

Ministry Priorities: Faith, Safety, Excellence

- 1) We commit ourselves to prayer; we submit our plans to God's will and ask Mary's intercession.
- 2) We proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and celebrate our Catholic Christian faith and life.
- 3) Our ministries:
 - a. stem from and are faithful to the Catholic Church;
 - b. draw from and support the mission and vision of our pastor;
 - c. are integrated with the whole parish with particular attention to liturgy and sacraments;
 - d. are creative and flexible as global and local situations necessitate shifts in methods.
- 4) We present a safe environment for all families, children, youth, sponsors, etc.
- 5) We strive for uniform programming, meeting participants' needs in methods that are varied, consistent, yet as few as possible, effecting streamlined ministries.
- 6) *Ready for anything, we anticipate the smoothest possible year with a minimum of disruption.*

Ministry Approaches for 2021-2022

- A. We offer the following ministries for the various age/grade levels:
 1. *PreK-K, ages 3-5 ("Sunday School")*
 - a. Children at each session-time gather weekly with catechists in classrooms.
 2. *Grades K-5 ("Family Formation")*
 - a. All families at each session-time meet monthly for whole-family faith formation.
 - b. Families receive materials to explore during brief at-home sessions during the in-between weeks.
 3. *Grades 6-12 ("Youth Formation")*
 - a. Youth at each session-time gather weekly with catechists in classrooms.
 - b. Special events are scheduled such as retreats, youth & parent sessions, etc.
 4. For all ages and grades:
 - a. Staff and dedicated volunteers work together to guide each session's learning, prayer, and community objectives while observing the [General Guidelines](#) found below.
 - b. Those requiring at-home formation have that option by request.
 - c. The [Safe Ministry Guidelines](#) below may be refined according to shifts in Archdiocesan or pastor's directives, local or global situations, statutory requirements, etc.

Safe Ministry Guidelines

- A. Ministry planning adheres to Archdiocesan Guidelines for Parish Faith Formation and corresponds to related recommendations from relevant state and national health and education bodies. These inform parish preparedness plans, which consider (among other things) the following safety concerns:

Those elements below marked with an asterisk () are directly informed by the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Faith Formation Events and Activities (Children, Youth, and Adult) 2021-2022. Their recommendations are based on shared wisdom of educating and forming during the Covid-19 pandemic, the responsibility of parents as primary educators of their children, and the requirements of Minnesota Statutes. [Sub-elements in brackets are added by St. John Neumann Faith Formation.]*

1. **Healthy Expectations*
 - a. Faith Formation staff:
 1. Assures parents that health protocols are in place for a proper environment to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.
 2. Trains catechists in current and updated protocols; give them a copy of:
 - a. the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Faith Formation Events and Activities (Children, Youth, and Adult) 2021-2022.
 - b. this Faith Formation Overview and Healthy-Open/Preparedness Plan.
2. **Health Checks*
 - a. Staff and Volunteers must ensure they themselves and other household members are healthy before arriving at Faith Formation events.
 - b. Parents and guardians must ensure they themselves, children, and other household members are healthy before sending children to any Faith Formation event.
3. **Vaccines*
 - a. Covid-19 vaccines are not required in Faith Formation programs of the Archdiocese.
 - b. We will provide information on the availability of the Covid-19 vaccine and provide support for those who desire to receive a vaccination.
4. **Face Coverings*
 - a. Likewise, while face coverings are neither required nor prevented, we recommend that all staff, volunteers, parents, and children/youth wear a face covering at all Faith Formation events. Parents and guardians make this decision for their own children.
 - b. Individuals with underlying health conditions should wear a face covering.
 - c. No person will be stigmatized for the decision to wear or not wear a face covering.
 1. Let the “Law of Love” prevail as we are called to love our brothers and sisters in Christ in every respect and circumstance of this pandemic.
 - d. Changes in local circumstances may lead to the Pastor adjusting this policy.
5. **Physical Distancing*
 - a. Our ministries promote public health recommendations for physical distancing in ways that will most broadly:
 1. Impact the parish’ educational and formation goals and
 2. Continue or even expand in-person formation opportunities for all persons.
6. **Reducing Spread of Disease – and Responding to Symptoms if Warranted*
 - a. Adults and children should stay home when they are sick.
 - b. They will be sent home promptly if they display symptoms of Covid-19 or other illness.
 - c. *If adults or children test positive for Covid-19 following attendance at a Faith Formation activity, the Pastor and Director of Religious Education should be notified immediately.*
 - d. Adults, children, volunteers, and staff may return after illness following a standard policy: fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication – unless someone has a lab-confirmed case of Covid-19.
 - e. Those with lab-confirmed cases of Covid-19 are allowed to return when all of the following are true:
 1. They feel better. Their cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms have substantially improved;
 2. It has been at least 10 days since they first felt sick or tested positive;
 3. They have had no fever for at least 24 hours without using medicine that lowers fevers.

7. **Contact Tracing*
 - a. This is solely the role of the Minnesota Department of Health.
 - b. Faith Formation, through the Parish Business Administrator, will assist if necessary by providing relevant information as requested.
8. **Hygiene and Sanitization*
 - a. All persons are encouraged to follow typical hygiene recommendations (handwashing, hand sanitizer, tissue use & disposal, etc.), at home and at parish facilities.
 - b. [Parish-owned craft materials, writing implements, etc. are used exclusively for these ministries and, using generally accepted protocols, are established by staff as “clean for re-use” for successive sessions.
 1. Children/youth are free to bring materials from home if desired.]
9. **Maintaining Healthy Facilities*
 - a. Faith Formation staff works with parish maintenance staff in following the parish-wide plan for cleaning and disinfecting the facilities.
 - b. [If an infectious disease is found to have been present in the building, sanitization steps will take place according to the maintenance staff’s procedures. Communication with other participants is consistent with current protocols.]
10. **Food Distribution*
 - a. No snacks are provided or eaten at regular Faith Formation classes.
 - b. Other Faith Formation events may have food at the discretion of ministry staff and in consultation with the Director of Religious Education, depending on event needs.
 - c. Health-related steps in regard to food storage, preparation, service, and cleanup are maintained to prevent the spread of disease.
 1. Allergies and allergens are carefully noted and monitored.
11. **Virtual Classrooms*
 - a. Faith Formation programs should minimize the use of strictly distance/virtual models of formation, especially with children and young people.
 1. As the primary educators and catechists of their children, accommodations are made and parish support given if parents or caregivers decide to homeschool their children’s Faith Formation program rather than participate in in-person activities.
 - b. [See section B, below.]
12. *Safe Room Arrangements (seating, etc.) and Maximum Room Occupancies*
 - a. Dependent on distancing requirements and activity/movement needs.
13. *Dropoff and Pickup*
 - a. Sunday School: Parents or legal guardians bring their children to and pick them up again from assigned rooms.
 - b. Family Formation: Parents and children are together in whole-family formation.
 - c. Youth Formation:
 1. Youth may be safely dropped off at and picked up again from the building entrance (chapel entrance only); parents do not need to accompany youth into the building or to their assigned classrooms.
 2. It is understood that a) some youth drive themselves and b) some youth ‘carpool’ with other persons. The parish does not engage in transportation arrangements or youth whereabouts other than actual presence at Faith Formation events. (See #14, below.)

14. *Attendance*
 - a. Attendance is kept for all Faith Formation activities.
 15. *Livestreaming and Recording*
 - a. Livestreaming and/or recording is not a component of any Faith Formation ministry.
- B. At-home participants receive a full experience of parish formation that is as materially consistent with the at-church experience as possible.
1. At-home and in-person curricula may not be exactly the same from week-to-week; at the same time, participants are guided along paths of Catholic Christian discipleship with equally age-relevant and discernable goals.
 2. At-home families are invited to all large-group events such as parent gatherings, retreats, reconciliation services, special Masses, etc.
- C. Communication, while at times to everyone and at times to various subsets, is critical, such that all feel they are fully part of the ministry and are *one* community.
1. It is hoped all families:
 - a. provide a regularly-checked e-mail address, and
 - b. open/read all Faith Formation communication – along with all St. John Neumann communication.

It is the Faith Formation Team's blessing and pleasure to serve the children, youth, and adults of St. John Neumann ... forming lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ who passionately participate in our Catholic Christian life.