

CATECHIST HANDBOOK

It is helpful for catechists to be aware of policies and expectations at their respective parish. Creating a handbook which outlines these in writing allows them to review it periodically and refer to it when questions arise. Policies may differ from parish to parish, so the following guideline can be used as a starting point for creating your parish-specific Catechist Handbook.

1. **SPIRITUALITY**
Include in this section the expectation of participating in the sacramental life of the Church (Eucharist & Reconciliation) and of establishing a regular prayer time. Encourage time in adoration, reading of spiritual books, and listening to inspirational music or radio programs. Suggest helpful apps like Laudate or Pray as You Go.
2. **CERTIFICATION**
Provide the Diocesan Certification Sequence and emphasize working together with fellow catechists toward Level 1 Certification over the first 2-3 years of service. Provide dates for classes offered at the parish and the diocese.
3. **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**
Expectations for catechist attendance at in-services, meetings, conferences and workshops. Policy for arranging a substitute or notification of unexpected absence. Arrival and departure times for class. Policies regarding student attendance and absence. Calendar for the entire year including retreats.
4. **SAFETY INFORMATION**
Procedures for emergencies such as fire or intruder. Accident reporting. EIM (Ethics and Integrity in Ministry) policies for catechists, parents and students. Congregating in hallways, escorting to bathrooms, taking class outside or to the Church.
5. **CLASSROOM READINESS**
Creation of lesson plans, how to use the Catechist Manual, reserving materials, supplies or equipment, available times to use workroom. Include a list of available materials. Policy for reimbursement of supply costs. Copying procedures.
6. **COMMUNICATION**
Explanation of channels of communication from DRE to catechist or DRE to parents of students. Cell phone and email policies and use of systems like “Remind” or “Flocknote” or parish apps to communicate.
7. **MISCELLANEOUS**
Participation in fund-raising events or parish events. Special catechetical events during the year. Policy on class parties and field trips.

ALWAYS INCLUDE A PRAYER FOR CATECHISTS



PARENT HANDBOOK

Parents appreciate being made aware of policies and procedures at the onset of the catechetical year. Preparing a handbook that they read and SIGN is an excellent way of making sure they consent to their expected participation during the upcoming sessions of Religious Education/Faith Formation. The following are suggested content areas which can be adapted to meet your parish needs.

1. WELCOME

Include an enthusiastic welcome to your program and a thank you for their participation! Convey the program vision and mission. Give a general overview of what is offered.

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

Religious Education/Faith Formation Staff positions and responsibilities
Email addresses and phone numbers for RE/FF staff and appropriate Parish Staff members; Office Hours; communication channels

3. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Calendar for the upcoming year, Class location, times & expected arrival and departure times for students, attendance policy, homework policy, Mass attendance expectations, supervision of students, checking students in and out of class, discipline policy. Special needs accommodations. Fees.

4. PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Parent classes, participation in student activities, retreats, special events. EIM procedures and policies for their participation in classrooms and for material to be taught to their student(s). Medical needs, medications, advising of known absences.

5. EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Weather cancellations, disaster preparedness, bomb threats, intruders, fire drills. Communication channels.

6. MISCELLANEOUS

Fund raisers, parking policies, behavior rules for church grounds or church visits

ALWAYS INCLUDE A FAMILY PRAYER

ASK FOR THEIR PRAYERS FOR THE RE/FF PROGRAM

CONSIDER PROGRAM SPECIFIC HANDOUTS WITH IMPORTANT DETAILS

