



**FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM  
CATECHIST'S HANDBOOK  
2023-2024**

## **A CATECHIST'S GUIDELINES**

God has chosen you! You have been asked to accept responsibility for helping your students grow in the love and understanding of God. The general duties of a teacher are here:

1. Read and study the whole year's curriculum in order to understand the purpose of each lesson.
2. Attend all teacher training classes in order to develop your knowledge and teaching skills.
3. Study each lesson early enough to do careful planning for each class.
4. Take a personal interest in all students and in each one's development.
5. Arrive at least 30 min prior to the start of class.
6. Have regular prayer experiences with your class.
7. Include Bible readings and references as a regular part of your class.
8. Communicate with parents.
9. Maintain reasonable discipline in your class
10. Give feedback to the staff whenever a better job can be done supporting you.
11. Begin and end your class promptly.
12. Be happy and joyous in your important ministry.

Copies from Wright- Patterson AFB  
Parent Handbook

## **CATECHIST'S INFORMATION**

A **Catechist** in our Religious Education Program is a Catholic Christian who freely choose to share in the mystery of the church by teaching and proclaiming the message of the Gospel to young people.

**Aids** are high school students and adults who are available to assist before class in setting things up, during class to help the Catechist and Coordinator, and at the end of class to put materials away and check the classrooms, washrooms, etc.

### **SATURDAY SCHEDULE:**

The school doors will open at 10:45 AM Upon their arrival, students will go directly to their Catechist and then they will be directed to their classroom. Students are not allowed to enter the classroom unless the teacher is present.

Class should begin promptly at 11:00 AM and end promptly at 1:00 PM Teachers should walk all students to the door.

### **CATECHIST CHECK-IN**

Each Catechist and Aid- Volunteer is responsible to check in at the Office before class begins and pick up the Catechist Note from the CRE, letters to parents, Attendance Sheet etc.

Also, do not go directly to your classroom. All Catechist and volunteers should go directly to the room at the back of the principal office. We are going to be praying together before class. Please arrived 30 min before class.

### **CLASSROOMS:**

Please asses the condition of your classroom and record this on the attendance slip. It is equally important that you leave the room as you found it. Check windows, waste baskets, chalk boards, doors, etc.

Please make sure that the students do not touch, mark, or take anything that doesn't belong to them.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

On regular class days, attendance sheet will be collected at 11:15am. Use A to designate student absence, T when tardy.

If it is necessary for a student to leave school before dismissal, he or she must present a written request from parents to you. You will forward the request to the office. **No student may leave school unaccompanied.** The student must be picked up in the School Office by the parent or designated adult.

## **TARDINESS:**

A student is considered tardy if he or she is not in his or her classroom at 11:00 AM

Tardy students are to report to the office before going to the classroom. A tardy slip is given to the student. He or she is to bring the tardy slip home. A copy of the tardy slip will also be put into the student's folder. Hopefully we can eliminate tardiness by giving a few tardy slips at the beginning of the year. **Every moment of class is precious time!**

## **LESSON PLANS:**

Lesson Plans are to be completed for every session. Please fill out the **Lesson Plan Form** in your folder. Lesson Plan Forms should include: the objectives for each week and the page numbers to be covered. **Lesson Plans will be collected at the same time attendance sheet are collected.**

**Please try to cover a chapter per week. Also, make use of the Advent and Lent lessons.** You may have to combine a lesson or two.

A more detailed Plan is requested in the event a substitute teacher is necessary so that he or she can continue the class from the right chapter. Also, since it is impossible for the coordinator to be in all the classes every Saturday to visit and evaluate the lesson, the Lesson Plan provides the coordinator with the information of the material is being covered on a given Saturday. Finally, in the event parents have questions, the lesson plan is also a good source of reference.

## **SUBSTITUTE PROCEDURE:**

In case of absence, A Catechist is asked to call the coordinator during the week to arrange for a substitute. When possible, please give notification the week before you will be absent and prepared a detailed Lesson Plan for the substitute to use. Unless an unforeseen emergency arises on Saturday morning, the Catechist should have a Lesson Plan prepared for the substitute. In this type of emergency, please call me at 773-552-0982.

In order to help substitute, leave a list of student's names and seating chart; leave the teacher's manual, student text, and lesson plan listing theme, page number, handouts, special projects, liturgy, etc.; write out routine class procedures including directions for recording attendance, checking homework, bathroom visit, dismissal, etc.; leave a list of any special students needs such as a disability, a particular discipline problem, special dismissal arrangement, etc. The more continuity that can be maintained, the less disruption having a substitute will cause.

## **EMERGENCIES AND FIRST AID:**

If a student is hurt or sick in the classroom, the Catechist should select a student who will go to the Office for assistance. The **teacher must stay with the sick child, remain with the class, and send for help.**

No member of the staff is permitted to administer any type of medication to the students.

**If the Catechist must leave the room for an emergency, notify the teacher nearest your classroom. Tell him or her that you will be out of your classroom for a minute and ask him or her to check in on your class. Leave the door of your classroom open during that time.**

## **FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES:**

Fire drills are conducted regularly in accordance with the state law. Teachers must be aware of the location of fire alarms and extinguisher. Be sure of the exit that your class should use. **All four exits will be open.**

In an emergency, the teacher makes sure that no one is left behind, closes the windows (if there is time) and closes the door. Safety demands that **the teacher be the last one to leave the room**. This emphasizes the need of an aide in classes of younger children who need to be led out in an emergency.

**The students must be taught how to leave the building and where to meet once the building is vacated. All teachers must keep their attendance books with them at all times. Everyone must be accounted for after the evacuation of the building. By using the attendance book, personnel can quickly account for students actually missing in an emergency, not just absent that day.**

There will be at least two fire drills. You will be notified about the schedule drill so the lesson can be planned accordingly. **At least one fire drill thereafter will hold unannounced to evaluate readiness.**

The following are the teacher duties:

1. Upon suspicion of a fire, ring the school fire alarm **immediately. Do not investigate the fire. Ring the bell!**
2. Have the students form a **single line** ready to exit.
3. Pick up your **class roster**.
4. Without opening the door, **feel the door** to see if it is warm. If so, **do not** go out into the hall.
5. If the hall is blocked by hot gases, fire, and smoke, instruct the students to gather in an orderly fashion near the windows. Keep the door to the hall closed. Open the window and try to attract the attention of the rescuers below. If smoke enters the room, have the students who cannot get to the window **lie on the floor**.
6. If the corridor is clear, open the classroom door slowly. Safety demands that the teacher be the **last** to leave the room. If there is aide, he or she should lead the children out. The teacher must make sure that no one is left behind, shut the window if there is time, and shut the door.
7. The students are to remain **silent** during the drill.
8. Instruct the students to use handrails on the stairs when exiting.
9. If the exit is blocked, the aide or the first student in the line is to **raise both arms**. This is the signal for the students to stop and turn around. Children are also to raise their arms as a sign to those behind them. All are then to proceed to the next closest exit; the aide must quickly get back to the lead.

10. The **first two students** to arrive at the exit doors are to open them, hold them open, and close them when everyone is out.
11. Once outside, the teacher is to **take attendance and check the class roster** to see that all students are out of the building.
12. When the **all-clear** signal is given, the teachers are to lead the students back to their classrooms in silence.

### **TONADO DRILL PROCEDURES:**

Tornado drills are held in the early spring. Students kneel by the wall outside their classroom, lean forward and cover their head/necks with clasped hands.

### **BOMB THREATS:**

If telephone or written bomb threat is received, the building shall be vacated immediately and police department shall be notified. Ordinarily, the CRE shall accept the decision of the police authorities concerning further action to be taken. There will be a code spoken over the public address to alert the Catechists that there is a bomb threat, i. e., "Catechist, please bring your red books to the office!" The Catechists will know where to go and what to do without alarming the students.

### **HEALTH PROCEDURES:**

#### **HEAD LICE:**

Teachers will inform the office of any case of head lice in the classroom. The office will notify parents in the event head lice is found in their child/ren's room.

### **BLOODBORN PATHOGENS EXPOSURE:**

In the event of an exposure in the classroom, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Put on disposable gloves.
2. Cover the exposure with the correct substance.
3. Send the student involved to the office for further attention.
4. Fill our exposure incident report.
5. Request maintenance clean-up of exposure.

In the event of an exposure outside a classroom setting, the following procedures must be followed:

1. DO NOT TOUCH THE EXPOSURE SUBSTANCE.
2. Send the student involved to the office for further attention.
3. Request maintenance clean-up of exposure.
4. Fill out exposure incident report.

## **WASHROOM GUIDELINES**

Ordinarily, no class should go to the washroom on class time. The children have just come from their homes. The children should be able to wait until they return home.

In the event that students or class will use the washroom, please follow these procedures:

1. If the entire class uses the washroom, bathrooms should be checked before use and after use in an effort to curb damage. Report any damage or misconduct to the CRE.
2. Students should never be denied the use of the bathroom. Never send a student alone. Assign a partner. Have the two students report any damage or misconduct in the washroom to you and if necessary to the CRE.
3. It is a judgment call on the catechist's part to determine if the student really needs to use the washroom or is faking. Children may be asked to wait a short time until it may be more appropriate for the child to leave the classroom. A record should be kept of individual frequent washroom visits.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

On days it is raining, the windchill is below 0, or the temperature is below 0, the school will be open and children allowed to enter the school. Catechists are expected to be inside the school to help supervise the children.

## **SUPPLIES:**

All supplies for use in the Religious Education Program will be located in the CLOSET on the second floor in front of the library in the convent area. Please get supplies before your class begins. For additional supplies, please send students to the office. The aide



will get additional materials for you. **Please do not leave your classroom unattended to get supplies yourself.**

Please remind each student that he or she is responsible for bringing school supplies with them to class each week, paper, pencils, crayons, textbooks, etc..

### **PROJECTOR OR TV**

If you need to show videos to your students, please let me know in advance so I can have it ready for you.

### **TUITION COLLECTION:**

All tuition collection will be handled in the office. If a parent or student brings money to the classroom, please send them to the office.

### **PARENT/TEACHER CONTACT:**

Don't wait until problems arise to meet the parents! Make an effort to get to know all the parents! We will provide opportunities for this: Special liturgies, Sacramental Parent Meetings, and Parent/ Teacher Conferences. Invite the parents to participate in your classes whenever possible. We can improve the parent/teacher relationship by taking the first step.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS:**

Progress reports (Report Cards) will be handed out two times during the year: January 6- the parents and teachers conference and April 6.

### **LITURGIES AND PARALITURGIE:**

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month R.E Family Mass will be held. Every catechist with their class will be asked to help in planning the liturgy and participate in Mass. I will distribute a calendar with the specific dates for your class and assigned duty. You are also asked to invite your students to the other special Liturgy services during the year.

## **SACRAMENTAL POLICIES:**

All Sacramental Policies are found in the Parent's Handbook. Every student preparing for the reception of the Sacraments (Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist) must be in our program two years.

All Catechist are asked to be aware of the students in the older grades who may not received First Reconciliation and First Eucharist! If they are new to the program, please notify the office of the student's name. They will stay in your class this year and be placed in Special Sacraments next year.

Please note: This year there are a few eligible students for Special Sacrament. The policy for this year only is: These students will attend their grade level class weekly. They will also participate in Special Sacrament Classes once a month for an hour.

Any teacher who is involved in Sacramental Preparation is expected to attend Parents Meeting. In Fact, all catechists are invited to attend these meetings.

## **WORKSHOP AND CATECHISTS' MEETINGS:**

Teachers' Meetings are scheduled for all to attend so that we can improve our program and build community. Attendance of all is required. We will meet on the following Saturdays from 9:00am to 10:00am September 9, October 7, November 4, December 2, January 6, February 3, March 2, April 6, and May 25.

The Archdioceses of Chicago requires all catechist to be involved in ongoing formation and is encouraging certification of all catechist in each parish. Since this is an expectation of the diocese, we will again participate in the Deanery Programs.

## **CATECHIST MANDATING:**

The State of Illinois has legislated that all administrators and teachers working with children are mandated to report all cases of suspected child abuse. Teachers and administrators who fail to report suspected cases have penalties for not reporting. Teachers and administrators are not the final determiners in such cases and are only reporters. Any case that is reported is not done so without serious consideration beforehand.

Catechists are also required to be in compliance with the office for the Protection of Children and Youth and follow the Safe Environment Compliance Guidelines. All catechists and volunteers must be in compliance. All compliance recordkeeping is to be verified and tracked within the Virtus System Database and reported in the Annual Audit.

Those under the age of 18 are unable to meet safe environment compliance requirements; therefore, they may not be in a supervisory role or in charge of minors.

## **BLESSED IS THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER**

(A paraphrase on the Beatitudes)

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who knows his or her subject, for he or she will teach it with conviction.

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who is practicing his or her Catholic faith, for his or her example will give force to his or her teaching.

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who prepares his or her class, for students' interest will be his or her reward.

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who is dedicated to his or her task, for his or her dedication will make him or her attend to and work regularly and diligently to make his or her class successful.

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who is adaptable, for adaptability is a prime need for successful teaching of religion.

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who is friendly but firm, for youth will respect his or her teaching.

Blessed \_\_\_\_\_ is the Religious Education Teacher who prepares his or her teachings, for often youth is thinking of "weightier problems" and most need to hear the doctrine again and again.

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