

Grouping 101
**All Saints/St. Bonaventure/Holy Spirit/
St. Aloysius**

Catechist Handbook

Encounter Jesus
Follow Jesus



Children's Faith Formation Mission Statement

“Our mission is to be an active partner with parish families in the nurturing of children in the Catholic tradition by helping them to encounter and follow Jesus Christ. We seek to lead our children and their families into a personal relationship with Jesus through catechetical formation, moral teaching, prayer, and the sacramental life.”

The Catechist is a Person Who:

- Is called to teach in the name of Christ and His Church.
- Speaks from the depths of his/her own personal faith journey.
- Lives a deeply spiritual, religious life.
- Witnesses a life of prayer.
- Opens his or her heart and mind to the Word of God in the Scriptures.
- Has deep love for the Church and her teachings.
- Lives in communion with the Church and embraces a full sacramental life.
- Possesses the unambiguous commitment to convey the truths of the faith in a clear and consistent manner. Pursues the necessary training in theology, religious education and catechetical methodology in order to effectively teach the heart and mind of Christ to his/her students.
- Participates in the social and charitable ministries of the Church.

The Catechist:

- Is knowledgeable in the content of the faith.
- Demonstrates some skills in presenting the faith to a particular age group.
- Recognizes and names his/her own gifts and skills.
- Prepares his/her lessons.
- Is cooperative with the direction and ties of communication of the catechetical program.
- Is aware of the safe environment policies (*clearances, Protecting God's Children*)
- Is aware of the catechist certification policy and is available for training on the parish/diocesan level.
- Is available for meetings on the parish/diocesan level.
- Is cooperative in all service and worship activities involving the students.
- Is open to ongoing evaluation.

All parish personnel are to be entered in the diocesan data base and have all “Safe Environment” and “Protecting God’s Children” requirements completed before serving in CFF program in any capacity.

In particular, volunteer catechists **are expected** to attend Basic/Provisional Certification Courses offered through the diocese. These courses are based on the four components of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Creed, Sacraments, Morality with Prayer woven throughout each course, and Methods. Methods courses are based on grade level and area which the catechist will be teaching. The DRE will keep you advised.

Procedures & Policies

Arrival: Catechists should arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of the Faith Formation sessions and gather for announcements and prayer in the designated area. He/she needs to pick up their attendance folder in the CFF office. Catechists are needed in their classroom 10 minutes prior to class to supervise arriving children. Attendance needs to be taken within the first 10 minutes of class and returned to the office. Aides can return the folder or two students may walk it to the office.

Formation time: The catechist must remain with the students throughout the session.

A supervised group restroom break once during the session is recommended.

Catechists are not allowed to enter the restroom with the students.

A restroom will be designated for the catechists use.

If the catechist wishes to use a different room, visit the church, go outside, visit the gym please advise the DRE.

Children's late arrivals and early dismissals must be recorded in the CFF office.

If a catechist is not available for a session please contact the DRE so a substitute may be found and leave a lesson plan with the DRE.

If a child misses a session the catechist should provide appropriate materials to make up the lesson at home.

Departure: Each site has a specific pick-up procedure. The DRE will advise you to your specific procedure. However the catechist must not leave the classroom until all children have left the room.

Food: Drinks and snacks are permitted during class time.

All snacks must be nut free.

Catechists must be aware of children's food allergies before allowing snacks.

Fire Drills: A fire drill is mandatory once each catechetical year. Please follow the posted emergency evacuation plan.

Materials: Instruction should be from the chosen curriculum.

Catechists are allowed to supplement the curriculum with appropriate activities and materials.

Additional resources are available to the catechist in the CFF office as well as basic office and craft supplies.

Please ask the DRE if you require additional supplies.

Discipline:

Acceptable correction:

Verbally correct the child

Isolate the child

Child is sent the CFF office

Child's parents are advised by the DRE

Student/DRE/catechist conference

Request for parent to attend parish religious education class with child

Provision of alternative means of religious education

Other Policies:

The Diocese has a zero tolerance for bullying policy. All incidents of bullying are to be reported to the DRE and an incident form is to be filled out.

No weapons are allowed and should be immediately confiscated and reported to the DRE.

Any substance abuse should be immediately reported to the DRE.

Unacceptable Means of Correction correction:

Corporal punishment of any type

Busy work of a purely repetitive nature

Indiscriminate punishment of all pupils in a class for the disruptive conduct of one

Unsupervised expulsion from the classroom

Sending the student home without the parents knowledge

Punishments which ridicule the student

Communication:

Catechists can and should communicate with the parents about the general instruction and special events in the session as well as any make-up work. Communication should never be directly with the child but through the parents collectively. If any situation arises that a parent must be contacted individually please advise the DRE of the situation and seek approval.

Procedure for Evaluation of Catechists:

Observation of catechetical session

Evaluation tools and checklists

Informal conversation

Prudent assessment of feedback from those in the volunteer's care

Periodic individual meetings

Student Evaluation

The DRE is to provide the Diocesan Evaluation form so Catechists can evaluate the child's progress and give feed back to the parents.

**DEPARTMENT FOR RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
“CARDINAL’S CLAUSE”**

I hereby acknowledge and accept the religious nature and mission of the Parish

Religious Education Program, and I agree that my Pastor has the right to dismiss me for public immorality, public scandal, or rejection of the teachings, doctrine or laws of the Roman Catholic Church.

Further, I acknowledge that examples of the violation of the clause would include but are not limited to, being in or entering into a marriage which is not recognized as being valid by the Roman Catholic Church, or support of activities which espouse beliefs contrary to Catholic Church teaching and laws such as advocacy of abortion.

I understand that this acknowledgement is effective for the duration of my service at any parish within the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

**I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF A COPY OF
THE CARDINAL’S CLAUSE.**

(Original to be kept in catechist permanent file)

Catechist Parish Religious Education Program

Catechetical Administrator (witness) Date

(Note: a signed copy of the Cardinal’s Clause must be kept in the catechist’s record file)

Contact Information:

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