



Epiphany Parish Mason City, Iowa Faith Formation Program Parent Guide

**Faith Formation Office
Newman Catholic High School Rm. 105
2445 19th Street SW
Mason City, IA 50401
Telephone: 641-424-0499**

**Faith Formation Leader: Jennifer Clancy
Office Manager: Carolyn Weiss**

**Email: dbq130re@dbqarch.org – Jennifer Clancy, FFL/CRE
dbq130resec@dbqarch.org – Carolyn Weiss, Faith Formation Office Manager**

Introduction

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for parents/guardians, students, and catechists, involved in the Faith Formation Program at Epiphany Parish. The philosophy, goals, policies, guidelines and schedule serve to communicate the content of our Religious Education program.

The catechetical formation of each child is a responsibility shared both by the parent and the parish Faith Formation Program. The goal of Faith Formation is threefold: to present information in the content of our Catholic Christian faith, to enable formation in the values and attitudes needed to live a Catholic Christian faith, which leads to the end-goal of transformation and conversion in Christ Jesus.

The policies in this handbook apply to the Religious Education Program for Epiphany Parish. These policies give the Coordinator of Religious Education, parents/guardians, students, and catechists a direction in responding to the religious and spiritual needs of parish families.

Rules and regulations are made to help inform the student of the rights and needs of others, as well as to help serve as a guide for his/her own acceptable behavior. Rules and regulations create and maintain an environment wherein quality religious education and the safety of every child are considered to be of the utmost importance.

Parents and catechists are requested to acquaint themselves as well as the children with the contents of this handbook. Knowledge of the policies and guidelines will help achieve the goals of our Religious Education program.

Faith Formation Programs

- Religious Education Classes for Children in Grades 1st – 8th
- First Reconciliation/First Communion, Grade 2 (Page 8)
- Confirmation Grade 9th (Page 8)

Mission Statement

We believe...

in the God whose saving love is revealed to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and who sent the Holy Spirit to form us into the community of Christ's disciples, the Church.

We affirm...

that all of us are called to share fully in the Church's mission to teach, to serve, and sanctify.

We envision...

a Church in which the spirit of community and service is renewed, in which all have full access to the Word of God, in which faithful ministers are provided for all communities, and in which Christian family life is fully supported.

We Plan...

with the help of God's grace, to fulfill the goals and carry out the strategies which will make this vision a reality.

Mission Statement of the Educational Apostolate Archdiocese of Dubuque

The mission statement of the Educational Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Dubuque is to promote lifelong faith formation which challenges individuals to:

- Respond to God's continuous call for conversion to Jesus Christ
- Form and be formed in Christian community life
- Grow in knowledge of faith
- Participate in liturgical celebrations and prayer
- Collaborate in the Church's mission of evangelization

We Envision...

This faith and these principles inspired us to envision a Church in which we

...are disciples of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a *community* "devoted to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and prayers," zealous in caring for the needs of others. (Act 1:8; 2:42; 4:34)

...are a people in whom the biblical *Word of God* finds rich soil, flourishes in the truth of Catholic teaching and produces a harvest of holiness and social justice.

(Luke 8:8; 6:45)

...are ministered to by faith-filled and qualified *persons in leadership* who imitate the Good Shepherd and are "worthy of their hire."

(1 Peter 5: 1-4; Matthew 10:10)

...support *families*, in various forms, striving to be domestic churches which instill Catholic faith and morality in the hearts of the next generation.

(Ephesians 5:21-6:4)

Roles and Responsibilities

Parent/Guardian

You model your faith for your children daily. What your child will learn from Religious Education class depends on your support and reinforcement at home, attending Sunday Mass as a family, and family prayer. Your interest and encouragement lets your child know you value what is being done in the religious class. Learning prayers and the Catholic faith cannot be done only during class time. We expect you, the parents, to work with your child at home by dialoguing with your child about what is being learned in the classroom. The Faith Formation programs will provide materials to aid with this dialogue.

Catechist

The role of the catechist is to “Echo the Good News.” The Good News is the message of Jesus and the Catholic Church, prayer and worship, community with each other and within the parish, and service to all peoples. Catechists help lead the children to grow in their faith and relationship with Christ in the Church.

FFL/Coordinator of Religious Education

The Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) is a catechetical leader and administrator, who is responsible for overall direction of parish catechetical programs. This includes working with the pastor(s), other ministers, and appropriate committees, boards, or councils involved in setting policy and planning; supervising coordinators, designing catechetical programs; assisting in liturgical planning; conducting sacramental preparation workshops; and providing opportunities for catechist formation.

Epiphany Parish Staff

641-423-5001

Rev. Neil Manternach, Pastor

Rev. John Gossman, Pastor

Rev. Rod Allers, Pastor

Sue Fleming, Office Manager

Office Hours

Mon–Thurs 8:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M.

Friday 8:00 A.M.–Noon

Carol Bruns, Business Manager

Karen Byrne, Pastoral Associate

Michael Byrne, Deacon

Chuck Cooper, Deacon

Matt Berry, Deacon

Pat Dixon, Pastoral Minister

Jim Wolf, Pastoral Minister

Chelsie Stevens, Youth Minister

Jennifer Clancy, Faith Formation Leader/CRE

Carolyn Weiss, Faith Formation Office Manager

Help For Victims of Sexual Abuse

The Archdiocese of Dubuque has established a program of pastoral assistance to people who believe they or those in their care have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other Church personnel. This assistance will include help in informing civil and Church authorities. Victim Assistance Coordinators are trained to facilitate access to appropriate professional mental health services, social service agencies, support groups and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. Any individual desiring help from this program is invited to call Dr. Thomas Anderegg (563-556-1225) or Joan Hoffman (866-319-4636) to report an allegation or receive assistance. This program is part of the new “Policy for the Protection of Minors.”

Reporting to Separated/Divorce Parents *(most recent review: March 5, 2005)*

Policy adopted: March 12, 1988

Revised: March 7, 1998, December 6, 2003; March 5, 2005

Archdiocesan Board of Education

For purposes of this policy, a parent is defined as a birth parent, an adoptive parent or a legally-appointed guardian. It does not include a step parent or a grandparent. In the case of students whose parents’ marriage has ended in divorce, the names and addresses of both parents should appear in the student’s file. A certified copy of the Order of Dissolution as well as any subsequent modification of the Order should be on file.

Access to Educational Information

Unless otherwise decreed in the Order, information commonly made available to parents of any student in attendance (i.e. notices of school/program functions, report cards, and appointments for parent-teacher conferences) should be provided to both parents.

Guidelines and Policies

A. Program Registration – All students **MUST** be registered to attend class, and to receive communication from the Faith Formation Office. Registration is done online by going to the parish website at www.epiphanyparish.org and clicking on Faith Formation-School tab. A link to the registration site can be found there.

B. Schedules & Calendars

1st – 8th grade Religious Education

Fall Session

Wednesday evenings 6:00–8:00 P.M.

Runs the end of August to mid-December

Note: 2nd grade **MUST choose this Fall option

Summer Session

Runs 2nd & 3rd week in June

Monday–Thursday 8:00 A.M. –Noon

First Sacraments (2nd Grade)

Runs January–April

Parent-led classes on Sundays

10:00–11:00 A.M., Some Wednesday evenings

Confirmation (High School Freshman)

Program runs January–May of Freshman year and September of Sophomore year

Wednesday evenings & some Sunday afternoons

C. Parish Registration

It is **required** that all Faith Formation families be registered as members of Epiphany Parish. Please contact Epiphany Parish Office at 641-423-5001.

D. Altar Servers

Boys and girls in fourth grade are offered the opportunity to train to become altar servers at Epiphany Parish in the fall. A permission sheet must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the parish. Contact Karen Byrne at 641-423-5001.

E. Attendance

- 1) A written record of attendance is kept by each catechist. Absences are noted in the office.
- 2) If your child will be **absent**, please call the Faith Formation Office at 641-424-0499, or your child's catechist, or email dbq130resec@dbqarch.org. If your child has three unexcused absences, the Faith Formation Office will contact the parent/guardian.
- 3) If your child is absent, homework will be sent via email to completed and returned by the next class.

F. Arrival/Dismissal

- 1) Students should arrive no more than 10 minutes before class begins (5:50 P.M. for Fall Session and 7:50 A.M. for Summer Session). They may enter at the main entrance of the Elementary School (the doors facing McKinley Avenue).
- 2) Pick up students at main entrance of the Elementary School.
Note: you may park in Elementary Parking lot and come in to get your child.

G. Care of Property

- 1) Respect for another's **property** and for school and parish property in general is expected in every area of the school. Students may not rummage through desks, closets, files, or lockers in any classroom or hall.
- 2) **Food and gum** are not allowed in any classroom or inside any buildings unless it is part of the class program and under the authority of the catechist.
- 3) **Students may not bring iPods, MP3 players or cell phones to class. If they bring them, they will be held by the catechist until the end of the class.** We realize most middle school students have phones. If they need to bring their phone, they will be asked to put it in a basket during class.

H. Catechists

- 1) All catechists sign an acknowledgement form and go through a background check regarding sexual child abuse and sexual molestation. They are also in-serviced on recognizing sexual abuse. They participate in an in-service each year to strengthen and renew their faith.

I. Communications

- 1) There will be **communications emailed or texted to your phone** during the year, especially for days of no class that are not ordinary break times. **Please select this option on the registration form. You must indicate "YES" for texts to happen.** Children are given the responsibility of delivering notes to parents from catechists or the Coordinator of Religious Education; at other times notices are emailed. **Please** check your email or text frequently. **If you do not have email or text access, please call our office.**
- 2) A parent newsletter, "F.A.I.T.H." is e-mailed to all homes at the beginning of most months. Please read it carefully for all important information for the month. If you change your email address, please inform our office. Newsletters will also be posted on our parish website at www.epiphanyparish.org.

- 3) Both parents in a divorce situation will receive regular communications from the Religious Education Office, if so desired and if both addresses are provided.
- 4) If classes need to be **canceled** due to the weather, that information will be on KIMT TV by 5:00 P.M. that day. You will also receive a text and email if you select “YES” on the registration form.

J. Discipline

Students are expected to participate in a cooperative and respectful manner in all activities. In the event of a problem, we will follow the procedures outlined in the **Discipline policy (on our parish website listed as “Discipline Policy”)**.

K. Hall Monitors

To insure the safety of the students and to assist both the catechists and the students, we need parents to serve as hall monitors (3 per night). You can sign up at the beginning of the year or call the office at 424-0499.

L. Safety/Emergency Procedures

Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. In case of fire, an alarm will sound. In case of a tornado, the CRE would announce it over the PA system.

Sacrament Preparation Information

First Reconciliation/First Eucharist

To enter into the traditional First Sacrament Preparation done in second grade, the child must:

- (1) Be a member of Epiphany Parish—If not a member, contact Sue in the Parish Office at 641-423-5001. If you are a member of another parish, you must take part in their preparation classes.
- (2) Be a Baptized Catholic
- (3) Have completed First Grade Religious Education (either in Epiphany Parish RE program, or at Newman Catholic School, or another RE program or school).

Be enrolled in the 2nd grade Religious Education class (either in the **parish RE program or at Newman Catholic School).

****Those going through the parish RE program must enroll in the Fall Option.****

If your child has been baptized in another Christian faith, or not baptized yet, please contact Jennifer Clancy at 641-424-0499 ASAP for an explanation of the process needed to receive these sacraments.

Confirmation:

To enter into traditional Confirmation Preparation beginning in the freshman year, the student must:

- (1) Be a member of Epiphany Parish. (If not a member, please contact Sue in the parish office at 641-423-5001.) (If you are a member of another parish, you must participate in their Confirmation process.)
- (2) Be Baptized Catholic
- (3) Received First Eucharist
- (4) Completed 8th grade Religious Education (either in Epiphany Parish RE program or at Newman Catholic School, or another parish or school).

If your student has not met the above requirements, please contact Jennifer Clancy at 641-424-0499 ASAP for an explanation of the process needed to receive this sacrament.