

Parish Catechetical Handbook

2025-2026



711 College Avenue • Daphne, AL
(251) 626-2343 • www.ctkdaphne.org

Revised July 31, 2025

Dear Family,

Welcome to our parish catechetical program. The purpose of our program is to follow Christ's call "to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world and to hand his message on to successive generations by professing, living and celebrating the faith..." (*National Directory for Catechesis* #15)

The parents are the primary educators and evangelizers of their children. Our pastor along with those working in catechetical ministry seek to assist parents in their God-given duty to raise their children to a full life in Jesus Christ. This handbook has been designed to provide general information, dates, and requirements for participation in the parish program.

In the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the U.S. Bishops remind us that it is in the parish that the faithful are "energized to carry out Christ's mission." It is here that the "spiritual, moral and material support for the regular and continuing catechetical development of the parishioners" is provided. (NDC, #60)

The parish reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified, in writing, if changes are made to any procedure or information contained in this handbook. We hope this serves to enhance communication, and provide a clear presentation of expectations and responsibilities of students and their families. In the long run, we hope it makes family life easier!

We thank you for letting us assist you in this most sacred of duties and for entrusting us with your most precious of assets. We look forward to working together with you this year. It is in working together that we are the Body of Christ and carry out His mission.

May the Lord bless our efforts!

Sam Di Benedetto
Director of Religious Education

Mission Statement

The mission of the catechetical program of Christ the King Parish of Daphne, Alabama, is to help all participants and their families develop a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and to live out their Catholic faith in ways that draw others to Christ and the Church. We seek to carry out this mission through catechesis, spiritual growth and service.

Objectives for Parish Catechetical Program

- ❖ To present a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
- ❖ To center on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- ❖ To be appropriate to the age level, maturity, circumstances, language and ethnic background of each participant
- ❖ To involve all members of the parish community, particularly the parents
- ❖ To focus on the symbols, rituals, and prayers of the Church
- ❖ To enable the believers to live out their faith in their everyday life

from the *National Directory for Catechesis (NDC, 2005)*

The parish catechetical program admits students of any sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this catechetical program. Where possible, our parish program strives to make accommodation for children and youth with disabilities. Please contact the DRE for consultation about particular situations.

Catechetical Personnel

Pastor

Rev. Johnny Savoie

Parochial Vicar

Rev. Connor Plessala

Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Sam Di Benedetto
(251) 626-2343
sam@ctkdaphne.org

The Director of Religious Education, in cooperation with the pastor, oversees the entire catechetical program at his/her church, and is responsible for recruiting catechists, selecting curriculum and textbooks, locating resources, supporting sacramental preparation, and planning special youth liturgies. The DRE also attends regular meetings, functions and spiritual formation under the direction of the Archdiocesan Office for Evangelization and Family Life in Mobile.

Catechists

Catechists are volunteers who have recognized a special call to help spread the Word of God by sharing it with His children. Catechists are strongly encouraged to participate in Archdiocesan sponsored ministry formation classes designed to provide them with added insight and resources that can be used in the classroom. As required by the Archdiocese of Mobile, all catechists are trained and certified as part of the Child and Adolescent Protection Program.

Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are the first and foremost educators of their children. Children, without conscience effort, model their parents – their speech patterns, attitudes, carriage and mannerisms. Parental attitudes and commitments to faith and morals have a significant impact on a child's own moral and faith development. In addition to providing parish or Catholic School education in the faith, we encourage parents to support their children's spiritual and moral development through Christian conduct, prayer, weekly worship and frequent reception of the sacraments.

Special Catechetical Programs

Adult Faith Formation

Mission: To organize and promote faith education courses for adults within our parish community. The ministry offers large and small group studies, lectures, video screenings, online courses, and a library of resources for personal study on diverse topics.

Time: Meets weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly; varies by program activities.

Talent/Special Skills: A desire to learn more about and grow in our Catholic faith.

Facilitators are needed to assist in leading groups and studies.

Coordinator: John Hart, (251) 367-4799 or johnh@ctkdaphne.org

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Mission: To engage children in the Gospel and Mass readings through age-appropriate lessons and activities.

Time: Offered at the 8:30 am Sunday Mass for children 4 years through 2nd grade. Program meets September through April.

Talent/Special Skills: Adults and high school age teens with a desire to share our faith with children are needed to assist in presenting lessons and activities. Materials are provided. Child Protection Training through the Archdiocese of Mobile is required for all adult participants.

Coordinator: Rebecca DeVaney, (251) 656-4881 or rdevaney@bcbe.org

Children's Faith Formation

Mission: To assist parents in handing on the Catholic faith to their children in a classroom setting by promoting knowledge of our beliefs, full and active participation in the Liturgy, moral formation, and a vibrant prayer life.

Time: Children in grades K-8 meet weekly on Sunday mornings for 1 hour and 15 minutes in the school classrooms. PreK-3 and PreK-4 meet weekly on Sunday mornings for 1 hour in the Immaculata Center. All classes meet from September through April.

Talent/Special Skills: Adults are needed to serve as catechists for all grade levels. High school teens are encouraged to participate as classroom assistants. All volunteers should have a love of faith and children along with a desire to fill an essential role within a Christ-centered environment. Training, materials, and support are provided. Time commitment involves weekly preparation, Sunday morning class time, and meetings as necessary. Child Protection Training through the Archdiocese of Mobile is required for all adult participants.

Coordinator: Sam Di Benedetto, (251) 626-2343 or sam@ctkdaphne.org

Confirmation Program

Mission: To provide religious education and sacramental formation for parish students and their families who are preparing to receive Confirmation.

Time: Meets on Sundays during the school year. The schedule is posted on the Life Teen website (www.ctkdaphneyouth.org).

Talent/Special Skills: Instruction is a three-year process. Students should enroll in the Confirmation Program as they begin their ninth grade year. Adult volunteers are needed and welcome. Child Protection Training through the Archdiocese of Mobile is required for all adult participants.

Coordinator: confirmation@ctkcsdaphne.org

Parish Library

Mission: To make works of a religious nature available to the parishioners of Christ the King.

Time: The library is located in the Immaculata Center and is open M-F from 7:30 am-5:00pm and Sunday from 7:30am-12:00pm. It is a self-serve library.

Talent/Special Skills: Any parish member 16 years and older wishing to assist with the library is welcome to contact the coordinator.

Coordinator: Laura Guarisco, laurakirk@bellsouth.net or 251-626-2718

RCIA - Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Mission: To provide a process of learning, spiritual formation, and discernment for adults seeking full communion in the Catholic faith. Participants are evangelized through prayers, study, interaction, and discussion.

Time: Meets weekly on Thursdays at 6:30 pm in the Immaculata Center (September-Easter).

Talent/Special Skills: Open to adults who are at various stages of their faith life including those who have never been baptized, those who have been baptized in other faith traditions, and those who have not completed the sacraments of initiation. Volunteers who have a desire to share the Catholic faith are needed to serve as sponsors and in other supportive roles throughout the year.

Coordinator: Sally Halliday, 251-454-6447 or salliday@gmail.com

Volunteers

Every parent has gifts to offer the parish catechetical program. Please speak with your child's catechist or the DRE to discuss ways in which you can become involved.

Sacramental Preparation Guidelines

General Sacramental Requirements

1) Parents must submit a copy of their child's official certificate of Baptism from the parish where the sacrament was received if the child was not baptized at Christ the King.

2) The student must attend all sacramental preparation classes unless they are formally excused.

We reserve the right to delay the reception of any sacrament if it is determined that a child is not adequately prepared or otherwise ready to receive.

Baptism

For information and/or to schedule a baptism, contact Sam Di Benedetto at (251) 626-2343 or sam@ctkdaphne.org.

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion

Children in second grade who have been properly catechized are eligible to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The remote preparation for the sacraments takes place in the parish catechetical program, the Catholic School, or home settings. Special (immediate) preparation classes are held in the fall for Reconciliation, and the spring for Eucharist.

Children who are older than the second grade, but are not yet adults will receive separate sacramental preparation during the year in addition to attending their regular grade level classes.

Confirmation

The sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in the 11th grade. The teen must be enrolled in a Catholic high school and/or Life Teen. Confirmation formation is a two year process and is separate from and in addition to Life Teen. Students should enroll in the Confirmation Program as they begin their ninth grade year. Adult volunteers are needed and welcome. Child Protection Training through the Archdiocese of Mobile is required for all adult participants. Meets on Sundays during the school year. For information, contact confirmation@ctkcsdaphne.org.

Parish Programs for Children and Youth

PreK-3 & 4

The *God Made Everything* program by Loyola Press is used in Pre-school. These classes are held Sunday mornings from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the Immaculata Center.

Kindergarten through Grade 8

The *Finding God* series by Loyola Press is used in Kindergarten through Grade 8. This series focuses on specific faith themes and content in each grade and/or sacramental preparation, and has been found in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops. The text includes age-appropriate activities and prayers for memorization. We encourage parents to become familiar with their child's catechetical textbook. Learning the faith begins at home and our program is designed to assist you in your role as primary educator of your child. These classes are held Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:45 a.m. in the school classrooms.

Life Teen (High School-Adolescent Catechesis)

Students in grades 9 through 12 will use the *Life Teen* program for their catechetical instruction. This program leads teens closer to Christ by providing resources, education, and training that encourage vibrant Eucharistic celebrations and opportunities that enable teens to grow in their faith. By engaging in the lives of young Christians, Life Teen encourages them to become Catholic leaders in their communities. Life Teen meets twice weekly in The Alley located at 810 Trione Avenue: Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00 p.m., and Sunday nights following the 5:00 p.m. Life Teen Mass. Dinner is provided on Sundays. Additional activities are scheduled throughout the year. For information, contact (251) 626-3992 or youth@ctkdaphne.org.

Parish Catechetical Policies

Attendance Policy

Students and parents should make every effort to attend the catechetical sessions and/or parent meetings offered at Christ the King. Parents are expected to bring their children to class ON TIME, and to pick them up promptly. **Students who miss an excessive number of classes per year may not advance to the next grade level of catechesis.** If a student must miss a class, parents are asked to contact their child's catechist to obtain any missed assignments or information. Students and parents with specific family dilemmas preventing them from attending weekly catechetical classes will be handled on a case by case basis by the Director of Religious Education in consultation with the pastor.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students must arrive to class ON TIME and must be picked up promptly at the designated dismissal time. Students who are preschool age through the 4th grade must be picked up by the custodial parent (or their designee as identified on the student registration form). Students in grades 5 through 8 may leave their classrooms on their own but may not leave the CTK campus without a designated adult.

Communication

Since the catechist has the most direct contact with your child, parents should discuss any classroom problems with the catechist first. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, parents should speak with the DRE. If still unresolved, the problem may be brought to the pastor.

Comments, suggestions and ideas are always welcome. Please share them with the DRE by email (sam@ctkdaphne.org) or in a written form.

Emergency Class Cancellation

If local schools are closed due to an emergency situation, catechetical classes will generally be cancelled. If you have any questions about cancellation, please check the parish website or Facebook page, contact the DRE or your child's catechist.

Fire Safety and Disaster Preparation

Procedures for fire and disaster evacuation are posted in each classroom. Each catechist will instruct his/her students on their respective classroom's evacuation procedures.

Health Concerns

Health information is collected on the Catechetical Registration Form. Catechists and other personnel are not allowed to dispense or administer medication to students. If your child is on medications (for ADD or other such medications), please follow their doctor's orders in administering their medication.

Sickness

Please use the same criteria you use for secular school to evaluate whether your child is too sick to attend religion class. If your child becomes sick during class, the parent or guardian will be contacted.

Student Behavior and Expectations

- Students will be expected to show respect to their teachers and classmates. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Classroom rules are posted in each classroom. At the first disruption, the child will be referred to classroom rules. After the second incident, the child will be sent to talk with the DRE. If inappropriate behavior continues, the parent/guardian will be contacted.
- All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. They are also expected to complete assignments and participate in group projects.
- The Archdiocese of Mobile has a detailed **Field Trip Policy**. This policy, its regulations, and permission forms will be used for all field trips, service projects, retreats, etc.
- **Students attending parish catechetical sessions are expected to regularly attend the Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days, and celebrate sacraments. Parents or guardians are also encouraged to do so.** We strive to help our students recognize this parish as their “family of faith”. In order to help them recognize their faith family, it is important that they celebrate Mass here as often as possible.

Dangerous behavior

Harassment, racial slurs, fighting, smoking, drugs, or other inappropriate (or gang -related) conduct among students will not be tolerated. Violations of this rule will warrant immediate notification of parents/guardians of the child involved, and may warrant suspension or even dismissal of the involved from the program. The proper civil authorities may also be notified.

Weapons

In the unlikely event a student is suspected of possessing a weapon or drugs while on parish premises or as a participant in catechetical program or a youth ministry event, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) or Youth Ministry Leader (YML) will immediately notify the parents of the child. The proper civil authorities may also be notified.

Cell Phones

Students are to refrain from using cell phones during class time. Catechists reserve the right to confiscate any cell phones that are seen being used in any way until the class has ended.

General Expectations

It is expected that each family become actively involved in the parish and in the catechetical program so that by their participation they model a living, conscious and active Christian faith, and reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children are expected to embrace and live these values and attitudes.

Before a student will be permitted to participate in the catechetical program their parent or guardian must sign the Acceptance of Responsibilities section on the back of the current year Religious Education Registration Form stating that they have read these rules and policies, and that they agree to be governed by them. These forms are due no later than two weeks after a child begins attending class.

Child & Adolescent Protection Policy

“All children have the right to be safe and protected from harm in any and all environments – home, school, religious institutions, neighborhoods and communities. The Archdiocese of Mobile embraces this right to safety and is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the protection of children” (Archbishop Lipscomb, 2003). With these words, Archbishop issued a policy that Archbishop Rodi continues today.

The policy requires, in part, that all children and youth in grades Pre-K – 12 be catechized on the principles listed in the Archdiocesan Child and Adolescents Protection Program. This catechesis takes place during *Respect Life* month which is in October. A letter will be sent to each family, notifying parents of the dates of these CAPP classes for the children and youth.

In addition, the policy requires that all priests, deacons, school administrators, teachers, youth ministers, parish catechists, support personnel, coaches, and other volunteers having “substantial contact” with children attend training in the prevention and recognition of all forms of abuse against children. This program is provided by the Archdiocese. All persons who work with children in the Archdiocese of Mobile will be required to have background checks as part of the CAPP training.

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow all Archdiocesan policies on such matters. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Archdiocesan Office for the Protection of Minors & Adults.

Mrs. Ginger Koppersmith
Director and Victim Assistance Coordinator
Phone: (251) 434-1559
Email: gkoppersmith@mobarch.org

Field Trip Information

If the Parish Catechetical Program plans an off-site activity or program, you will be required to complete a Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver and a Medical Information Form according to the *Archdiocesan Field Trip Policy*.



