



# **Handbook for the Religious Education of Youth**

In the Family of Parishes of  
**St. Philip the Apostle**  
And  
**St. Francis de Sales**

## **St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church**

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### **Notice to All:**

The policies and rules outlined in this Handbook supersede all  
prior Handbooks, rules, and policies, as of July 1, 2022.

# **Staff Handbook for Religious Education**

## **Philosophy of the Programs**

The Catholic Church exists to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18-20). The religious education programs of St. Philip the Apostle and St. Francis de Sales exist for this purpose. Our leaders and catechists seek to assist parents, who we acknowledge as the primary formators of their children, in bringing young people into contact with Jesus Christ and the communion of the Catholic Church, as well as growth in catechesis, prayer, and relationship with God, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of all souls, especially those entrusted to our spiritual care.

## **Catechist Policies and Rules**

### **General Policies**

- Catechists must be in full communion with the Catholic Church, and convey the official teachings of the Catholic Church, in accord with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Religious Education Policy 2001.01.
- It is acknowledged that catechists are volunteers with busy lives and commitments outside of our programs. Catechists are to be thanked for their service to the Church by Church leaders and parishioners. While the role of catechist is indispensable for the good of our young people and Church, the Director of Faith Formation has a particular obligation to support catechists in their role and provide for their needs to enable catechists to adequately prepare for classes.
- Catechists are asked to act in accordance with the philosophy of our religious education programs.
- Catechists are asked to adequately prepare classes prior to class. If a catechist needs assistance, they are strongly encouraged to ask the help of the Director of Faith Formation.
- Catechists are asked to keep a record of attendance for each class session.
- If catechists are interested in assigning homework, they should first contact the Director of Faith Formation for permission to do so and to discuss the nature of it.
- Catechists should treat the formation of the youth entrusted to their care with confidentiality. Student attendance and progress should only be discussed with parents, the Director of Faith Formation, and other religious education staff at their parish, for the sole purpose of helping the student grow in their love for and relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Catechists are asked to comply with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's catechist formation program. Catechists are asked to contact the Director of Faith Formation for more information and assistance in special situations.
- Catechists are asked to attend catechist meetings as possible for them. Catechists will be given a summary of the meeting afterwards.
- Assistants to catechists and youth ministry volunteers are asked to follow the direction of the lead catechists or lead youth minister, unless such action would be sinful or scandalous. If such personnel have concerns, they should contact the Director of Faith Formation, or the Pastor if their concerns have not been adequately addressed by the Director of Faith Formation.
- All copyright laws must be followed. Please contact the Director of Faith Formation with questions.
- All off-site trips are to be coordinated by the Director of Faith Formation, with information regarding the activity given to parents at appropriate times.

### **Discipline**

- Catechists are asked to follow the discipline protocols found in the Student Handbook. If catechists would like to change the discipline protocols for their class, they are asked to contact the Director of Faith Formation to discuss doing so and how to inform students and their parents.
- Discipline for catechists is acknowledged as important to the spiritual well-being of our parish and programs. If a catechist does not comply with the rules regarding catechists, the Director of Faith Formation will meet with them to discuss areas of concern and develop ways for the catechist to again comply with our policies and rules. If a catechist obstinately will not comply with policies and rules, they will be dismissed as a catechist. The Pastor and Director of Faith Formation may dismiss a catechist at any time, but explanation of dismissal must be given.

## Behavior and Expectations of Catechists and Students

- Catechists must not be negligent of the spiritual and other needs of their students.
- Catechists may take a student's belongings or items they bring with them *only* under the following circumstances:
  - If an immediate danger is posed, or
  - A student is obstinately causing a disruption of class with the item(s) after repeated verbal requests to stop their disruptive behavior.
  - Any item taken must be kept in a visible place to all students, and returned to parents at the end of class. The only exception is for items posing an immediate danger; catechists are asked to hold such items as appropriate for the situation, and take proper action.

## Safety Procedures and Rules

- Candles may be used in class, but must be used in a safe manner and extinguished immediately after use, and when left unattended.
- Catechists may not administer medication to students. If a student is feeling ill, catechists should make contact with the Director of Faith Formation, who will take the student out of class and contact their parent or guardian, or, if appropriate, the catechist may do so directly. During youth ministry events, youth may administer their own medications. Permission to provide medications to youth during extended or overnight activities will be sought from parents or guardians as appropriate to the activity.
- Catechists should discuss the use of snacks in their classroom with the Director of Faith Formation and provide snacks upon permission and reference to allergies of students.
- Catechists should only release students to parents or guardians who are permitted to pick up a student. For special circumstances, permission from the parents or guardians must be sought.
- All policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Decree on Child Protection must be followed, including that all catechists and volunteers must be registered and compliant with the SafeParish program.

## Catechist Personnel Policies

- Catechist supervision primarily consists of catechist meetings, visits of the Director of Faith Formation to the classroom, and meetings as needed or requested by the catechist and their particular situation.
- If a catechist will be absent for a class, they are asked to contact another catechist who can serve as a substitute, and notify the Director of Faith Formation. If they have difficulty in doing so, they are asked to contact the Director of Faith Formation.
- Catechists are asked to arrive for class as appropriate for the success of their students and preparation of their class. If assistance is needed, catechists should ask the Director of Faith Formation for help or direction.
- Catechists must sign a statement that they have read, understood, and accepted these policies and rules.

## Catechist Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Policies and Rules

I, the undersigned catechist, acknowledge I have read, understood, and accepted the policies and rules of St. Philip the Apostle and St. Francis de Sales' religious education programs. Understanding and acceptance of the policies and rules are acknowledged indefinitely, until the policies and rules are updated, or I provide written notice otherwise.

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Signature of Catechist

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Printed Name of Catechist

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Date

# **Student/Parent Handbook for Religious Education**

## **Philosophy of the Programs**

The Catholic Church exists to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18-20). The religious education programs of St. Philip the Apostle and St. Francis de Sales exist for this purpose. Our leaders and catechists seek to assist parents, who we acknowledge as the primary formators of their children, in bringing young people into contact with Jesus Christ and the communion of the Catholic Church, as well as growth in catechesis, prayer, and relationship with God, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of all souls, especially those entrusted to our spiritual care.

## **Student/Parent Policies and Rules**

### **General Policies**

- Acknowledgement of reading, understanding, and accepting these policies and rules is given by parents or guardians by signing the permission and release form for each religious education program.
- All young people will be allowed to participate in age or grade appropriate programs without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or handicapping conditions. Persons with disabilities are asked to inform the Director of Faith Formation regarding special accommodations needed. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Religious Education Policy 2102.03 will be followed.
- Admission and re-admission to religious education programs are subject to consideration of how appropriate participation in the program would be to a particular young person, by both the Director of Faith Formation and the parents or guardians of the young person.
- Parents involved in home-based religious education may contact the Director of Faith Formation for support and guidance.
- In the case of non-custodial parents, custodial parents or guardians must inform the Director of Faith Formation and their child's catechist of the rights of the non-custodial parent.
- If these policies and rules change, parents will be notified in writing prior to the change taking effect.
- Policies and practices, beyond what are included in this Handbook, for each program will be provided upon registration for individual programs.

### **Financial Procedures**

- Amount of fees for each program will be provided upon registration for each program.
- In the case of a refund, the Director of Faith Formation will contact those involved. If a person thinks they should have a refund, they should contact the Director of Faith Formation.

### **Attendance Procedures**

- Students should attend all programs they are registered in, for the duration of the program. If a child will be absent, parents should contact the child's catechist or the Director of Faith Formation to inform them.
- Attendance records will be kept on file. They are confidential between the parents, catechist, and Director of Faith Formation.
- If a student is continuously absent, the Director of Faith Formation will contact the parents to discuss how to proceed with religious education.
- Homework expectations will be provided by the catechist to parents. Catechists must have approval of the Director of Faith Formation to assign homework. Parents may discuss concerns with the catechist or the Director of Faith Formation.

### **Discipline**

- Young people and their parents are required to comply with these policies and rules, as well as additional rules a catechist may have for their class.
- If violation of these rules occurs, a verbal warning will be given, along with notifying the parents of the behavior at the end of class. After a verbal warning, if bad behavior persists, a student may be removed from class to be given another form of religious education given by the Director of Faith Formation or someone delegated by them to do so along with notification to parents. If after removal, bad behavior persists, a conference with

parents will be scheduled. If, after the conference, or if parents are unwilling to meet for a conference, the student may be expelled from the program.

- The Director of Faith Formation reserves the right to make exceptions as they see appropriate to the disciplinary policy, taking into consideration the benefit to and needs of the student, other students, the program, and the families involved.
- Catechists may have their own procedures of discipline, but they must have approval from the Director of Faith Formation to do so, and must inform parents of their procedures.
- Corporal punishment and abusive language are not permitted.
- Catechists may take a student's belongings or items they bring with them *only* under the following circumstances:
  - If an immediate danger is posed, or
  - A student is obstinately causing a disruption of class with the item(s) after repeated verbal requests to stop their disruptive behavior.
  - Any item taken must be kept in a visible place to all students, and returned to parents at the end of class. The only exception is for items posing an immediate danger; catechists are asked to hold such items as appropriate for the situation, and take proper action.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

- Sacramental preparation programs will be provided as needed for the good of young people. Policies and rules regarding each program, beyond the policies and rules written here, will be provided upon participation in the program.

### **Off-Site and Extended Programs**

- Religious education programs that will be held off-site or for extended periods of time will have rules and policies unique to each program. Parents will be informed of them upon registration.
- Permission and liability release for children to participate in each off-site or extended/overnight program must be given by parents for each activity. Multiple permissions/releases may be given using one form.

### **Safety and Emergency Procedures**

- Campus facilities and locations used, arrival and pick up times, and traffic flow (if necessary) for each program will be provided upon registration for programs.
- Doors will only be unlocked at particular times under particular circumstances, unique to each program's needs. Information will be provided to parents upon registration for a program.
- Fire and severe weather procedures will be in line with the procedures in place for each location used.
- In case of injury, illness, or accident, catechists and program leaders will take appropriate immediate action. Attempts will be made to contact parents to both inform parents and ask for their direction in caring for their child. If contact with parents cannot be established, attempts will be made to contact the first and second emergency contacts to do the same. If emergency contacts cannot be contacted, or they are not listed, catechists and program leaders will proceed as appropriate for the well-being of the child, including utilizing off-site care at a medical facility.
- Each child must have an emergency medical form on file. Each form will be kept on file for the use in all religious education programs for the entirety of the school year, and the summers before and after.
- Catechists may not administer medication to students. If a student is feeling ill, catechists should make contact with the Director of Faith Formation, who will take the student out of class and contact their parent or guardian, or, if appropriate, the catechist may do so directly. During youth ministry events, youth may administer their own medications. Permission to provide medications to youth during extended or overnight activities will be sought from parents or guardians as appropriate to the activity.
- Catechists should discuss the use of snacks in their classroom with the Director of Faith Formation and provide snacks upon permission and reference to allergies of students. If a parent does not want their child to participate in snacks, they should make this known to the Director of Faith Formation and their child's catechist.
- All policies outlined in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Decree on Child Protection will be followed, including that all catechists and volunteers must be registered in and compliant with the SafeParish program.