

# *St. Thomas More Religious Education*

## *MISSION STATEMENT*

**Religious Education provides the opportunity for all – no matter of age - to come together in small Christian communities which nurture and foster the ongoing education so that faith becomes a part of one's daily life.**

**The catechetical ministry of St. Thomas More will encourage every person to nourish a deeper relationship with God, to strengthen our parish community and to build up the body of Christ.**



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## CURRICULUM

### LOYOLA PRESS

#### “Finding God – Our Response to God’s Gift”

This marks our third year using this text from Loyola Press. I am very excited about many aspects of this program – but in particular I am excited the way the text allows you, the parent, to participate and know what is going on at Religious Education.

In addition to the text your child will be using in class, each family will receive a book entitled “A Parent Guide to Prayer”. This is a perfect resource for parents as you pray with your children. Every week your child should bring home a “Parent Page”. These take home pages provide you with background and activities to stay truly involved in your child’s faith formation. Parents will also receive 5 times a year a news letter from Loyola Press that offers inspiration and motivation for personal and family faith formation.

Loyola Press also offers an awesome website [www.FindingGod.org](http://www.FindingGod.org). This site provides parents and children with additional activities to help with inspiration and faith formation in the home.

#### Kindergarten

The “God Loves Us” program recognizes that young children have a readiness to learn about God. The program integrates Scripture and doctrine in each lesson to help children and their catechists relate the richness of our Catholic faith to their every day lives.

#### Grade One

God is our Creator and loves us as our Father. Jesus came to tell us about God the Father and forgives us through his life, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit shares the life of the risen Jesus Christ and forms the community of the Church. We know Jesus through personal prayers and by worshiping God together, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. We can thank Jesus for the gift of himself and the Holy Spirit by obeying the Commandments, caring for one another, and caring for the world.

#### Grade Two

God loves each of us and we are called to act on God’s love for us by loving one another, by living as Jesus wants us to live. As we prepare for the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, we give special attention to examination of conscience, how to make a good confession and importance of preparations to receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

#### Grade Three

God creates us good and calls us to live in community. We emphasize the role of the Jesus calling us to a new way of life – what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus and how close Jesus wants us to be with our Father. We learn how each of the sacraments deepens our relationship with God and how the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity are the foundation for the moral choices we make as we grow to be like Jesus.

#### Grade Four

God calls us to lead a moral life. He revealed the Ten Commandments to provide us with the parameters to live a life for God and others. Jesus taught us the Beatitudes and their relationship to living a Christian life. We give special attention to Sacraments of Healing and Sacraments at the Service of Communion as part of the moral dimension of our faith.

### Grade Five

Strengthened in sacramental life of the Church, we are better able to live like Jesus in making choices for God and others. We enter into a new way of life when we celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. Through the sacraments we live more fully in the Holy Spirit as members of the Church. The fullness of our life in Jesus Christ will find completion at the Last Judgment when we face our Savior.

### Grade Six

We explore the history of salvation – from Creation, through the Old Testament, to its fulfillment in Jesus – as we share stories of our ancestors in faith: Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon. We recognize the importance of the prophets as witnesses for God and their relevance to our own time. As followers of Jesus, we explore the meaning of the Psalms as the prayers of Jesus and the themes of Wisdom Literature that teach practical ways of living for God in everyday life. We find our connection to Christian worship from its roots in the Old Testament, and we learn of the special connection between the celebration of Passover and the celebration of the Eucharist. Important themes of Catholic Social Teaching call us to holiness, to care for the earth, and to act in the ways of justice.

### Grades Seven & Eight

Finding God for junior high takes a different approach than grades one through six, but continues to create a climate that appeals to the senses and opens hearts and minds to the work of the Holy spirit. Finding God for junior high weaves together experiences in prayers, Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, and liturgy for young people

## FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST EUCHARIST PREPARATION

Children in the second grade will be receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Sessions will be held for the parents and children which will serve to enrich the faith life of everyone involved. Unless requested to use regular mail, we will be contacting families with dates and other information via email in early autumn which will include the session dates as well as the dates for the actual reception of the sacraments. The official policy regarding First Communion / Reconciliation can be found on page 11 of this handbook.

### RECONCILIATION

Children are prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation by focusing on the principal themes of the sacrament – response to God’s call, conversion, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The class sessions reflect upon the child’s own experiences and these are then seen in light of the gospel. Each child is guided to see his/her place within the church community and to recognize how the community responds to the message of the Scriptures.

### EUCHARIST

Preparation for first Eucharist includes an in-depth study of the Mass. The children learn to realize the importance of community, as we gather in Christ’s name. The various sections of the Mass are explained, along with a description of each item in the church sanctuary. The children also learn that the Eucharist is a sacrificial meal. They are introduced to the concept of the mystery of the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist. They learn that those who are with Jesus through the Eucharist are called to live according to his example.

## PRAYER

Prayer assists us in establishing a relationship with God through Jesus in the Holy Spirit, and those is at the heart of the faith life of children and all of us. Since parents are the first and primary teachers, the home is the ideal setting for prayers. With this in mind every family at STM has been provided a "Parent Guide to Prayer". This is a perfect guide to practice prayer with your children as you prepare as a family for your child's reception of the Sacraments. Listed below are prayers that are taught at each grade level, which can be encouraged to be prayed at home as well.

KINDERGARTEN	Sign of the Cross The Lord's Prayer Hail Mary Glory to the Father Act of Faith, Hope and Love Prayers to the Guardian Angel Morning Prayer Evening Prayer Blessing Before Meal Thanksgiving After Meal
GRADE ONE	The Apostles Creed The Jesus Prayer Act of Contrition I Confess Rosary
GRADE TWO	All of the Above
GRADE THREE	All of the Above
GRADE FOUR	Nicene Creed Act of Faith Act of Hope Act of Love Prayer to the Holy Spirit Way of the Cross
GRADES 5 THRU 8	All of the Above Contemplative Prayer Spontaneous Prayer

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken within the first fifteen minutes of class time. Parents will be contacted if a child has missed 3 consecutive classes as a courtesy to parents. We want to insure that our students are not suffering from a severe illness or family emergency.

## CANCELATION OF CLASS

If the schools cancel class or after school activities due to inclement weather, Religious Education classes are automatically cancelled. All cancellations of class will be posted on our website as soon as possible. Please view our parish web site at [www.stthomasmoreic.com](http://www.stthomasmoreic.com) for all cancellations. Also local radio and TV stations that will announce our cancellation will be informed, but many will not announce church related announcements.

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

The philosophy and policies of the parish teach responsibility and self-discipline. This is the key to good conduct, consideration for others, and learning. Therefore, the following rules are to provide a Christian setting and learning environment that will benefit each person in the parish community.

### General Rules

- To respect people in authority in all areas of the Parish
- To respect others
- To behave in courteous manner
- To take good care of property and possessions and respect the belongings of others
- To walk in the halls in a quiet and orderly manner
- To settle matters without violence, in a peaceful manner

### Parish Property

- Play in the assigned area on the Parish Property
- Follow safety rules set up by the DRE and Pastor
- Respect parish grounds and buildings

### In the Classroom

- No student will interfere with another student's right to learn and a catechist's right to teach

## CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Normal discipline problems will be handled by the regular classroom catechist. If there are recurrent or serious discipline problems the student will be dismissed from class, following this procedure:

- 1 The student will be accompanied from the classroom to meet the DRE
- 2 The student will fill out a discipline sheet, and an agreement of correct behavior will be reached between the student and the DRE.
- 3 Both the student and the DRE will sign the discipline sheet and the student will return to class. After class, the DRE will present the sheet to the catechist for his/her signature and the student will then take it home to obtain the parent's signature.
- 4 After a second incidence, the DRE will notify the parents by phone of the disciplinary action and discuss the agreement reached with the student. Parents will be reminded to return the sheet to the religious education office after it is signed.
- 5 Discipline sheet will be kept on file in the RE office for the school year. If, a third incident occurs and the student is again dismissed from class, he/she will not be allowed to attend class for the remainder of the year without the presence of the parent in the classroom

- 1st Discipline Sheet = on file
- 2nd Discipline Sheet = parent notified
- 3rd Discipline Sheet = parent attends with student remainder of year

## HARRASSMENT

Harassment of the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, harrass, distress, agitate, disturb , or trouble person when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's volunteer status or employment or advancement or of a student's participation in parish programs or activities.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee or student is used as the basis for decision affecting the volunteer, employee, or student
- Harassment as set forth may include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - repeated remarks of a demeaning nature
  - verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse
  - implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.
  - demeaning jokes, stories, activities directed at a student, volunteer, or employee

These guidelines are important to create a Christian environment for learning and sharing

## SAFETY

For the safety of the students, the following guidelines are to be observed by everyone. Please notify the DRE of any unusual delay in pickup of students, and inform us of any arrangements you will make. Please no early or late drop off's or pickups if at all possible.

Students in Kindergarten thru 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will need to be picked up from the classroom by a parent or older sibling. Grades 3 thru 8 will be allowed to meet their rides in the parking lot.

## Snacks & Food

Please do not send drink or food with your students. It creates a distraction and a mess in our classes that we do not need to clean up after. We begin all sessions with a large group prayer service, and it is not appropriate to be eating or drinking soda during a prayer service.

## Restroom Facilities

Due to the space limitations and the design of our building all students are asked to take care of restroom breaks before arriving at St Thomas More. Our teachers do not have the time to escort 15 little people to the restrooms. Please have your child take care of his or her "business" before coming to Religious Education

## FIRST AID

Whenever a student is injured, or complains of feeling ill, catechists will locate one of the "first responders" for religious education. First responders are the DRE or Religious Education Assistant. If a student complains of not feeling well, he/she will be sent to the office and the parents will be notified.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

Please report on your registration form or notify the RE Office if your child has any food allergies which we should be aware of. (Catechists may hold a party/celebration which includes food and drink.)

## MEDICATION

If student(s) are on medication during the school day they are requested to remain on their medication while attending RE Class. Catechists are not to administer any type of medication

## DRUGS AND ALCOHOL STATEMENT

The parish recognizes the adverse effects of chemical abuse. Therefore, the parish prohibits the use, passing, or selling of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or other narcotics in any form by students. (Matches, cigarette lighters, knives, or other sharp objects are also prohibited.) If there is any violation of this rule, parents or guardian will be notified. The student or catechist may be suspended from the religious education program and/or a monitoring program will be arranged which may include a counselor

## **WEAPONS POLICY**

Diocese of Davenport Policy is No Tolerance.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Cell phones will be off and not used during the class time. Teacher will confiscate any phone used during class time and returned after class. We only have 75 minutes of class time. That leaves 22 hours for you to text your friends.

### **FIRE PROCEDURES**

All classes will leave the building through the nearest exit. Catechists are responsible for knowing the location of the nearest exit and for keeping track of their assigned students. The students will line up outside the church building or the parish center\*, away from the front entrance as that is where the fire trucks will be located.

### **TORNADO PROCEDURES**

All students will move into the storage room at the south end of the basement until an "all clear" has been issued.

### **PROTOCOL 2002**

The purpose of our Religious Education Safety Plan is to provide an environment in which our students are in a safe and caring facility so that they will have the opportunity to grow and learn, and integrate Gospel values in their lives.

A "Protocol 2002" happens when there is an event that occurs in the religious education program which results in the need for students to stay in classrooms with teachers. The event may range from an **intruder** in the building, to a **drug seizure, to a medical emergency, to a fire, or gas leak.**

#### **Emergency Procedures:**

1. DRE and RE Assistant will have parent phone numbers
2. Call 911
3. Lock doors and post person at each door to allow for exit and entry of Personnel
4. If evacuation is necessary, children in the church will be evacuated thru the lower level exits and assemble in the grassy area in the southwest corner of our property.

**St. Thomas More's First Reconciliation / First  
Communion Policy**  
**Iowa City, Iowa**

*The preparation for and celebration for all sacraments are important aspects of parish life. Therefore, the preparation process and celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation / First Communion should ordinarily take place in one's home parish.*

**All children wishing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation / First Communion from St. Thomas More must go through the Sacramental preparation process at St. Thomas More. If families attend the Newman Catholic Student Center, preparation for these families will be held at the Newman Center.**

**As well as the Sacramental Prep classes, children should be attending a Religious Education Program – or enrolled in Regina Elementary School – during their 1<sup>st</sup> year in grade school.**

## **St. Thomas More's Confirmation Policy** **Iowa City, Iowa**

*The preparation for and celebration for all sacraments are important aspects of parish life. Therefore, the preparation process and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation should ordinarily take place in one's home parish.*

**All candidates for Confirmation from St. Thomas More must go through the Confirmation preparation process at St. Thomas More. If families attend the Newman Catholic Student Center, Confirmation preparation for these families will be held at the Newman Center when their Confirmation candidate is a senior in high school.**

**Unless a family has recently moved into the Iowa City area, families are not to register at St. Thomas More simply to be a part of that parish's Confirmation preparation. It is highly recommended that all candidates - at a minimum - attend Religious Education Classes during 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.**

**No candidates will be accepted into the Confirmation preparation process after the Rite of Candidacy has taken place.**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR**  
**2011 – 2012 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Monday 6:30 PM – 7:45 PM**

**Wednesday 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM & 7:00 PM-8:15 PM**

**Wednesday – September 7<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM – Teacher In-Service**

September 19 – Class Begins  
 September 26 - Class

September 21 – Class Begins  
 September 28 - Class

October 3- Class  
 October 10- Class  
 October 17- Class  
 October 24- Class

October 5- Class  
 October 12- Class  
 October 19-Class  
 October 26-Class

October 31 – NO CLASS - HALLOWEEN  
 November 7- Class  
 November 14 - Class  
 November 21 – Class

November 2-Class  
 November 9-Class  
 November 16 -Class  
 November 23 – NO CLASS

November 28 - Class  
 December 5 - Class  
 December 12 -Class  
 December 19 – Class

November 30 - Class  
 December 7- Class  
 December 14 - Class  
 December 21 – NO CLASS

**Christmas Vacation Begins December 20<sup>th</sup> thru January 18<sup>th</sup>**

January 16 – NO CLASS – MLK Day  
 January 23 – Class  
 January 30 – Class

January 18 – Class will be held  
 January 25 – Class  
 February 1 – Class

February 6 – Class  
 February 13 – Class  
 February 20 – NO CLASS – Presidents Day  
 February 27 – NO CLASS – No School per ICSD

February 8 - Class  
 February 15 - Class  
 February 22 – NO CLASS– Ash Wednesday  
 February 29 – Class

March 5 – Class  
 March 12 – NO CLASS ----- SPRING BREAK -----  
 March 19 – Class  
 March 26 – Class

March 7 – Class  
 March 14 – NO CLASS  
 March 21 – Class  
 March 28 – Class

April 2– NO CLASS ----- HOLY WEEK-----  
 April 9 – Class  
 April 16 – Class  
 April 23 – Class

April 4 – NO CLASS  
 April 11 – Class  
 April 18 – Class  
 April 25 – Class

April 30 - Class

May 2 – Class

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR – Grades K thru 2nd**  
**2011 – 2012 SCHOOL YEAR – Sunday Morning 9:45 – 10:45**

**Wednesday – September 7 – 7:00 PM – Teachers In-Service**

September 18 – Class Begins

September 25 - Class

October 2 - Class

October 9 - Class

October 16 - Class

October 23 -Class

October 30 – Class

November 6 - Class

November 13 - Class

November 20 – Class

November 27 – NO Class - Thanksgiving

December 4 - Class

December 11 - Class

December 18 – Class

Christmas Vacation Begins December 22<sup>nd</sup> thru January 17<sup>th</sup>

January 22 – Class will be held

January 29 – Class

February 5 – Class

February 12 - Class

February 19 – NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS

February 26 – Class

----- SPRING BREAK -----

March 4 – Class

March 11 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

March 18 – Class

March 25– Class

April 1 - Class

April 8 – NO CLASS – Easter

April 15 – NO CLASS – FIRST COMMUNION

April 22 – Class

April 29 – Class