

Catholic Church and School

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Email: issa.gaytan@mhocrc.org

Catechist Handbook, 2022-2023



Welcome Letter

Dear Catechists,

Thank you for joining us for the 2022-2023 Religious Education year. We are so blessed to have each of you as part of our team. Our mission is to build a foundation of faith from which our children and their families will grow in their knowledge of God and the Roman Catholic Church.

It is important to take the time to read this handbook carefully. It contains information you will need as a catechist.

Please feel free to speak to us about any concerns or problems you might have. We are here to support you in any way we can in your ministry as a catechist. Also please, share with us the joy you experience by sharing the Good News with your students.

God bless you in your teaching ministry!

Issa Gaytan
Coordinator of Religious Education

Mary Help of Christians Education Staff

Pastor: Coordinator of Religious Education: Fr Harry Loubriel Issa Gaytan Ana De La Rosa

E-mails

Administrative Assistant:

Issa Gaytanissa.gaytan@mhocrc.orgAna De La Rosaana.delarosa@mhocrc.org

Religious Education Office Hours:

Sunday – None Monday 12:00 pm-2:00 pm Tuesday 9:00 am-2:00 pm Wednesday 12:00 pm-2:00 pm Thursday 9:00 am-2:00 pm

Religious Education Session Hours:

Sunday 8:00 am-10:30 am Monday 4:30 pm-7:30 pm Wednesday 4:30 pm-7:30 pm

Class Schedule

Session	Day	Time	Grades
1	Sunday	8:45-10:00	K,1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, C1,
			C2, RCIC1 & RCIC2
			elem.
2	Monday	4:30-5:45	K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, C1,
			C2
3	Monday	6:15-7:30	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, C1, C2,
			RCIC1, RCIC2, High
			School 1 & 2
4	Wednesday	4:30-5:45	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, C1, C2
5	Wednesday	6:15-7:30	1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6 ,7 C1,
			RCIC2.

Part 1 – Catechist Formation

Congratulations!

In deciding to become a catechist, you have answered God's call, the call of your baptism. You have made an important decision, one that will enrich your life forever.

What is a Catechist?

The word catechist comes from the Greek word "echo." Catechists are people who ECHO the Word of God.

A catechist is a baptized man or woman who has responded to God's call (vocation) to build up His kingdom specifically through catechesis. By the witness of his/her life, he/she leads others to encounter the Person of Jesus Christ and invites them to become his disciples.

QUALITIES OF A CATECHIST

The National Director of Catechesis has established the following guidelines as the "ideal qualities" of a catechist.

Response to call

Catechists are called by God through the Church to the ministry of catechesis, not only to give time and talent for re-echoing the faith but to be open to one's own deepening, understanding, and living of the Catholic faith.

Witness to the Gospel

Catechists are called to believe and witness the gospel and its power to transform life. Catechists are persons with an ongoing commitment to God's word, in their mind, in their hearts and in their lives.

Commitment to the Church

Catechists are called to be ministers of the Word and representatives of the Church. They are called to teach what the teaching authority of the Church proclaims, and when teaching any subject must always teach what the Church teaches, regardless of personal beliefs or opinions.

Shares in Community

Our God is a community of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Made in the image and likeness of God, we are called to be God's people a community of faith. Catechists are therefore called to foster and build a faith community in their classrooms and in all aspects of the parish.

Servant of the Community

Catechists are called to serve the Christian community in the spirit of Jesus and the prophets. This service means not only seeking to meet the needs of individuals within the parish but also in the larger local and global community. This challenged the Catechist to be aware of Church teaching and actions in terms of peace and justice. Catechists need to be open to receiving the service and care of others in order to truly be of service to others.

Knowledge and Skills

Catechists are called to prepare for this important ministry by acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate gospel values and Church teachings effectively for different age groups.

INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES OF THE CATECHIST

In his Apostolic Exhortation "On Catechesis in our time," Saint Pope John Paul II wrote:

Christocentricity in catechesis also means the intention to transmit not one's own teaching or that of some other master, but the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Truth that communicates or, to put it more precisely, the Truth that he is.

We must therefore say that in catechesis it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught – everything else is taught in reference to him- and is Christ alone who teaches- anyone else teaches to the extent that he/she is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his/her lips. Whatever be the level of his/her responsibility in the Church, every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his/her teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus. He/she will not seek to keep directed towards himself/herself and his/her personal opinions and attitudes the attention and the consent of the mind and heart of the person he/she is catechizing. Above all, he/she will not try to inculcate his personal opinions and opinions as if they expressed Christ's teaching and the lesson of his/her life. Every catechist should be able to apply to himself/herself the mysterious words of Jesus: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me." Saint Paul did this when he was dealing with a question of prime importance: "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you." What assiduous study of the Word of God transmitted by the Church's magesterium, what profound familiarity with Christ and with the Father, what a spirit of prayer, what detachment from self must a catechist have in order that he/she can say: "My teaching is not mine!".

"Catechists must hand on the teachings of Christ to those being catechized;...Catechists must make words of Christ their own: 'My teaching is not my own but is from the one who sent me,' and they confess with Saint Paul, 'I handed on to you... what I also received.'" National Directory for Catechesis (CH 4:29E)

Part 2 – Catechist Development

Opportunities for Catechist Growth and Development

A variety of meetings, workshops, and conferences sponsored by the Archdiocese of Miami are available to you. The Religious Education Office also plans workshops. Such meetings and conferences are intended to be opportunities of growth. We encourage you to participate in them.

Archdiocesan Requirements for Catechists

Each catechist is required to complete and submit the following documents: A Volunteer Form, Pledge of Conduct, Safe Environment (VIRTUS and Fingerprinting).

Why do I need to be Certified?

This process of certification allows catechists to become formed in their own adult faith. You will have the opportunity to update and renew your understanding of Catholic teachings in an adult context. It will give you greater confidence both in your ministry and your own personal growth as a disciple of Christ. The methods component of certification provides participants with concrete, practical information and strategies to be effective teachers.

Requirements for Certification

All parish catechists are required to complete four basic theological courses and one ministerial and methodological course.

Ministerial Course

1. Ministry of Catechesis

Theological

- 2. Introduction to Sacred Scripture
- 3. Profession of faith: Creed
- 4. Liturgy and Sacraments
- 5. Catholic Morality: Life of Christ

In-House Meetings

In-House meetings for prayer, sharing time and workshops will be provided to help you in specific areas in the classroom. Dates to be determined.

Catechist Orientation Meetings

Opportunities for faith sharing will be provided at the beginning of the year. All of these are intended for the spiritual, social and educational growth of the catechists.

Part 3 – Catechist Tasks and Responsibilities

Responsibilities

- ❖ The catechist report to the Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE). Mark he copy in all the communications to the parents.
- **Second Proof of the Proof of t**
- Prepare the weekly lesson.
- Set up and lead the lesson.
- ❖ Arrive on at least 15 minutes prior to the start of class.
- ❖ Be present for each class; notify the Religious Education Office if a substitute is needed.
- Integrate prayer as part of every lesson.
- ❖ Attend scheduled orientation meeting, catechists meetings and workshops.
- Comply with all Archdiocesan policies (Fingerprinting, VIRTUS/Protecting God's Children).
- Follow and use the curriculum/textbook provided by the Religious Education office.

1. Arrival and Departure of Catechist and Assistant

Arrive early! Sign up at the front desk. Your weekly information will be located at the front desk. This should be picked up at the beginning of class by YOU! There is often information that needs to be sent home, or read for the day.

2. Catechist Absences

When you are unable to teach your class, please follow the procedure below:

If you know the dates you can't teach the class please let the Coordinator of Religious Education know ahead of time so we can find a substitute for you. The following should be available when you are going to be absent: lesson plans, seating chart (if used) and nametags.

- If you are feeling ill the night previous to your class session, please call the coordinator. A follow up call on the day you are scheduled to teach should be made to confirm if you can't make it and that you will need a substitute.
- ❖ Have your class phones and emails handy, so you can call them to cancel class if it is absolutely indispensable.
- ❖ If you are unable to teach your class, please inform the office.

Office #: 954-323-8025

Issa Gaytan Cell: 954-461-7486 (Please use it for emergencies only)

3. Catechist Dress Code

Your appearance will set the tone for your student (No shorts, or low cleavage please). If you want them to take Religious education seriously, your neat appearance, effective organization, and control of the classroom will promote that attitude.

Part 4 – Classroom Responsibilities

1. Be Welcoming! You are the Church

It is our sincere desire to present an atmosphere of welcome and love in our Religious Education Program to the children and their parents, WE ARE THE CHURCH. We represent JESUS, and in that role we must put aside our own personal judgments and let the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) be the fruits shown each week. These are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness and self-control.

- Greet the students at the door with a smile
- Wear your name tag for every class, make sure the students know your name
- Tell your students if you prefer to be called by your first name or last name. (Mrs. Mary, Mr. Jones etc.).

2. Student's Attendance

Catechists are responsible for taking attendance, EVEN YOURS. Accuracy is extremely important, please be so kind to do it each class.

- Take attendance by putting "A" in the box for absent students, "P" for present and "T" for tardy.
- If a child comes in after class has started, the student will have obtained a "Late Slip" from the front desk, this will help the office mark the child tardy instead of absent. It also prevents us from calling a parent to ask why their child is not in class, when indeed the child is present, but he/she has arrived late.
- Keep a copy of the late slip pass, for future reference.

3. Classroom Prayer

The people of God have always been a praying people. Religious Educators, who are mature in the faith and faithful to this tradition, will teach prayer. This teaching will take place through prayer experiences and through the learning of traditional prayers.

- Begin and end every class with formal prayer. Place your class in an atmosphere conductive to prayer by gathering around a prayer corner or prayer space in the classroom. Use your prayer boxes please, they are in the cubbies on the back room.
- Do not light any candles in the classroom. This is strictly prohibited.
- Remember all days at the end of the session we will have our end of the day prayer 5 minutes before dismissal, be prepared for it with everything clean please.
- Do not begin prayer until all students are ready. Do not allow disrespectful behavior towards prayer at any time.

4. Be prepared! Lesson Planning

As a lead catechist or as a team, your responsibilities include planning the lesson to be taught each week. Lessons should be planned carefully keeping in mind the age of students, the length of class and the total curriculum to be covered within the catechetical year. If you need suggestions we are here to help you.

5. Supply Request and Copies

Please try to anticipate your supply needs at least one or two week in advance and let us know ahead of time.

- Turn in your supply and copy requests in your folders. Please email them to Ana one week in advance. Please specify the number of copies that you will need.
- You may also come in at office hours a day before your session to the Faith Formation Office in the Church to pick up supplies and make copies.
- Trying to fill copy and supply needs in the minutes before class will no longer be possible since we don't have supplies or copy machine at the school.
- Supplies and copy forms are included in your catechist folder and are also located in the Faith Formation Office.

Part 5 – Classroom Management and Procedures

1. Supervision of Students

All catechists and assistants are responsible for class discipline at all times. Students are never to be left alone in the classroom and you should not be alone with a student with closed doors.

- Supervision is a mental and physical act. A catechist must not only be there physically; a catechist must also be paying attention. Please watch that students do not go into the school student's desks, books, personal property, cubbies, computers or class projects.
- You are responsible for the care and up-keep of the classroom you share with the school teacher and students and other parish classroom facilities.
- Students should not come into class and begin to draw on the board.
- Students should come in, take their seats and be ready to learn. A good idea is to have a worksheet on their desks before they come in, so they can begin working as soon as they enter the classroom.
- If you want, make a seating chart on the first day of class. This will help you learn the names of your students. By placing them in alphabetical order you also have a good chance of separating "buddies" who may cause classroom disruptions. Also, in case of any damage to parish or school property or vandalism, this will help in the identification of anyone near that particular area. Later on you may want to think in a more open setting in your classroom: centers, small groups, etc.

^{*}No student should be in your classroom when there is no one to supervise. Students should not be allowed to leave the classroom for any reason.

^{*}If an emergency arises, a catechist or assistant catechist must accompany the student to the office and wait there until it is resolved.

2. Discipline

Catechists are VOLUNTEERS who are giving their time and effort for the benefit of the students. They have very limited time in which to teach their lesson. They are not expected to deal with students who do not plan to cooperate. If a child disrespects the catechist or their classmates, the catechist needs to:

- Have a one-to-one conversation between this child and the CRE or other designated personnel.
- The student's parents or legal guardian will be contacted by telephone. A conference will be held before the student may rejoin the class. The student's parent or legal guardian may be required to attend class with their child.

3. Communication & Discipline

Communication with parents is extremely important. You have been entrusted with their children's faith formation.

- Catechists should not hesitate to call parents when they believe they can benefit the child. Conferences should be arranged if the catechist believes it is necessary.
- Catechists may arrange for the Coordinator of Religious Education to be present. There should always be an open line of communication among parents, catechists, and administration.
- It is important to communicate with parents frequently. All phone calls, written communication, and oral communication with parents should be documented, dated, and retained for future reference.
- The CRE should always be made aware of parental concerns or student needs. All group letters sent home with the students should be first cleared by the coordinator.

4. Conduct Referrals and Parent Conferences

- A conduct referral must be used any time a student misbehaves or is disruptive in class.
- Do not wait until there have been several incidents and your patience has reached its limits before sending them.
- It helps to get the parents involved as quickly as possible.
- Fill out the conduct referral and turn it in to the Coordinator of Religious Education after class. We will call the parents to give it in person and keep a copy in the student's file.

Part 6 – Classroom General Information

1. Classroom Size

Catechists will have a maximum of 15 students in their class. If it is possible there will be a catechist's assistant to help in the class.

2. Classroom Care

Each catechist is responsible for the cleanliness of his/her classroom.

- The students must be taught to keep the classrooms, restrooms and the grounds clean.
- They must also be taught to respect the property of the students whose desks and classroom they share.
- It is important for all catechists to be conscious of what students are doing. Make sure they are not going through the desks or school property. Students must stay away from all computers in classrooms.
- Erase all whiteboards before leaving the classroom.
- Check that students have not written on any of the desks.
- Pick up any papers around the room.
- By the end of class, the catechist should be certain that the classroom is neat and clean. The floor and the room should be clean. The classrooms are to be left as you found it. Remember that we need to be good stewards of the church property.

3. Parties/Eating in Classrooms

Class time is precious and parties should be kept to a minimum and only in celebrations of a religious feast. You will need to ask the CRE for any celebration you might plan in your class. Do not bring candies, donuts or cookies to be given out at the end of class. It is better to have other types of rewards or incentives.

4. Equipment/Materials

Resource materials include TV, DVD, CD player, audiovisual equipment, books, music, and videos. Please request the equipment from the Office of Religious Education at least two weeks in advance.

5. Catechists Observation/ Catechists Evaluation

The purpose of observations is to help the catechist grow as a religious educator and in maintaining program excellence.

Part 7 – Safety Procedures

1. **Emergency Procedures**

During emergency situations, silence and order will be maintained at all times.

- Remember to bring your attendance folder with you.
- Students are to leave the classrooms in single file, walking quickly and quietly behind their catechist.
- Classes are to line-up in the last tier of the parking lot (farthest away from the building) and wait for further instructions.
- Please take attendance and make sure that all of your class is with you. If any person, student, or adult, is not present, please raise your hand and a staff member will come to assist you.

- A reminder that once you have exited the building with your students, no one can reenter the building for any reason, except for emergency personnel.
- When a "Clear" signal has been given, students proceed back into the building in a quiet and orderly fashion.
- If parents come to pick up their children during any emergency situation, they will need to check with the CRE before the children can be released.
- Catechists cannot release students during an emergency.
- Please keep your students with you at all times until instructed by the R.E. Staff or emergency personnel.

2. **Building Security**

Security is a concern. No one should be roaming the hallway that is not properly identified as a catechist or religious education volunteer. Please question anyone you see who should not be around. Notify the Faith Formation staff immediately.

3. Child Abuse

If you suspect one of the children has been abused or is abusing someone else, the law requires you to report this. The Coordinator will contact the proper authorities. NOTE: Careful observation and documentation of physical abuse should be consistently and accurately kept.

All Catechists need to comply with the safe environment requirements from the Archdiocese of Miami and follow the Virtus and the Protection of Children Guidelines.

4. Accidents & Emergency Information

Emergency contact information for each student is on file in the Religious Education Office. The information must be kept current at all times. *Please contact the Faith Formation Office immediately if there is an injury to a child, or any situation occurs that could become threatening or dangerous.*

- When an accident occurs involving a student, the office should be notified immediately. If there is an injury, the following actions should be taken:
 - o Calm the child
 - Make the child as comfortable as possible
 - Provide First Aid to the child
 - Notify the Office, who will notify the parent/guardian
 - *Fill out an Accident Report Form

You may use the telephone in the classroom to call the front office to notify if you have an emergency. The extension number that you need to call is # 8035

5. Inclement Weather Procedure

In case of threatening weather we will advise parents who call to use their own discretion. Catechists, who also feel a weather situation is unsafe, please call and we will make the necessary arrangements for your class. We will follow the Broward County School Procedures.

6. Drop Off/Pick Up

To be discussed in orientation meeting.

Part 8 – Curriculum

1. Curriculum

At the beginning of the year the catechists will receive a curriculum that must be followed throughout the year.

2. Sacrament of Reconciliation during Class Time

Students have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation once a year during class time. A schedule will be provided so that you prepare the students the week before reconciliation service.

3. Teaching Touch Safety Lessons

The teaching touching safety lessons are taught to all students once a year.

4. Holy Days

All Christian holy days are to be observed and celebrated, with particular emphasis on our Catholic liturgical calendar.

5. Classroom Supplies

We would like to do our best to support you by being as helpful as possible in preparing for your session. We have amazing volunteers who are available during session times to do tasks for you for future classes. Requisitioned materials will be placed in your folder or near the folders if the items are too large by the following week. Simply requisition your needs on the supply form provided.

List below are the basis that are available to you:

Construction paper Glue Markers dry erase Crayons Felt Videos Staplers Tape Scissors Pens Stickers Misc. ribbon Tissue paper Pipe cleaners white out

If you need something else that is not listed above, please ask for the materials two weeks in advance. Thank you.

Letter to Parents

GUIDELINES

Please use the following letterhead:

Mary Help of Christians 5980 University Drive Parkland, FL 33067

The following is just a suggested format for your letter. Please feel free to be as creative and informative as you'd like.

Greeting:

Dear Parents,

Body of Letter:

Paragraph #1: Introduce yourself - Tell something about your family and your personal and professional background, include teaching experience.

Paragraph #2: Tell about some of your plans and desires for your class.

Paragraph #3: Remind parents that we are all working together, we are here as support to them, as the primary religious educators to their children.

Paragraph #4: Conclude with a request for ongoing support prayers.

Type and sign: Sincerely, yours in Christ, Very Truly yours, etc.

Name

A PRAYER TO SAY WHEN YOU PLAN A LESSON

Lord Jesus, come talk with me. Help me to prepare myself for my planning task at hand. Bless my planning, bless me, And bless the young people with whom I share my faith.

Lord Jesus, come talk with me. Nobody knows my subject Better than you do. Help it to be such a part of me that I will become one of those Catechists so involved with my subject that the young people with whom I share Can't help falling in love with it too.

Lord Jesus, come talk with me.
Tell me again one of those stories
That you told with such simplicity and directness
On the scrubby hills and dusty roads of Palestine.
Now it is my turn to tell the stories. Help me to tell them
With energy and style so that my listeners may be moved.

Lord Jesus, come talk with me. After all, you are the very content of the lessons I Teach. You are my primary resource- first, last, and always. Be with me as I prepare to share my love for you. Help me and the young people with whom I share, to continue to grow in faith and grace





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LESSON PLAN

Catechist's Name:
Class:
Date:
Lesson:
Activity: (song, story, action, game, craft, video, field trip, show & tell)
Materials:
Evaluate Results: (How did it go?)
Suggested Changes: (if any)



Date:

MARY HELP of CHRISTIANS

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CLASSROOM CHECK LIST

Room #:		
Before leaving your classroom, order.	please take a few minutes to cho	eck the room. Make sure all is in
	Check List	
•	oor, desks clean, trash cans empt	ty, desks straightened, white
boards/ smart boards clean.		
	other items on the floor, unusua	
Concern: Any other concerns y	ou may have that relate to the us	se of the classroom.
Before Class:		
Classroom	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Floor		
Desks		
Trash		
Whiteboard/smart board		
After Class:		
Classroom	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Floor		·
Tables		
Desks		
Trash		
White boards/smart board		
Lights Out		
Concerns:		
-		
Catechist Name: Please leave this form with your folder at the front desk. Thank you!		
17		



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CLASSROOM VISIT REQUEST

GUEST SPEAKER PRIEST/ DEACON

Upon completi	on of the upp	er portion of this	form, please subi	mit to the Coo	ordinator.	
Date submitted	d:		_ I would like a Pr	iest/Deacon t	o visit my	class on:
Date:	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	(or) Date: (or) Date:				
•	_	est to speak abo	ut is:			
15 mi	nutes;	eak for approxima 25 minutes				
Grade:	Catechist:_		# of Stude	ents:	_ Room #:	
To: Priest/Dead Please return t		the form to the	Coordinator.			
	s on: Date:	Tin	ne:	For about _		_ minutes



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INCIDENT REPORT FORM

(for injuries, disciplinary actions, or property damage)

Catechist Name:	
Date:	
Name(s) of Students involved in Incident	
Date and Time of Occurrence:	
Location of Incident:	
Description of Incident:	
Response/Action taken by Coordinator	
Signed:	(Catechist)
Signed:	(Coordinator)



personal file.

MARY HELP of CHRISTIANS

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CATECHIST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

l,	Catechist at Mary Help of Christians Religious
Education Program acknowledge that Handbook. I agree to cooperate with enforcement of the policies outlined ultimate authority over the administ program's rules and policies. Moreo	at I have read the entire contents of the Catechist had the Religious Education Program in the interpretation and do in the Handbook. I also understand that the Pastor has the tration of the program and the interpretation of the over, I further understand that all of the program's policies guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of
Catechist Name (Print):	
Catechist Signature:	
Date:	
Coordinator Name (Print):	
Coordinator Signature:	
Date:	
Please return this form to the office	of Religious Education. This form will be kept in your