



Catechist Handbook

Church of St. Henry

Revised 2014

Mission Statement

We are a Eucharist Body of believers sent forth by the Holy Spirit on a shared journey of faith. We invite everyone to join together in worship and ministry to become active disciples of Jesus Christ through His Holy Catholic Church.

Objectives for Parish Catechetical Program

- ❖ To present a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
- ❖ To center on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- ❖ To be appropriate to the age level, maturity, circumstances, language and ethnic background of each participant
- ❖ To involve all members of the parish community, particularly the parents
- ❖ To focus on the symbols, rituals, and prayers of the Church
- ❖ To enable the believers to live out their faith in their everyday life

from the *National Directory for Catechesis (NDC, 2005)*

Catechist Role Description

QUALITIES OF A CATECHIST:

- Practices the Catholic faith and is actively involved in parish life
- Has an active prayer life
- Attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation
- Receive the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year
- Knows and supports the teachings of the Catholic Church, especially on Marriage, Sexuality, Contraception and Abortion
- If married, is in a valid blessed Marriage by the Church
- Shows a concern for ongoing personal spiritual growth
- Maintains a positive attitude in relating to others
- Relates well to the assigned age group

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Is familiar with this Catechist Handbook.
- Attends scheduled catechist meetings and in-service opportunities
- Communicates with the Faith Formation coordinators if you are unable to attend meetings, be present for your class, and have significant student concerns.
- Cooperates with Faith Formation coordinators in implementing the goals and objectives of the parish program.
- Observes parish guidelines and policies, as well as diocesan guidelines and policies.
- Uses textbooks and materials provided by the Faith Formation coordinators
- Requests needed supplies, equipment, audio-visual resources from the Faith Formation coordinators at least one week in advance.
- Is compliant with the diocesan *Safe Environment Program (PCYI)*.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Prepares or assists with lessons.
- Uses the materials/text assigned by the Faith Formation coordinator.
- Arrives early before each class and arrange the space to be orderly, attractive and conducive to learning; and return space in the order in which it was found.
- Greets participants as they arrive.
- Begins and ends each session on time and with prayer.
- Sets and posts a few simple and clear rules for discipline, and follow the policies in the Parish Handbook for Families.
- Maintains attendance records.
- Presents material clearly, with enthusiasm, and in an interesting manner.
- Uses a variety of methods to present material that would appeal to all learning styles.
- Reviews the previous lesson and relate new material to the previous lesson.
- Summarizes lesson at the end of each class.
- Begins and ends with prayer, creating a sacred space and religious symbols as appropriate with the Liturgical Year.

General Classroom Policies and Procedures

1. Each class will have at least two adults who will share responsibilities for planning and leading classroom activities whenever possible.
2. Outside doors, classroom doors and copy room will be available by 3:15pm.
3. Each catechist upon arrival should check their mail boxes for any information or handouts for that evening.
4. Keys for the supply cabinets in your classrooms do not leave the building, please pick them up and return them to your mail boxes each week.
5. Copying procedures; ask the Faith Formation coordinator or the office help if you want to make additional copies.
6. Please take attendance at the beginning of each class. Keep attendance folder accessible in the event you must quickly evacuate the classroom and need your attendance list to account for students and volunteers. Attendance records should be returned to your mail boxes at the end of each catechetical session.
7. All children **must** be registered before attending class. A visitor must fill out the registration form with emergency contact information and phone # ahead of time.
8. A list of names, addresses and phone numbers of all catechists, and other volunteers will be provided and updated as necessary.
9. Communication with parents, i.e. letters to parents about special activities, things going on in your classroom, a reminder to send an item with the child, etc. may be sent home with children from class. Please make sure the Faith Formation coordinators have a copy of all communication prior to being sent out.
10. TV/DVD/VCR and/or CD equipment is available for you to use. Arrangements should be made with the Faith Formation coordinators.
11. If you need supplies call or email the Faith Formation coordinators.
12. Bibles and a Catechism are available in every classroom for your class use.

When planning your class activities, you are welcome to use ideas from a variety of resources to support the main concept presented in the “chapter” for the week’s lesson. Additional catechist resources on topics such as drama, skits, music, games, crafts, prayer, etc. are located in the worker room, online or contact the Faith Formation coordinator for ideas. Please get outside resources approved.

Lesson Planning

Each class period should include time for prayer. Prayer may be spontaneous, guided meditation, and/or reciting traditional prayers appropriate for the age level. Each family has received a Prayer Booklet with prayers they should have memorized by each grade level. Please say the prayer assigned to your grade level each week.

Class time should be different than what children experience during the school week. Children may be coming from a long day at school, and are now ready for some activity. Class activities should be developmentally appropriate with the following goals in mind: teaching bible stories and Catholic Christian traditions, developing community, leading children toward prayer, worship and service.

Snacks/Refreshments – are only allowed during the 3:55pm class. This is exception is made due to coming straight from school and they are hungry. Snacks are to be a healthy snack that is not messy. If a child is bringing snacks that do not meet this requirement the teacher should remind them that they may not bring that kind of a snack to class. If it is an ongoing problem please contact the Faith Formation coordinator. Other class times are not allowed to have food in the classrooms in order to keep them clean and orderly. Snacks can often become a distraction.

Safety

FIRST AID supplies are located in the worker room. Caution should be taken if there are any blood-related injuries, bloody noses, serious cuts, etc. Use gloves. The Faith Formation coordinator should be notified immediately.

ILLNESS/ACCIDENTS – Contact the Faith Formation coordinator or office assistants if a child becomes ill and to report accidents. The office staff will contact parent if necessary before class ends. The Faith Formation coordinator is required to complete an accident report the next weekday.

Registration forms include parent-reported information on special needs, medical allergies, etc.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES are posted in each classroom.

In an emergency, take the attendance folder and calmly lead children to designated area. Once evacuated, check attendance to account for every child and volunteer. In order to have an accurate count of staff and children in your care, **always take attendance at the beginning of class** (both students, visitors, and any volunteers present each day). These serve as legal documentation.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES Inclement Weather

The weather during the winter in Minnesota is often unpredictable. In the event that Monticello schools are closed during the day, classes, events and activities in the Faith Formation Program are also cancelled.

At times the evening becomes questionable. Please keep attentive to weather announcements regarding cancellations. Please always use your good judgment. Some areas depend on the plowing of roads, etc. The Faith Formation coordinators will send an email if classes are canceled and it will be posted on the parish website.

CHILD DROP-OFF/PICK-UP POLICY :

Students in Grades 2-6 will not be allowed to leave the building without a parent. Students will not be allowed to wait outside. A written and signed note must be given to the Director if a student is to be taken home by someone other than the parent or person designated on the registration form. Students in Grades 7-10 must wait inside until their ride arrives.

Each session will run the full length of the scheduled time period. Students are to remain in their classrooms until the bell rings. Students are expected to leave the building in an orderly manner and are to walk at all times. In winter months snow throwing is prohibited.

Early Dismissal From Class

Commitment to Religious Education is important, therefore, sports practices or games do not constitute a valid reason for being tardy or an early dismissal. If a student must be excused from class for some urgent reason, a note, signed by the student's parent or guardian is to be given to the catechist by the student at the beginning of class. The note should contain the reason and time of early dismissal as well as the name of the person authorized to pick the student up. The authorized adult must come to the office to sign the student out for pick up.

Forms

ATTENDANCE - All classes are required to take attendance using the form provided. Both student and staff attendance must be taken at the beginning of each class meeting, and returned the mail boxes at the end of class.

CLASS LIST of registered students, as well as those with special needs information including medical needs, allergies, learning disabilities, medications, etc. will be provided and updated as necessary. This list will also include names of those who have permission to pick up the child after class.

I have read, understand, and agree to uphold the policies and procedures stated in this Catechist Handbook.

Volunteer's Printed Name:

Volunteer's Signature: _____

Date: _____