

## **2024/2025 Religious Education Handbook**

Providing a Firm Foundation of Faith

1 Corinthians 3:11 & Matthew 7:24-27

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**Religious Ed. Classes held at:** St. Malachy Catholic School  
403 W Clark St, Creston, IA 50801

**Contact Phone during Religious Ed. Classes:** 641-458-0835

(Please do not call the School Office, since the School office is closed).

**We wish to thank our generous volunteers who  
give their time each week to teach and assist in our Religious  
Education Program**

## **Catechesis: It's Nature and Purpose**

Catechesis is the handing-on of Christ's message to his people. It is the systematic instruction of children, young people, and adults in the Catholic faith and the teachings of the Church with the goal of making them into Christ's disciples (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 5).

John Paul II states in *Catechesi Tradendae* (*On Catechesis in Our Time*): "at the heart of catechesis we find ... the Person of Jesus of Nazareth ... in catechesis it is Christ ... who is taught ... and it is Christ alone who teaches ..." (#5, 6)

## **Goals of Religious Education**

Formal Religious Education is an essential part of a life-long process toward maturity in Christian faith as a lived reality.

At Holy Spirit, we strive to support the active, informal religious education imparted by parents through a more structured and coordinated program of learning and living the Catholic faith. We try to model and create an atmosphere for learning based on Christian values.

We strive to teach the whole person by going beyond the intellectual and encouraging students to come to know and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ along with a commitment of love and service to His Church.

## **Role of Parents**

Our Religious Education Program is based on the teachings of the Church that parents are the primary and principal educators of their children. "This role in education is so important that only with great difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well rounded personal and social education of children is fostered" (*Declaration on Christian Education*, § 3). Without parental interest and support, formal religious education can have little hope to succeed in its goals. Only parents can assure proper attitudinal formation of their children by being living witnesses and models of Christian values.

We strongly encourage all parents and guardians to pray together at Sunday Mass and in the home, and discuss issues of faith and praxis with their child in order to reinforce and augment what is being taught in the religious education class.

## Parent/Guardian Meetings

Yearly parent meetings are required to keep parents and guardians abreast of changes, policies, and/or to highlight important aspects of the Religious Education program as it pertains to them and their child. During the Sacrament years, parents and guardians will also have to attend some additional meetings in order to assist in their child's preparation for the Sacrament.

## Curriculum

Holy Spirit Religious Education utilizes the *Blest Are We* Curriculum, which has been approved by the US Catholic Bishops and is in full compliance with *Sacred Scripture* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Confirmation class utilizes the *Decision Point* Curriculum by Dynamic Catholic, which has been approved by the US Catholic Bishops and is in full compliance with *Sacred Scripture* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Videos and lessons can be found on their website:  
<https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/confirmation.html>

Each student from Grades 1-10 will receive the books which should be taken home and returned to class each week.

## Homework

Students may receive homework at their catechist's discretion in order to supplement and reinforce the lessons. It is highly recommended that parents become familiar with the text and help their children review the lessons and homework each week. **In fact, all Parents are encouraged to read through their Child's textbook.** Any parent or guardian who needs assistance to understand the text should contact the child's catechist.

There is a \$15 charge per book to replace lost or missing textbooks. Books will be presumed to be lost and must be replaced if not brought to class more than two consecutive weeks in a row.

## Sunday Class Masses

Participation in Sunday Mass weekly is the most important component of Religious Education. We expect that all children attend their grade level Mass with their parents and families. Children and Youth Masses are available during the year, as well. Some are required. See the calendar in the back of this handbook.

### **Children with Special Needs**

On the Religious Education registration form, parents are requested to note any needs that might affect the performance of children in class. As we are able, we will work as closely as possible with students and parents to provide suitable and effective religious education instruction to children with special needs.

### **Class Times**

**Location:** All Classes will be held at St. Malachy Catholic School, 403 W Clark St, Creston, IA 50801.

**Children must report to class on time.** A child who is repeatedly late is required to make up the material missed.

*Wednesday: Pre-K to 8th grade 6:00-7:00 Pm  
9th-10th grade 6:45-7:45 Pm (Youth Group is 6-6:45)*

### **Attendance**

**Regular attendance** is necessary for the children to grow in their faith. Each year of Religious Education (1-10) is part of the necessary preparation for the Sacraments, which include Confession, Communion, and Confirmation.

Parents/Guardians are urged to send their children to class every week. A total of 4 absences for any reason are permitted. No Doctor's notes are needed because sickness is included in the 4 absences. If your child is hospitalized and seriously ill, please contact the Office of Religious Education. After 4 absences, children will be expected to make-up the time and the work. Five or more unexcused absences will result in the need to make up the time in summer classes or repeat the year. Students will be tested before being allowed to enter the next grade. A phone call to the Office of Religious Education before class is expected when it is necessary for a child to be absent or a note should be sent to the catechist when the child returns to class.

If a child needs to be absent for several consecutive weeks, the parents should contact the Director of Religious Education and make arrangements to complete the lessons which will be taught during the extended absence. All the lessons will be expected to be completed when the child returns to class.

### **Pick up & Drop-off**

ALL students must sign in and out of the RE program. Students ages 13 and under **MUST** be accompanied by a parent into the school building, and will be signed in and out of the building. Students will begin their time at RE in the gym, and will also be dismissed from the gym accompanied by a parent or guardian. **Parents must sign out their child at the door.** For the safety of the child, no child will be sent out of the building alone.

### **Late Arrivals**

All those arriving late must sign in at the door before reporting to class. Multiple late arrivals may be counted as an additional absence.

### **Early Dismissals**

It is essential that all students remain in the classroom until the bell rings- **Early dismissals are not permitted except in emergencies and exceptional cases. Class time is limited and such dismissals are disruptive to the class.** If an emergency arises, however, it is required that the parents request early dismissal by calling the Director of Religious Education or bringing in a note before class day. **A parent must come to the School to sign out and pick up his/her child in the event that an early dismissal was requested and is granted.** Parents must sign out their child at the door. For the safety of the child, no child will be sent out of the building alone.

### **Cancellation of Classes/Inclement Weather**

In case of inclement weather, a text message or email will be sent out as soon as possible. On occasion we may try to call parents.

### **Class Assignments**

Children are assigned to their classroom according to the discretion of the director. Our program cannot honor special requests to place a child with a certain catechist or with the child's friends.

### **Guidelines for Behavior**

We want the children to understand that it is a privilege to come together to learn about our Catholic faith and the Truths revealed to us by God. Many dedicated adults who have generously offered their time and talent as Catechists prepare and teach each week in our religious education. **As participants in religious education, students are expected, therefore, to show respect towards themselves, catechists, adult volunteers, and other**

students before, during, and after classes and activities. They are to give their full attention to the lesson and to participate in all activities to the best of their ability. Students are expected to act in a manner that reflects Christian values at all times. Anything that would interfere, disrupt or distract from the learning and activities for themselves and for all students within the class or activity will not be tolerated. Parents will be informed if students fall below this expectation. In some cases, students may lose their privilege of attending religious education classes at Holy Spirit.

### **Dress Code**

The opening chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, states that we are made in the "image and likeness of God." In recognition of the sanctity of our bodies which are "temples of the Holy Spirit," all students are expected to dress modestly for class out of respect for themselves and others. Specifically, low-cut tops, exposed underwear or midriffs, and clothing that is tight-fitting and revealing is not appropriate nor permitted in class. Shorts must be finger-tip length. Shoes or sandals must always be worn. Students dressed inappropriately may not be permitted to attend class if they arrive in inappropriate attire. In addition, shoes with cleats are not allowed in the building.

### **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the classroom. If they are brought to class, even if not in use, the catechist may collect them and ask students to keep them in an off position on a designated desk until the end of class. If students are found using a device during class, the Director of Religious Education will retain the device until a parent comes to claim it for them.

### **Personal Needs: Snacks and Lavatory Use**

It is highly recommended that all personal needs such as snacking and use of the lavatories should be taken care of before arriving at Religious Education classes. Parents, please give careful attention to these needs since they affect the performance of your child in class.

No food and drinks are permitted in the classroom.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress Reports indicating attendance will be issued in January.

## **Holy Spirit Total Catechetical Program**

The Holy Spirit Religious Education Program is a Ten-year program beginning in Grade One and continuing through Grade Ten. Pre-K and Kindergarten attendance is optional. We expect each child to begin instruction in the first grade and continue each successive year through Grade Ten. Please, understand if a child leaves the program and later returns, he/she will need supplemental instruction, may be tested and will probably be delayed before being placed in their regular grade level in a Religious Education class.

### **Requirements for Registration**

#### **Re-Registration**

All students must be registered by September 1st to begin the first class and not count it as an absence.

#### **New Registrations**

New Registrations for Kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade will be received beginning in the Spring. The child's official baptismal certificate is needed at the time of registration. Students from other parishes and older students are welcome.

All children ready for Kindergarten or First Grade in September of the current school year are encouraged to be registered for Religious Education classes. **Please note that Kindergarten is optional but First Grade is necessary in order to make First Communion in Second Grade.**

#### **Transfers**

If new registrants have attended religion classes in another parish, they need a Transcript as proof of their participation in prior classes and for Reception of First Holy Communion. Baptismal Certificates, with notations of First Holy Communion if already received, are required of students who have received these Sacraments.

#### **Cost:**

Religious Education Classes are \$40/ Student with a Maximum registration fee per family of \$120

### **Sacrament Policies**

#### **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Special lessons are provided to give the child the opportunity for moral education and conscience formation that will lead to the reception of the

Sacrament of Reconciliation. Instructions and celebration of the sacrament are arranged to abide by the *National Catechetical Directory* for Catholics in the United States formulated by the American Bishops: "Catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried preparation."

Celebration of this sacrament will ordinarily take place in Advent and Lent.

### **Sacrament of Holy Eucharist—First Communion**

At the heart of Christian life is the celebration of the Eucharist. Baptized Christians are fully joined to the Body of Christ and His Church in the Eucharist.

Catechesis for the preparation for First Eucharist involves a special program of instruction that initiates the child into deeper understanding of and a participation in the Eucharist.

The celebration of First Communion will ordinarily take place on the first Saturday of the month of May.

There is a Sacramental fee of \$20 per student.

First Communion guidelines will be distributed at a parent meeting that give all the details and requirements for First Penance and First Eucharist.

Important Reconciliation and Holy communion dates are as follows:

First Reconciliation: November 6th

2nd Grade Parent Meeting: February 5th @ 6 Pm

First Holy Communion Practice: May 2nd 5:00 Pm

First Holy Communion: May 3rd 5:00 Pm

### **Guidelines**

The child must be in at least the Second Grade and have completed an approved First Grade Religious Education Program prior to the time of preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation followed by First Eucharist which occurs during the second Grade.



Weekly Sunday Mass attendance of the child is expected as much as possible before First Communion since *it is expected* after reception of First Communion in order to fulfill the Lord's Commandment.

### **The Sacrament of Confirmation**

Confirmation represents the completion of the Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church. In Confirmation, a young person experiences a fullness of life in the Holy Spirit and a release of the gifts received at baptism. Confirmation represents not an end but the beginning of a life of faith that one freely chooses.

The Confirmation candidate must be in Tenth grade of High School or higher and have successfully completed grades one through ten in the Religious Education program or its equivalent. The formal preparation begins in the Eighth grade with service hours and other requirements. It continues with learning and memorizing some basics of the Catholic faith, and continues with more intense direct preparation for Confirmation in the Tenth grade.

The involvement of Parents in helping children to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation is very important but it is the young person him/herself who must give evidence of their desire for the Sacrament and demonstrate their willingness to take on the responsibility for completing the requirements for Confirmation. This will be spelled out in the *Confirmation handbook*, which will be distributed and explained at an initial meeting for Parents and candidates. The responsibility, most importantly, includes attending Sunday Mass on a weekly basis.

### **Sunday Mass Attendance Expected**

All 7th through 10th grade students are expected to attend Mass weekly to fulfill their Sunday obligation and may be asked to demonstrate proof or write a reflection on the Gospel each week if they are not in attendance.

### **Confirmation Celebration**

Confirmation will ordinarily be celebrated in the Spring. The date of Confirmation will be announced as soon as the Bishop's Office notifies the Pastor. Please refer to the calendar attached.

There is a Sacramental fee of \$20 per student.

Important confirmation dates are as follows:

**\*\*Confirmation Retreat: September 22nd**

**\* REQUIRED TO PROCEED WITH CONFIRMATION\***

Confirmation Parent Meeting: September 25th 6:45pm

Sponsor Picked by: November 6th 11th

Confirmation Sponsor meeting: November 20th 6:00 PM

Reports & Hours due: February 5th

Meeting With Priest: Wednesday Evening's In February

Confirmation Practice: March 1st 2:00PM

Confirmation: March 2nd 9:00 AM Mass

### **Retreat Information**

Retreats are offered 2x/year for all grades and attendance is expected, and families are welcome. Building a retreat culture in our parish community is a way to engage, inspire and encourage children to reflect, and provide greater opportunity for spiritual growth.

Please refer to the yearly Calendar for retreat days and times, and plan to attend. We are excited to be offering these opportunities and look forward to your family's participation.

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## 2024/2025 Week-By-Week

<i>RE Meeting Dates:</i>	WEEK #
Sept. 11th	1
Sept. 18th	2
Sept 22nd	NET RETREAT @ HS GRADES 7-12
Sept. 25th	Week 3 & *Confirmation Meeting
Oct. 2nd	Family Faith Night
Oct .9th	4
Oct. 16th	NO RE
Oct. 23rd	5
Oct. 30th	NO RE
Nov. 6th	Week 6 & * First Reconciliation all 2nd graders
Nov. 13th	7
Nov. 20th	Family Faith Night
Nov. 27th	NO RE
Dec. 4th	8
Dec. 11th	Family Faith Night
Dec. 18th	9
Dec.25th	Merry Christmas! NO RE
Jan. 1st	Happy New Year! No RE
Jan 8th	Family Faith Night * Confirmation Meeting
Jan. 15th	10
Jan. 22nd	11
Jan. 29th	12
Feb. 5th	Family Faith Night * FHC Parent Meeting
Feb. 12th	13
Feb. 19th	14
Feb. 26th	15
Mar. 2nd	CONFIRMATION-8AM
Mar. 5th	No RE- Ash Wednesday!
Mar. 12th	Family Faith Night
Mar. 19th	16
Mar. 26th	17
Apr. 2nd	18
Apr. 9th	Family Faith Night
Apr. 16th	NO RE- Holy week
Apr. 23rd	19
May 3rd	5 PM First Holy Communion
May 5th	Family Faith Night