

# Faith Formation Catechist Handbook 2021-2022



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## CATECHISTS' PRAYER

Your love, O God, is the source of life.  
All that I have,  
all that I am belongs to you.

Help me see your blessedness in me,  
the living grace that flows through  
all creation to sanctify our world.

Your love, O God, is the source of life.  
All that I have,  
all that I am belongs to you.

Let me see the potential of life committed to community:  
make me generous of heart,  
loving in spirit, and  
creative in sharing my unique gifts  
with those in need.

Your love, O God, is the source of life.  
All that I have,  
all that I am belongs to you. Amen.

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**FAITH FORMATION** is what we do each Wednesday afternoon/evening with our young parishioners in order to assist the faith formation that parents/families do at home. This parish activity is about forming our young parishioners into good citizens of God's Kingdom. This involves more than learning facts about our faith, but being able to put our faith into action. Many people refer to this as "Religious Education" which offers the facts of our faith, while Faith Formation helps us to believe and to act as people of God.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION – CATECHIST**

### **Responsibilities of a Catechist:**

- To prepare the lesson
- To set up and lead the lesson
- To arrive on time
- To evaluate the lesson
- To participate in on-going formation
- To participate in parent meetings
- To be present for each class or contact Director of Faith Formation or Pastor
- To integrate prayer as part of every lesson
- To attend regularly scheduled catechist meetings and diocesan workshops
- To follow discipline practices of the parish
- To comply with all diocesan policies

### **Personal Skills Needed:**

- The ability to articulate one's faith
- The ability to lead group discussions and conduct faith sharing experiences
- The ability to design and conduct prayer experiences
- The ability to plan and conduct a catechetical lesson using shared Christian Praxis or similar learning methods
- The ability to use audio-visual materials effectively
- To have an understanding of growth and development, especially faith development from ages 0-18

### **Personal Qualities Needed:**

- To believe deeply in Jesus through the Catholic Tradition and to want to share that belief with others
- To be committed to the Catholic Church and the Church's teaching mission
- To be comfortable with and able to communicate effectively with the age group that he or she will be catechizing
- To be able to deal with conflict and disagreement in a sensitive and understanding manner

### **Length of Commitment:**

- To be of service from late August through April
- 1 1/2 hours each week in addition to preparation time and in-service

### **Training Required:**

- To attend planning meetings and in-service workshops for catechists; all catechists will determine additional needs for learning and develop a learning plan in consultation with the Director of Faith Formation.
- In accordance with the policy and guidelines of the Diocese of Sioux City new catechists need to create an account at **Virtus.org**, then complete a code of conduct, a background check and watch the Protecting God's Children training video, all found at Virtus.org.

### **Benefits of being a Catechist:**

- An opportunity to
  - share his or her faith with youth
  - guide youth in their growth as Catholic Christians
  - be challenged to grow as an adult Catholic
  - to receive the support of other adult leaders.

### **Termination of Commitment:**

The length of a catechist's commitment to service may be interrupted if:

1. The catechist, for personal reasons, cannot continue his or her commitment. In this case, two week notice is desired and the catechist's assistance in replacing himself or herself is requested.
2. The catechist is not following procedures as outlined in the catechist handbook or catechist job description, and after pastoral dialogue with the Director of Faith Formation, mutually agrees to discontinue as catechist or is asked to resign his or her position.

The process of action in this situation should be:

1. If a problem exists concerning a catechist who does not appear to be fulfilling expectations of the duty. The first step to resolving the situation shall be a meeting between the Director of Faith Formation and catechist. The problem shall be discussed openly and an attempt made to determine the source of the problem and to achieve resolution.
2. If the situation cannot be resolved, the next step may be termination of commitment.
3. The catechist is welcome to talk to the pastor, or another person designated by him, and share any concerns he/she may have.

### **ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS OF A CATECHIST**

1. Be able to explain your faith in your own words and why you live as a Catholic Christian.
2. Participate in service to others in areas of family, church, and community.
3. Be open to learning, growing, and living the faith of the Church.

4. Participate in parish life and the Eucharist.
5. MODELING the faith to your students.
6. ENCOURAGING questions, growth, and participation of your students.
7. PRAYING for your students.
8. WORKING WITH your students.
9. GUIDING your students.
10. PARTICIPATING with your students in their classroom and parish activities.

It is important for you to be faithful by at least attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.

### **PRAYER**

As a Church, we hold a common language with God and each other in our prayer. We pray the Eucharist together as a community and we also recite common prayers as a universal church. Knowledge of the faith we profess is part of the preparation for Confirmation, and this includes our prayers.

The following are prayers and components of our faith that each catechist is expected to know and understand:

Genuflect	The Ten Commandments
Sign of Cross	The Seven Sacraments
Angel of God	Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Before Meal Prayer	Fruits of the Holy Spirit
Our Father	The Spiritual and Corporal works of Mercy
Hail Mary	The Mysteries of the Rosary
Glory Be To The Father	Hail Holy Queen
Morning Offering	Memorare
Act of Sorrow/Contrition	Beatitudes
The Apostles' Creed	

Remember, you are Stewards of God's Gifts. These gifts include the children that have been entrusted to you and the faith you will be sharing and helping to grow and realize Life is Christ!

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

As several catechists and grades share most classrooms, please leave the classroom as you found it, so it is ready for the next class session. Please clean the white board after class. While the erasable marker is erasable, after a while it will dry on the board, making it more difficult to clean.

Please encourage your young parishioners to use the restroom before class so they do not need to use it during class.

Please use the additional activities and assessment tools. Please contact the parish office about making copies. If you need more than 20 copies we will use the high-speed duplicator. If less than 20 copies we will use the copier.

Remember to pray with your class at the beginning and end of each class session.

If you need any supplies, please let the parish office know.

**Guest speakers and supplemental materials (other than provided by the textbook series or the Diocesan Media Center) need to be approved by the Director of Faith Formation and/or the Pastor.**

### **STIPENDS**

1. Catechist: FREE tuition for children attending the program but materials fee must be paid.
2. Substitute: \$10/class session
3. Catechist Aide: \$5/class session

### **VIRTUS**

In 2003, the Diocese introduced the Virtus program in order to protect our children from harm. This is based on Diocesan policy, which is based on statutes established by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, which states that beginning in 2003, all persons working with our children have been required to attend a Virtus online training session and to continue the training through regular reading materials, bulletins, provided online at [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org). Failure to complete this training within ninety (90) days of accepting a position in the parish that includes work with and around children will result in the termination of the person's service.

Once you have completed the online training, you will receive on a regular basis e-mail reminders regarding the issuing of ongoing training in the form of reading materials. Thus, you should log onto [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), using the name and password you used to register for the Virtus online training, on a regular basis to remain current with your training. **IF** you do not have Internet access, please let the parish office know and you will be provided printed the bulletins you need to read and return to the office for proper recording. **Catechists MUST remain current in their Virtus training to maintain commitment, that is no more than six [6] months behind on reading Virtus bulletins.**

Virtus highly recommends no adult be in a room alone with an individual. If this situation would arise, the adult should step out into the hallway and observe the child from there.

### **ATTENDANCE**

To insure the safety of our children, attendance is taken within the first ten minutes of class time.

Catechists should:

- Notify the Director of Faith Formation as soon as possible if you are unable to teach so a substitute can be arranged
- Have a lesson plan available for your substitute
- If the catechist arranges for his own substitute, please let the Director of Faith Formation or Pastor know prior to the absence
- Substitutes are to meet the same qualifications as a catechist



## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Students need to know that they are able to share in class without ridicule or gossip being spread night of class meeting.

If a catechist or aide observes anything that leads them to believe a child is in trouble (truancy from school, pregnancy, physical abuse, drug abuse, etc.) the Director of Faith Formation or Pastor is to be immediately notified. The Pastor will handle all situations of this type.

At the first class, let the students know that you will respect their privacy, but are required by Parish and Diocesan policy to report anything you learn that indicates a child is in danger.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

In order for any child to leave the parish facility while under the care of a catechist, they must have the parent(s) or guardian(s) permission.

Parents will be notified and asked to sign a form granting permission for field trips. These forms are to assure the safety of the child(ren). Parents have the right to ask that their child not participate. Any child not participating in the field trip is asked to remain home during the event. Students whose behavior does not meet required standards can be denied participation in field trips.

## **FIRST AID**

Universal precautions are appropriate e.g., consider all blood and certain other body fluids as infectious. Reasonable precautions can limit exposure to blood and other potential infectious material. If a child vomits or in the event of injury – bleeds, notify the Director of Faith Formation or Pastor. Use the gloves provided in your first aid packet. For minor cuts or scrapes, have the child wash the area and apply their own bandage. Clean small amounts of blood or vomit with paper towels and place the soiled materials and gloves in the Ziploc bag in your kit. Keep students away from the soiled spot, until it can be cleaned later. Dispose of the Ziploc bag in the garbage container in the kitchen.

## **FOOD AND DRINK**

All children should fill out health forms inclusive of allergies and other medical concerns at the time of registration. Please consult before serving food or beverages to prevent health risks to our children. Serving food and beverages should be cleared with the Director of Faith Formation or Pastor.

## **BEHAVIOR FORMS**

It is a good practice to acknowledge good behavior. You are encouraged, especially in the lower grades [i.e. PS-4<sup>th</sup>] to utilize the ANGEL ACTION forms. A copy of this form will be available in your classroom. If you need more please ask. Please complete forms for each student you wish to acknowledge their positive behaviors and return the form to the Faith Formation Office for recording.



If you have a student who is disruptive and acting out and you have done all you can to appropriately correct the behavior in the classroom and you wish to notify the parent[s], a **DISRUPTIVE FORM** is available for you to complete and give to the Faith Formation Office for review, recording and mailing to the parent[s]. A copy of this form is available, please ask.

### **PRAYERS**

Please see the current **FAMILY HANDBOOK** for a complete list.



## **READING AND UNDERSTANDING OF CATECHIST HANDBOOK**

I have received and reviewed the Catechist Handbook and the Parent/Student Handbook for the Faith Formation Program. I understand the policies, rules and regulations stated therein and agree to abide by them.

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Signature of Catechist

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Date