

There are VIRTUS sessions available throughout the year at different locations throughout the Diocese of Green Bay which any volunteer or employee can attend. No volunteer can work with children in the religious education area if he/she refuses to attend.

\* Legal Reference: Wisconsin Statutes s.48.981 (2) (3) (4)

*In accordance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's Statement on "Protecting God's Children", each grade level, Pre-K through high school, will receive 1-3 hours of education in abuse recognition, prevention, and other moral issues every year.*

### **Student Dress**

Students shall wear clothing appropriate to the learning environment of a church community or a parish sponsored event. Hats and coats are removed during class. Garments which advertise or promote values contrary to the message of Jesus are not acceptable.

### **Smoking**

Smoking, alcohol and drugs, are prohibited by law for minor children under the age of 18, and they are forbidden by both Diocesan and St. Thomas More policies.

### **Weapons**

No one shall possess, use, threaten, or store a weapon or lookalike weapon on parish property or on parish sponsored events. Weapons are defined as anything that could cause bodily harm, property damage, or intimidation. Students in possession or reasonably suspected of being in possession may be subjected to search and seizure. Such an effort would be done in the presence of an adult witness. The police may be notified depending upon the results of the search. Parents will always be notified that such an event has occurred.



## **Faith Formation Handbook**

**Faith Formation Office**

**920-739-8172**

**Website**

**[www.stmcath.org](http://www.stmcath.org)**

## Faith Formation Personnel

### Pastoral Leader

Deacon Lincoln Wood  
lincoln@stmccath.org

### Child Ministry

P/S-Grade 5  
Sacraments: Eucharist & Reconciliation  
Emily Shackleton, Coordinator  
emily@stmccath.org

### Youth Ministry

Grades 6-12  
Laurie Overesch, Coordinator of Youth Ministry  
laurie@stmccath.org

### Young Adult Ministry

Sacrament: Confirmation (Grade 11 or 12)  
Anna Donnermeyer, Coordinator  
anna@stmccath.org

### Adult Ministry

Anita Revord, Director of Missionary Discipleship  
anita@stmccath.org

### Administrative Assistant

Wendy Fischer  
wendy@stmccath.org

### Faith Formation Office Hours and Contact Information

Office Phone: 739-8172

Office Hours: 8:30 am - 4:00 pm (M, T, Th)  
2:00 pm - 8:00 pm (W)

Summer hours by appointment

Website: [www.stmccath.org](http://www.stmccath.org)

deacons and priest are here to support in a deeper way at times of death or extreme circumstances. The Parish Office can be reached at 739-7758 or [stmccath.org](mailto:stmccath.org).

### **Catholic Education Commission**

The Catholic Education Commission is an advisory body to the pastor. It is responsible for the total faith formation program of STM Parish by initiating policies and setting guidelines for/with the Child, Youth, Young Adult and Adult Ministry Coordinators so the programs can accomplish their goals. The Catholic Education Commission reports directly to the STM Parish Pastoral Council.

### **Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Code**

The Diocese of Green Bay will not tolerate the sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a minor by a priest, deacon, other minister, employee or volunteer who is in the service of the Diocese. Likewise, all students are expected to be respectful of all others they come in contact with. Any sexual harassment or misconduct will NOT be tolerated and a student suspected of such behavior will be immediately asked to leave and parents will be contacted.

### **VIRTUS - "Protecting God's Children"** (Preventing Child Abuse Awareness)

[Each volunteer and employee of the Green Bay Diocese eighteen years old or older who have regular contact with children and vulnerable adults are to participate in a "Protecting God's Children Adult Awareness" \(VIRTUS\) session which the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Diocesan Department of Total Catholic Education mandates.](#)

The Diocese of Green Bay is committed to creating, providing and maintaining safe environments in all its parishes, schools, and other institutions so that all persons, especially children, young people and individuals at risk, will be protected as far as possible from all harm particularly sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of minors and abuse of individuals at risk. This policy is in compliance with The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

parish sponsored activities on and off parish premises.

This plan will:

- Promote the well-being and safety of all students and staff.
- Protect the right of every catechist to teach and every student to learn.
- Maintain the dignity, worth, sacredness, and value of each person.
- Include appropriate and timely communications with parents.
- Foster personal responsibility and accountability of actions by students and staff.
- Exemplify Gospel values particularly that of love.

### **Discipline Plan**

The following procedure will be implemented by discretion of the catechists if a student violates any classroom rules:

1. The first offense will result in a verbal reminder from the Catechist.
2. The second offense will result in the child staying after class for five minutes and meeting with the Coordinator.
3. For the third offense, the child, accompanied by the Coordinator, will contact his/her parents to let them know that he/she has misbehaved.
4. If the problem persists, the student will be suspended from classes or from the entire program until the parents and child meet with the Coordinator and can guarantee that the problem has been resolved.

### **Communication Devices**

Cell phones and electronic gear (such as but not limited to MP3 players, video games, IPODs, PDAs) are a source of distraction during class time - for this reason, their use is not permitted during Faith Formation classes. Cell phones and all electronic gear need to be turned off before the opening prayer in class and must be put away until dismissal. If a student cannot conform to this rule - the catechist will ask for the cell phone/electronic gear and the parent will need to claim it at the end of class.

### **Pastoral Care**

As Faith Formation coordinators, we are ready to walk with families, children, youth and adults in any life situations that they face. We offer support and resources during difficult times, celebration during happy times, and everything in between! Our pastoral associate, parish nurse,

## **Welcome!**

*"Know that the greatest service that man can offer to God is to help convert souls." -St. Rose of Lima*

We, the Faith Formation staff of St. Thomas More, are at your service. We are here to help you learn more about our beautiful Catholic faith.

### **Parental Role**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children." (#2223) Since you have such an impact on your child(ren)'s faith life, we ask that you support their discipleship development by:

- Participating in the celebration of Eucharist with your child(ren) each weekend.
- Including prayer as a part of their daily routine.
- Encouraging regular participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Encouraging them to take a more active role in the parish's life and ministry, in keeping with their age and abilities (serving, ushering, music, help with service opportunities around the parish, etc). *\*Ask us about more youth volunteer opportunities.*

### **Personal or Health Concerns**

Information about learning disabilities or other personal concerns should be communicated on the student's registration form. This will allow for the student and the catechist to develop a healthier relationship and provide for protection against harmful reactions in classes. We want to be able to minister to each student as his/her individual needs require.

### **Website**

Please go to [www.stmcath.org](http://www.stmcath.org) to access our calendars, registration forms and other Faith Formation information. Any class cancelations will also be posted on the home page in the tab section.

### **Tuition/Fees**

Consult the website for tuition and fees found on the registration form ([www.stmcath.org](http://www.stmcath.org)) or contact the Faith Formation Department. *\*In case of financial need, scholarship assistance is available for St. Thomas More parish members who apply.*

## **Catechist - Parent Cooperation**

Efforts will be made throughout the year by the parish leadership, coordinators, catechists and Catholic Education Commission to keep you informed of our goals and efforts. We ask that this contact become mutual communication. The best way to know "what's going on" is not only to ask your student, but to read the church bulletin, check the website, [www.stmcath.org](http://www.stmcath.org), or come and ask those involved. If you have any doubts, questions, or comments, please feel free to contact the Child and Youth Ministry Coordinators.

## **Supervision**

For the student's safety, hallway supervision begins 10 minutes before classes. Since all classes end at 7:30 PM, there will be no after-class supervision.

## **Drop Off/Pick Up Procedure**

All drivers please exercise caution when entering/leaving the parking lot on class nights. For the student's safety, hallway supervision begins 10 minutes before classes. Students should not be dropped off prior to this time.

**Grades 1-5:** Students may be dropped off in the circle-drop-off area and gather in the first-floor hallway upon entering the building.

**Grades 6-8:** Students should gather in the lower level.

**Grades 9-10:** Students should go directly to classrooms.

Students who are late must check in with the Welcome Center Volunteer.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is the responsibility of parents. Students are expected to be at classes on time so they can begin promptly. Consult the calendars for dates and times of classes and required events. Calendars can be found at [www.stmcath.org](http://www.stmcath.org) by hovering over *Child & Youth*, click on *Faith Formation*, then scroll to the bottom to click on *Calendars*.

[Catholic Education Commission Policy on Regular Attendance for Faith Formation Classes:](#)

Attendance at all scheduled Faith Formation classes by students

in Grades 1-11 is a prerequisite for participation in sacramental programs - Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. Exceptions to this will be handled by the Coordinators of Child and Youth Ministry and the pastor.

**Please call or email all absences. If we don't receive a call or email, the administrative assistant may call or email parents to confirm their child's absence.**

Classes missed for any reason are expected to be made up by the students (see Make Up Work). Students who need to leave early must report to the Welcome Center. Parents must sign their child out. At no time will students be released without an adult.

## **Make Up Work**

If a child misses class he or she is expected to make up the class. Catechist/coordinator will assign make up work based on what was taught the night of the absence. This work should be completed and turned into the catechist in a timely manner.

## **Homework and Extracurricular Activities (Appleton Area School District Policy #345.3)**

There is both a written policy (for homework) and an informal agreement (for extracurricular activities) to reserve Wednesday evenings for family activities and Faith Formation in the Appleton Area School District. As a commitment to community life and in cooperation with community groups and religious educators, the Appleton Area School District makes every attempt not to schedule extracurricular events on Wednesday evenings. This is done so that students and families can be involved in non-school activities on Wednesday evenings. This agreement is a combined effort by Appleton schools and the churches to help families prioritize the value of faith formation. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the Appleton Area School District at 832-6161 or the St. Thomas More Faith Formation Office at 739-8172.

## **Discipline Expectations**

There is only one classroom rule in our St. Thomas More Discipline Plan. Students will show respect in both actions and words for the catechists, aides, other students, building, classrooms and all classroom items, including the property of the teacher and other students who use the classroom, and the program as a whole during class time and at all