

## **Introduction**

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for parents/guardians, students, and catechists involved in the Faith Formation Program in the Heart of Mary Cluster, including St. Mary, Urbana; Sacred Heart, Walker; and St. Mary, Vinton. The philosophy, goals, policies, guidelines and schedule serve to communicate the content of our faith formation program.

The catechetical formation of each child is a responsibility shared both by the parent/guardian and the cluster Faith Formation Program. The goal of faith formation is threefold: to present information in the content of our Catholic Christian faith, to enable formation in the values and attitudes needed to live a Catholic Christian faith, which leads to the end-goal of transformation and conversion in Christ Jesus.

The policies in this handbook have been adopted by the Heart of Mary Cluster Faith Formation Commission (Board of Education) and apply to the Faith Formation Programs of the Heart of Mary Cluster. These policies give the Coordinators of Faith Formation & Youth Ministry, Site Monitors, parents/guardians, students, and catechists a direction in responding to the religious and spiritual needs of parish families.

Rules and regulations are made to help inform the student of the rights and needs of others, as well as to help serve as a guide for his/her own acceptable behavior. Rules and regulations create and maintain an environment wherein quality faith formation and the safety of every child are considered to be of the utmost importance.

Parents & Catechists are requested to acquaint themselves as well as the children with the contents of this handbook. Knowledge of the policies and guidelines will help achieve the goals of our religious education program.

## **Faith Formation Programs**

Heart of Mary Cluster Faith Formation Programs include:

- Faith Formation Classes for children in grades K to 12th
- Youth Ministry/Adolescent Catechesis

## **HANDBOOK/NEWSLETTER NOTATION**

### **HELP FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

The Archdiocese of Dubuque has established a program of pastoral assistance to people who believe they or those in their care have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other Church personnel. This assistance will include help in informing civil and Church authorities. Victim Assistance Coordinators are trained to facilitate access to appropriate professional mental health services, social service agencies, support groups and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. To report current or past sexual abuse by Archdiocese of Dubuque personnel, please call: Dr. Thomas Ottavi 563-584-3000. This program is part of the new "Policy for the Protection of Minors."