



St. John Neumann Religious Education Program

Announcing an expanded program for 2011-2012!

» Changes for 2011-2012

St. John Neumann will be adding weekly classroom sessions for children in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. This is in addition to the “Faith UNwrapped” whole community sessions that the parish will continue to hold. Registration details and a tentative calendar for 2011-2012 will be available in early to mid April.

» The Additional Focus on Children

The purpose of adding classroom sessions is to aid parents in the religious education of their children. By combining the benefits of Faith UNwrapped and classroom instruction, a home and community environment will result which is conducive to educational growth and faith formation for children and parents alike. The continuation of monthly Faith UNwrapped events will provide the complementary support needed to establish this environment. Parents and all parishioners are asked to attend each Faith UNwrapped session. These once monthly events will provide a chance to continue learning and an opportunity to build community.

» The Church is Challenging Us

Our Catholic faith describes a vision that goes beyond attending the liturgy and identifying as a Roman Catholic. Religious education and human formation are understood to be lifelong activities. This growth continues both together as a community, as well as individually. Faith UNwrapped along with participation in the liturgy, personal prayer, and the acting on one’s own faith give the tools to both transform the world around us and become transformed.

The Second Vatican Council gave Catholics a gift and a responsibility. The bishops of the church were inspired to open up the liturgy to full participation by the laity. This participation flows from the call of baptism to be full participants in the ministry of Jesus. Practically, this involves taking ownership of one’s faith and actively participating in the community’s religious education. Religious education becomes a process of both learning and receiving while also being present and sharing. This transforms the community. The community becomes empowered to engage our neighbors.

» **Why Come Together for “Faith UNwrapped”?**

St. John Neumann, along with hundreds of parishes across the country, began the process of “whole community catechesis” in 2005 to help make manifest the gospel vision to create **households of faith**. Simply educating children in the classroom about the facts of faith does not give them the tools to follow Jesus. Parents, seniors, couples, young adults, teens, and children must join together to grow with one another. The liturgy is a Catholic’s focus for worship and public prayer and Faith UNwrapped is the opportunity to add knowledge and share experiences to make our experience of God and one another more meaningful.

Faith UNwrapped events follow a monthly theme and are designed to be relaxed. There are movies, skits, games, reading, teaching, prayer, and discussion. Staff members and volunteers go to lengths to make everyone feel comfortable. The feedback on Faith UNwrapped events is overwhelmingly positive.

» **An Appeal to the Various People that Make Up St. John Neumann**

Religious education is for all ages and St. John Neumann Parish makes a special appeal to teens, young adults, single men and women, and seniors to participate in religious education. Children and parents are not the only parishioners called to be engaged in learning about the Catholic faith and expressing it as a community.

All are welcome and all are asked to be present. The invitation goes beyond warm platitudes – as baptized Catholics, Jesus asks us you to follow him as part of a community of believers.

In addition, St. John Neumann Parish welcomes all ethnic groups and races, those who are divorced, couples with different religious traditions, those of all sexual orientations, single parents, those who have disabilities, and all members of society. Jesus welcomed everyone and so our faith community welcomes everyone. All Catholics are called to live their baptismal promises and are to be given our full attention and support.

» Frequently Asked Questions

» Why are classroom sessions being added?

Weekly classroom sessions are being added to our Religious Education program at St. John Neumann to provide families with **additional support** in educating our youth in their Catholic faith. As mentioned above, it is important to create both a **home and community environment**, which encourages educational growth and faith formation for children along with their parents or caretakers and other parishioners.

» Will adding classroom sessions require more time?

Yes. Three weeks of each month the children will attend a **once a week session** with their peers. During the additional week, parishioners of all ages participate together in a session, which includes learning both inter-generationally and with peers.

» If my child does not participate in the religious education sessions, will they be able to participate in sacramental prep activities?

For children being prepared for sacraments, participation in weekly classes and Faith UNwrapped will be required unless the children are attending Catholic school. Lifelong faith formation is ongoing, important and strongly encouraged for all parishioners.

» Get Involved Now!

Here are the ways to get involved in religious education at St. John Neumann for 2012:

- Register children in grades K-8 in religious education classes. Watch for the signup form.
- Mark your calendar for the Faith UNwrapped sessions. All parishioners are asked and encouraged to attend.
- Sacramental preparation sessions take place for those preparing for Baptism, First Communion, First Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Matrimony.
- Other opportunities for bible study, adult formation, and service learning are available as announced. See the parish bulletin.