise by law enforcement or a social service agency.

Definitions

1. Sex refers to a person's biological identification as male or female based upon physical characteristics present at birth.
2. Sexual identity refers to a person's identity as male or female that is congruent with one's sex.
3. Sexual binary refers to the God-given gift of the human family created male or female in the image and likeness of God.
4. Transgender or gender non-conforming is an adjective describing a person who perceives his or her sexual identity to be different from his or her sex and publicly presents himself or herself as the opposite sex or outside the sexual binary. Such public expressions that are intended to communicate a sexual identity different from one's sex include, but are not limited to, utilizing pronouns of the opposite sex, changing one's name to reflect the cultural norms of the opposite sex, wearing a uniform designated for the opposite sex, and undergoing surgery to change the appearance of one's reproductive or sexual anatomy.

Student Expectations

- Respect school and student property. Wipe muddy feet before entering the building, use garbage cans for garbage, do not sit or stand on desks or tables. Keep hands out of day-students' desks and off of day-class items, if this is not observed it could lead to disciplinary action.
- Respect yourself, your peers and all the teachers. Listen quietly when someone is talking and speak with good manners. Keep hands and feet to yourself. Do not run in the hallways. The Gym is only used with permission.

- Arrive prepared to learn and to contribute positively to the class. (Read chapters, complete assignments, and practice prayers regularly.)
- Students are not to bring I-pods, cell phones, headphones, food, drink, gum, weapons, toys, or anything else to class that will cause distractions. Any items brought to class that does NOT have to do with Religion should be confiscated. You may return items at the end of class time but for multiple offenses you can turn it in to the office.
- Appropriate dress: Students should dress respectfully for class; NO hats, caps, tank tops, t-shirts with inappropriate sayings, or short shorts are allowed. Please enforce this.
- Students who make a threat of any kind to their teacher, peers, helpers or parents, will immediately result with dismissal from the program

Special Events

Throughout the year there may be group events in the Gym for the whole student body. We will always give you a notice ahead of time of these events. Most events will take place at 6:45 unless otherwise noted. This leaves time in your classrooms to take attendance and work on a partial lesson or prepare students for the special event for the evening. Students will be dismissed by grade levels over the intercom system to help with congestion. We usually will give instruction but most of the time all students will sit on the floor facing the speaker\event and sit as classes so you can help with discipline. We will have chairs along the outside on the floor area for the teachers to sit on. All school Confessions have been scheduled for March (depending on availability of priests we will try to get through all the grades). Students will come in on bleachers and form a line in the center and if catechists could please monitor the line so all the priests have someone. Make sure all your kids have a chance to do their penance. Classroom aide can wait for some students while the rest of class goes back with catechist.

Prayer Memorization and Testing

Prayer memorization serves a unique purpose in our Religious Education program. The goal of this process is to teach the students memorized prayers so that they can eventually also be able to talk to God in their own words and so that they have words to fall back on in times of confusion, helplessness and distress. This can be encouraged through a simple explanation of this goal, consistent reinforcement of this goal and your example of praying in your own words in tandem with pre-written prayers. It is not to be portrayed in the same light as the tests they receive in school, as that can associate prayer and their relationship with God in the light of a pass/fail model, which can be especially harmful to students who struggle in school. If you need help on how to communicate goal of prayer memorization in this way, please do not hesitate to talk to Mary Rose about it.

Prayer testing for all grade levels is scheduled for during regular class time. How this is done will be left up to each catechist. You can test each child individually in a quiet corner of your classroom, in the hallway, or as a group. If you have a classroom aide, they can help you with individual testing as well as group testing to make sure each student has knowledge of their prayers. You can also use fill in the blank written tests. Some catechists are creative and come up with a different way to do testing in the classroom. The result of prayer testing is to help identify those students who need extra help and encouragement in the memorization of those prayers, not in order to give them a pass or a fail. If you need help in your classroom with verbal testing, you can ask parents to help but you need to let the office know they are coming. Parent helpers should check in at the office on the night of class. We can have chairs outside the rooms to have them verbally test in the hallway. Children memorizing prayers is important to building communication skills as they form their relationship with God.

There is a prayer testing grid for your classroom in the teacher's folder. Please turn this in before the end of the year or when you feel testing is finished in your classroom. Also provided in your folder is a copy of a parent letter with the list of prayers you will be testing your students on. It is important to maintain communication with our parents, as the primary educators of their children. If their child

needs help with memorizing a few prayers, this helps the parents to know what to concentrate on at home. Please send the letter home with the child or if you feel it should be mailed, please drop off in your communication folder in the office. **Please start testing with the new prayers for the current year and then test them going backwards through the grade levels.**

Name tags- plates

It has been the request of the pastors that students have a name tag at their desks if at all possible (9th and 10th grade can wear name tags) Students can make them from strips of card stock folded in half to stand up like a tent. We will provide the folded card stock. You will be provided colored dots to signify the parish the student is from. This helps the pastors to get to know the students quicker when they pop into the rooms.

- Blue dots – Immaculate Conception, Lonsdale
- Yellow dots – Most Holy Trinity, Veseli
- Red dots – St. Nicholas, New Market

Weather cancellations

The children and catechists in our program come from multiple districts and because every district often has different closing policies and close while others remain open, etc.

We will NOT be cancelling class based on any one school district.

Often, the decision to close day-time school is made in the early morning hours but severe weather can change during the day or bad weather can develop late in the day which may cause the cancellation of evening classes. While some districts may have closed in the early morning and the weather has improved during the day, classes **will be** held in the evening.

Notification of cancellations will be posted by 4:30pm on the website, www.lnmvire.net under the weather-cancellation tab. We will send out an email using Flocknote.

Contact Information

LNMV Religious Education website: www.lnmvre.net

Office Email: lnmvre@holycrossschool.net

Mailing address at School:

Holy Cross Catholic School 6100 37th Street W. Webster, MN 55088

St. Nicholas Parish Office

Rochelle Ibarra- Administrative Assistant

Tuesday – Friday

ribarra@stncc.net

www.stncc.net

Phone: 952-461-2403

51 Church St. Elko New Market, MN 55054

Immaculate Conception Parish Office

Mary Rose Rynda - Parish Secretary

Tuesday – Friday Mornings

office@icchurch.cc

www.icchurch.cc

Phone: 507-744-2829

202 Alabama Street SE, Lonsdale, MN 55046

Most Holy Trinity Parish Office

Rachel Barten

Friday Mornings

mhtveseli@gmail.com

www.mhtveseli.com

Phone: 507-744-2823

4939 Washington St. Veseli, MN 55046