

Volunteer Ministry Position: Faith Formation Para for Levels 1 - 6

Purpose: To assist and support the Catechist and/or assist a particular child who has developmental disabilities to participate more fully and learn in an Elementary Faith Formation class

Responsible to: Coordinator of Elementary Faith Formation and Catechist

Responsibilities:

- Attend catechist meetings and trainings as able.
- Read and follow all communication from the coordinator in a timely fashion.
- Report 15 – 20 minutes before session start to the Work Room on scheduled days or evenings.
- Before class, safety-check classroom. After class, pick up room, turn off the lights & close the door.
- Follow all Faith Formation policies, guidelines and procedures. (See folder)
- Greet and welcome the children and parents as they arrive for class.
- Assist the catechist in classroom management and, as requested, by reading a story, leading a game, parent communication, etc.
- If assigned, assist a child with developmental disabilities:
 - Follow policies and procedures for working with a child with special needs
 - Assist the child to learn, behave appropriately, and participate more fully in class
 - Speak with parents prior to fall classes about the child's needs, behavior issues, what is helpful, etc.
 - Communicate regularly with the parents, catechist, and coordinator about the child's progress
- Be present with your class at and participate in all large group or special gatherings during class time.
- Contact the coordinator and catechist well in advance if you are unable to come for a scheduled class.
- Attend at least one adult faith formation opportunity per year to aid personal and spiritual growth.
- Be conscious of student allergies and special needs as noted on the class list.
- Communicate promptly with the coordinator about concerns regarding children, program or facility.
- Report suspected child neglect or abuse to the coordinator and appropriate authorities as soon as possible and confidentially.

Qualifications/Skills:

- Practicing Catholic (attending Sunday Mass weekly, etc.) who desires to nurture children in the faith
- **Adults:** Successful completion of background check, VIRTUS training & signed code of conduct on file
- **Minors (Under Age 18):** Boundaries and Guidelines training, signed code of conduct and two reference letters on file
- Prompt, reliable, flexible and patient.
- Willing and able to work with others in the catechetical mission of the church
- Love of children and ability to work and relate well with them, including those with special needs.
- Friendly and welcoming and possessing a sense of humor
- Desire to learn and grow in the Catholic faith.
- Helpful, but not mandatory: Teaching experience or leadership with children

Time Required:

- Approximately 24 sessions per school year, 1.25 hour each
- Attend Catechist Trainings and Meetings as able & appropriate: 3 – 4 per year, 30 min. – 2 hrs. each
- New Paras: **Adults** – Mandatory VIRTUS training (3 hr.); **Minors** – Boundaries/Guidelines (15 min.)

When and Where: Tuesdays 6:00 – 7:15 pm or Wednesdays 5:00 – 6:15 or 6:45 – 8:00 pm, in the St. Vincent de Paul Education Center

Training/Support Provided:

- Orientation from the coordinator and/or other Faith Formation staff
- Mandatory VIRTUS training for new adult classroom assistants; Boundaries & Guidelines for minors
- Weekly Catechist Notes and periodic Catechist meetings and trainings
- Ongoing and seasonal ideas/supports (craft ideas, videos, story time, visits from priests, etc)
- Parish adult faith formation opportunities
- Personal & professional support of coordinator, coordinator assistant & catechist regarding your questions, ideas, etc.

Length of Commitment: September through April

Last Reviewed: August 2014

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you." John 15:16