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SAINT JOHN NEUMANN CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION

August 20, 2020.

Dear Saint John Neumann Parent:

Of all the necessities that we provide for our children, our Catholic Faith is the most essential. It furnishes the moral formation needed to build strong characters, provides a safe refuge in times of uncertainty, gives hope during trials, and supplies meaning and purpose for their earthly lives. Most importantly, it is the only gift we can pass on to our children that also prepares them for Eternal Life. It stands to reason that every Catholic parent should ensure that their children receive a religious education in the Catholic Faith.

We can be proud that St. John Neumann Parish has always placed a high priority on the religious formation of our children. Second only to worship, the ministries of catechesis and evangelization are the most vital to continued success of the life and mission of the Church. Evangelizing and educating our children in the Faith not only brings personal benefit to them, it also ensures the life and mission of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Preparations are underway for the new 2020-2021 Religious Formation Year, which promises to be full and productive. Once again, the SJN Staff is encouraging *all SJN parents* to ensure that their children receive some form of Catholic religious education, whether via catholic schools or the SJN Religious Formation Program.

This year our religious formation program will be conducted using a new and quite different format due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19. Emphasis will be placed on the religious formation of parents so that they will be empowered to educate their own children in the faith. This means that the attendance and participation of parents in the Parent Faith Formation Program will be vitally important to their children's success and grade promotion in the Religious Formation Program. Most importantly, this will be a marvelous opportunity to grow together as a family of faith.

The 2020-2021 Religious Formation Program will operate using four components:

1. Component One: Adult Faith Formation for Parents

Parents will act as the **Primary Educators** of their children. To facilitate this important role, parents will attend 3 adult faith formation lessons each month beginning in October and concluding in May. Each lesson will be approximately 30 minutes in duration. That is only 1½ hours per month. The first lesson of each month will be conducted in-person in the church with Msgr. Panke, Fr. Stephan Yap, or me as instructors. In-person classes will follow CDC guidelines for social distancing and sanitation. For those who are not comfortable meeting in-person, there will also be an option to view the lessons live-streamed on YouTube. The remaining two adult lessons each month will be conducted using a ZOOM online format. (ZOOM lessons will also be recorded so that parents can view them at their convenience.) These adult lessons are synced with the children's "Alive in Christ" textbook series and will provide in-depth knowledge of the subject matter that will enable parents to teach their children effectively at home throughout each month.

2. Component Two: Teaching Tools and Resources for At-Home Lessons

- a. Parents will be furnished with both hardcopy and online resources to teach their children.
- b. Each child will have an “Alive in Christ” textbook. (Bi-lingual textbooks will also be provided on request.)
- c. Parents will be provided with the corresponding “Alive in Christ” Home-Study Lesson Plans.
- d. Parents will have access to the Parents’ Support Page of the parish religious formation website: <https://www.saintjohnneumann.org/for-parents>. The Parent Support Page will have a Lesson Schedule, online Home-Study Lesson Plans, the ADW curriculum guides for parents, videos, links to your child’s textbook support site, and additional links to other valuable and informative sites, etc.
- e. Lastly and most importantly, parents will also have the catechists, mentors, and religious formation staff to provide support and assistance.

3. Component Three: Trained Catechists to Coach Parents and Children

- a. On approximately the fourth week each month, children will gather by grade level via ZOOM classes to receive summary instruction from trained and certified catechists. This will be an opportunity for children to receive clarification on the subject matter which they learned at home during the month. ZOOM classes will last no longer than 1 hour.
- b. Children will perform a brief Unit Assessment to gauge their progress. The assessment may be accomplished using games, activities, fun projects, or short quizzes.

4. Component Four: Mentors to support Religious Formation Families

- a. Each family will be assigned a mentor who will accompany them in their faith journey throughout the year.
- b. Mentors will contact their assigned families once a week to check on how they are faring, to answer questions, assist with any challenges, and to provide encouragement and support.

Indeed, COVID-19 presents challenges, but rest assured, the SJN priests, staff, catechists, and mentors will be with you in your endeavors throughout the year. You will not be alone. We are all in this together!

To register your family, go to the parish website at www.saintjohnneumann.org. Click on “Faith Formation”; then click on “Youth”; then click on “Children’s Program”. You will find a link entitled: “Family Religious Formation Registration”. Complete online the registration form and click on “Submit”.

Included with this letter is a Religious Formation Schedule of Parents’ and Children’s Lessons. Please take the time to review your family calendar and mark the dates when you and your child will need to attend your lessons. Be sure, too, to commit to a consistent time when you and your child will complete your home-study lessons together at home. You will be notified by email when your child’s textbook and your teaching materials are available for pick up from the Religious Formation Office.

A **Parent Orientation Meeting** has been scheduled for **Tuesday, September 22, 2020** from **7pm to 8pm** via **ZOOM**. The Religious Formation Program will be explained in more detail at that time. Link information will be emailed to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Religious Formation Office.

Sincerely in Christ,
Mrs. Maureen Joseph
Director of Religious Formation

Msgr. Robert Panke
Pastor