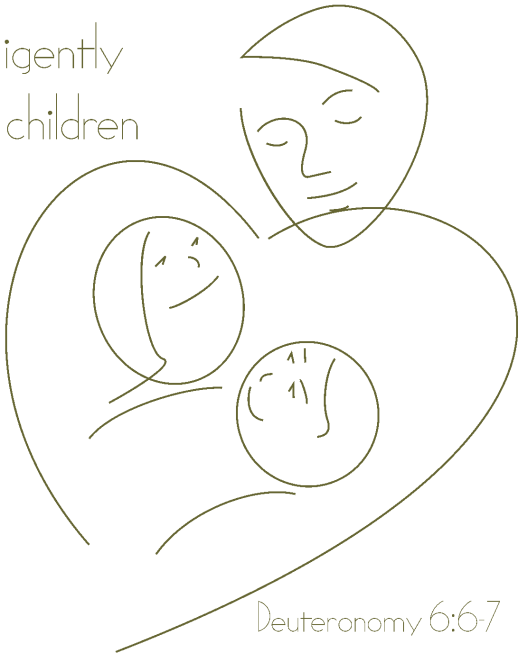
OLIH Catechist & Support Staff Handbook 2017-2018

Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 12

And these words...
shall be in thine heart:
And thou shalt teach
them diligently
unto thy children



Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Sign, cut off page and return to the FF Office

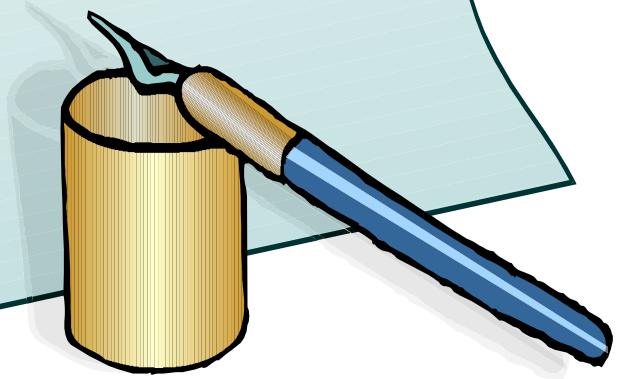
Catechists/Volunteers Handbook
OLIH/Diocese of Des Moines

I agree that it is my responsibility to read the OLIH Catechist/Volunteer Handbook for 2017-2018. I agree to abide by and follow the policies and procedures contained therein.

Signature

Print

Return by September 13, 2017



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Catechism

Revised May 2017

Welcome

Thank You for Saying "Yes"

On behalf of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish and the Faith Formation Staff, we would like to thank you for accepting the call to the important ministry of Catechist. As a Catechist you are vital to our mission of providing quality Faith Formation to parents and children. We also appreciate the work of support staff, who help the program run smoothly. With your help we can implement our statement of philosophy.

Conclusion

The ministry of Catechist is a vital part of the faith life of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish. Catechists of this parish deserve the respect, gratitude and support of the parish.

As part of the support, Catechists have the right to expect continuing training, in-service, as well as the materials they need to perform their ministry.

Catechists and Support Staff also have the opportunity to pre-register their own children for classes and to have the registration fee waived.

Catechists, Nursery and Office staff will have their registration fee waived. Sunday Nursery staff and other Support Staff will have half their registration fee waived.

The Faith Formation staff, on behalf of the parish, would like to express their appreciation for the dedicated and conscientious service of the people who volunteer as catechists. A yearly appreciation dinner is held in the spring for everyone involved in the faith formation efforts of the parish.

Discipline

Good discipline is an important aspect of creating a positive learning environment.

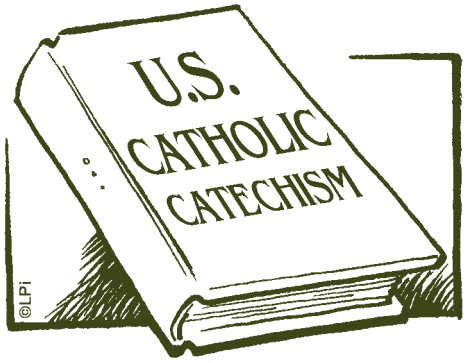
Catechists have the right to expect respect from the children in their classrooms. The procedures for handling discipline problems are as follows:

1. Seek help and suggestions from Director as to techniques and ideas for handling discipline problems.
2. If a student consistently presents a discipline problem that student should be sent/escorted to the office.
3. Corporal punishment of any kind is not allowed.
4. Abusive verbal punishment of any kind is not allowed.
5. Catechists should not contact parents regarding disciplinary problems. One of the Directors will contact parents on behalf of the catechist.

Statement of Philosophy

The Faith Formation Program of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish exists to help parents educate themselves and their children in the tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. The program seeks to employ methods and materials which are theologically sound and educationally age appropriate. The Faith Formation Program endeavors to encourage worship and prayer life through practice.

The Catechist handbook is designed to delineate some of the specifics of the commitment you have so generously made. The information, regulation and directives in this handbook pertain to all volunteers in the Faith Formation program of this parish. Please read the handbook carefully. It can be an aide to help you have a successful experience in your ministry.



Ethics

The Standard of Behavior for Catechists to strive for is the example of the Great Teacher—Jesus and the Gospel Message.

Catechists' demeanor and language should always reflect that they understand their role as examples of Christian Behavior.

1. All forms of profanity and any suggestive sexual innuendoes are unacceptable.
2. Catechists need to use extreme care when touching a child. In general, a catechist should not touch a child below the shoulders.
3. Corporal Punishment, including slapping, shoving, shaking, spanking or any form of punitive touching is forbidden.
4. Catechists should be extremely prudent in any comments, written or oral made about young people.
5. Communication about any child should be made only to those who have a legitimate right to know. Statements made should be measured by specific, behaviorally oriented, and verifiable standards. e.g., It is appropriate to state that a child has spoken out of turn three times after having been told not to. It is inappropriate to say that child is a trouble maker.
6. In general what is discussed by students in a classroom should be treated with utmost respect and should not be discussed outside the classroom. If however, there is indication of any harm to any student from him/herself or from anyone else, that discussion or indication should be reported to the Director at once.

Emergency Procedures

Catechists need to become familiar with emergency exit procedures which are posted in each classroom and provided on the classroom clipboard.

Attendance is to be recorded on the clipboard along with the regular attendance folder. In emergency situations, catechists are to follow the orders of the Crisis Management Team. If the event requires evacuating the room and/or building you must bring the clipboard in order to account for all students.

Accidents or illnesses involving students should be reported to the office immediately. An accident report should be completed as soon as possible in case of any personal injury. The Director will help the catechist complete this form and contact the parents.

Medication

No Faith Formation staff member shall prescribe medicine for a student.

Catechists should never administer medicine. Please contact a DFF if a student requires medication; we have nurses on staff to handle these situations.

Food Treats

We no longer utilize a treat bucket. Catechists must follow guidelines for allergy free snacks when bringing food treats into the classroom.

Supervision Responsibilities

Catechists are asked to help supervise children in the hallways and classrooms before and after class in order to provide a safe environment.

Catechists should never leave their class unattended. If a catechist must leave the classroom during class time he/she should ask another catechist to supervise the class.

Catechist's children not enrolled in the class may not be in the room while class is in session. The nursery is available for catechist's children.

With your fatherly blessing, Lord, strengthen these servants of yours in their resolve to dedicate themselves as catechists ...

7. Disruptive student behavior should be reported to the Director. It is the responsibility of the Director to contact the parent(s). It is not the responsibility of the catechists to call parents regarding student behavior.
8. It is the policy of the Diocesan Board of Education that any suspected cases of child abuse be reported to the Department of Human Services. It is the responsibility of the Director to make the report.

It is the policy of the Diocesan Board of Education that, religious educators and youth ministers, while not certified by the State of Iowa and, therefore, not in the category of mandatory reporters of child abuse, are required when child abuse is suspected to make a report to the Department of Human Services as a permissive reporter.

The following information is needed for the report:

1. alleged abuse
2. child's name and address
3. parent's name and address
4. perpetrator's name and address (if known)

Policy Adopted: November 23, 1992

Qualifications & Expectations

Catechists in Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Parish are to be registered members who participate in the life of the faith community.

1. Students in Grades 6 & 7 may help in the nursery during FF classes.
2. Students in 8-12 grade may serve as assistants in the Elementary Faith Formation Program or at the discretion of the DFF.
3. Confirmed High School Youth may serve as co-catechists with an experienced adult catechist for grades Pre-K-8.
4. Seniors who have previously served in the FF program will be considered a Catechist.

Catechists have the right to expect adequate preparation and support. In-service is provided on a regular basis. Online courses through Dayton University are available to catechists. The parish will pay half of the registration fee for these courses. Catechists are expected to further their faith formation by attending workshops and other faith formation opportunities.

Part of the commitment that a catechist makes is the commitment to attend the regularly scheduled meetings, prepare for classes, to arrive at an appropriate time and to follow the directions of the Faith Formation staff. Catechists are expected to be present for each class or give sufficient notice to the office if they cannot be in class.

1. Catechists are required to follow the Diocesan Code of Conduct for Personnel.
2. All Catechists must have an "Applicant/Volunteer Screening Application" on file with the Diocese.
3. All new Catechists must attend one VIRTUS Safe Environment workshop in a timely manner.
4. All Catechists should attend and participate in Mass on a regular basis.
5. Sign the Volunteer form on last page of handbook and turn it in to a DFF after having read this handbook.

Responsibilities

Preparation

Catechists are expected to prepare for the class which they teach by:

1. Studying the lesson plan, text, and resources provided for that day.
2. Assembling and preparing any materials not provided which will be needed to teach the class.
3. Spending some time in prayer and reflection about the message of the lesson.

If possible, catechists should arrive at class 10 minutes early, in order to have time to make sure all materials needed are available.

Classroom Responsibilities

Catechists are expected to respect the placement of children in their classrooms. Under no circumstances should class rolls be changed without the explicit permission of the Director or Assistant Directors.

A student may not be dismissed early from class without a parent coming to the classroom and presenting a signed Early Dismissal Form.

Catechists are expected to follow the lesson plans and calendar of lessons which are provided for their grade level, unless given permission by the director to substitute or change the schedule or plan.

Resources and teaching materials used in the classroom will be provided.

Catechists need to receive approval from the director to use supplementary resources, prior to their use.

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