

St. Anthony Parish Family Religious Education

Catechist Handbook

PHILOSOPHY

With the Holy Spirit as her guide, St. Anthony Family Religious Education is committed to working alongside her families to educate the children and youth in the Catholic faith, fostering in them a desire to truly be disciples of Christ. St. Anthony Parish Family Religious Education will teach what the Church teaches to be true and abide by all policies and decrees promulgated by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and her Archbishop.

CATECHISTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Catechists must be in full communion with the Catholic Church and must agree to convey the official teachings of the Catholic Church, not their private opinions** (Archdiocesan Religious Education Policy #2001.01).
- **Preparation for Class** – catechists should be familiar with their grade level text and plan lessons and activities geared to that age level. Teacher manuals are provided to aid in this task. If additional resources are needed, contact the Coordinator of Religious Education.
- **Record Keeping** – catechists are required to keep weekly attendance records, records of any disciplinary actions taken, and are encouraged to communicate with families regarding classroom learning activities. High school catechists will complete weekly record of CYO players' attendance at class during the CYO season (November through February).
- **Homework** – the catechist may assign homework at their discretion.
- **Confidentiality** – student records are to remain confidential.
 - Catechists will be provided with student name, parent name(s), address, birth date, phone number, and any pertinent medical information.
 - It is expected that verbal or written information shared by the student with the catechist or CRE will be held in confidence UNLESS someone's life, health, safety or criminal activity is involved.
 - Any and all suspicions regarding abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult are to be reported to civil authorities and the pastor, in that order.
- **Certification Requirements** – catechists are expected to continue in their own faith formation and are encouraged to obtain certification through the Vocare program of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.
 - Catechists are encouraged to attend other Archdiocesan in-service days and workshops
- **Catechetical Staff Meetings** – occasional meetings will be held to keep catechists informed of happenings regarding the parish and the religious education program.
- **Discipline** –
 - If a student continually causes a disturbance in religion class, the catechist will first try to resolve the matter with the individual student.
 - If improvement is not forthcoming, the Catechist will inform the parent, the Coordinator of Religious Education, and Pastor to ask for their assistance in remedying the situation.
 - Parents may be asked to sit in class with their student on a weekly basis.
 - If the situation persists, the student will be removed from the class, and the parents will be requested to do home instruction for religious education.
- **Classroom safety** – candles are not permitted to be used in classrooms due to fire hazard.

- **Corporal punishment** -- No child may be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive language (Policy C.4 in the *Decree on Child Protection*)
- **Copyright Laws** –catechists will be provided with information regarding copyright laws and are expected to adhere to copyright laws regarding print and media materials.
- **Field Trip Procedures** – field trips will generally be limited to students in 7th through 12th grades. Field trips should be educational in nature. Requests to take students on a field trip should be made to the CRE at least six weeks in advance. Any and all chaperones for a field trip are required to register for and complete the requirements of the Archdiocesan SafeParish program. A cover letter stating the educational purpose of the trip should accompany each permission slip. The permission form of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will be utilized for all field trips.

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- **Cancellation of classes** – If Coldwater Schools are closed due to icy or snowy conditions, religious education classes that evening will be cancelled. Other conditions that may result in classes being cancelled will be on a case-by-case basis.
 - Catechists and families will be notified via One Call Now when classes are cancelled. The notice will also be on our Facebook page and WCSM radio website.
- **Student Safety** – Parents are directed not to drop off children earlier than 6:15 PM in order to ensure that an adult is present on the premises to supervise.
- **In the event of a fire –_Classes should exit as follows:**
 - **School**
 - Classroom 1: exit classroom to the right and exit the building through the single door
 - Classroom 2: exit classroom to the right and exit the building through the double doors
 - Classroom 3: exit classroom straight ahead and down the hallway, make a right turn and exit the building through the double doors.
 - Classroom 4: exit the building via the door at the rear of the classroom.
 - **Rectory**
 - Front classroom: exit the room via the door closest to the front door; exit the building via the front door.
 - Hall classrooms: exit right out of the classroom and exit the building via the front door.
- **In the event of a tornado – classes should seek shelter as follows:**
 - School
 - All classes should exit the classrooms and sit with backs against the wall in the hallway.
 - Rectory
 - Classes should exit the classrooms and sit in the hallway along the stairs with backs against the wall.
- **Accidents** – parents will be immediately notified if their child becomes sick or is injured during religious education classes.
- **Snacks in the classroom** – snacks are permitted in the classroom. Catechists will be provided with information regarding the allergies of students. All trash from snacks is to be placed in the dumpster outside the school at the end of class.

CHILD PROTECTION

The parish will follow the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati regarding child protection. A copy of the *Decree on Child Protection* will be made available to each catechist.

- All catechists are required to complete a background check and register for and complete the requirements of the Archdiocesan SafeParish program prior to beginning as a catechist.
- Quarterly bulletins are to be completed within 30 days of being assigned.
 - If a catechist falls behind in this requirement by 3 months or more, they may be asked to step down from their role as catechist.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

- Catechists should notify the CRE as early as possible if they will be unable to teach a class. The CRE will arrange for a substitute.
- Catechists should arrive for class at least FIFTEEN MINUTES prior to the start of class. Catechists are responsible for the students from this time until they have been picked up by their parents.

STAFFS' SIGNED AGREEMENTS

All catechists will sign a statement that they have **read, understood, and accepted** the terms specified in the handbook.

Statement of Acceptance

I, _____, have read, understand and accept the terms specified in the St. Anthony Religious Education Catechist handbook.

Signature

Date