

This sample document that is meant to serve as an example resource for parishes to develop a parent handbook specifically for their program and community. This sample document is not all-inclusive or exhaustive. More information may be necessary that is specific to your parish program, such as drop-off and pick-up policies. When developing your parish's handbook, please make sure that you confirm parish and diocesan policies with the appropriate personnel.



Parish of Holy Children



**123 Main Street
City, State 45678**



Diocese of San Angelo
Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

Dear Holy Children Religious Education Parish,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 Religious Education Year! We are grateful that you have entrusted us with the privilege of accompanying your family as your children continue to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

As a Catholic parish, we recognize the fundamental truth that parents are the first and most important teachers of the faith. Long before a child enters a classroom or prepares to celebrate the sacraments, faith is nurtured in the home through prayer, love, forgiveness, service, and the example of adults who strive to live as disciples of Christ.

Our Religious Education program is not intended to replace the faith formation that begins in the family. Rather, it exists to support, encourage, and strengthen you in your God-given vocation. Together, we seek to help your children come to know God's love, understand the teachings of the Catholic Church, participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church, and develop a lifelong commitment to following Christ.

The most meaningful lessons of faith are often taught in everyday moments—praying together before meals, attending Sunday Mass as a family, reading Scripture, celebrating the liturgical seasons, serving those in need, and having conversations about God's presence in our daily lives. These experiences help children that faith is not simply something learned in a classroom, but a way of life.

Throughout the year, we invite you to be active partners in your child's faith journey. Your presence at Mass, your encouragement at home, and your participation in parish life are invaluable gifts that reinforce what is taught in our classrooms. Together, as parents, catechists, clergy, and parish community, we form a partnership rooted in our shared mission of leading children to Christ.

Thank you for choosing to be part of our Religious Education program. We look forward to walking alongside your family with prayer, support, and joy. May God bless you abundantly as you continue to nurture the precious gift of faith in your children.

If at any time, you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of the staff listed below.

In Christ,

Name

Coordinator of Religious Education
email@holychildrenparish.org
555-456-7890

Name

Coordinator of Youth Ministry
email2@holychildrenparish.org
555-456-8709



Diocese of San Angelo
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Registration

Registration opens in May of the previous academic year. Early registration helps us ensure that classes are appropriately staffed and that sufficient materials are available for every student. Registration is open year-round. However, if a family registers after classes begin, we ask that they contact the Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss proper placement for their child.

A registration fee is required for each student to help offset the cost of textbooks, supplies, and program expenses. The current fee is \$25 per student, with a family maximum of \$100. A child will never be denied participation due to financial hardship; families needing assistance are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Religious Education in confidence.

Families with children preparing to celebrate the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, or Confirmation will be asked to provide copies of their child's baptism certificate. Additional documentation may be required as needed to verify sacramental preparation and ensure accurate parish records.

Please notify the Religious Education Office promptly of any changes to your family's contact information, emergency contacts, or medical information throughout the year.

Attendance, Behavior, and Classroom Policies

Regular and consistent attendance is important. We understand that life and emergencies happen. Our expectation is that your student would attend a minimum of 80% of classes (20 of 25 classes). If your student misses more than 4 classes, we will invite you into an intentional conversation to help determine the next course of action and how we can best support you. Please inform the Religious Education Office if your child is going to be absent.

Students are expected to be respectful towards their teacher, their classmates, and their environment. If a student consistently causes disruption in the class, the following actions will be taken:

1. Gentle reminder in class to help redirect behavior and encourage positive participation.
2. Private conversation outside the classroom to discuss expectations and help the child refocus and return ready to learn.
3. Private conversation with the Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss expectations and a call to parents to make them aware of the situation.
4. If after all these steps, the disruptive behavior continues, a parent will be required to sit in the class with the student.

Food and drink (except for water) are not allowed in the classroom. If the class is having a special event that includes food and drink, parents will be notified ahead of time and may be asked to contribute.



Items that could cause injury to a student or others are not permitted in the building.

Early Dismissal and Inclement Weather

If a child must leave class early, a parent is required to inform the Coordinator of Religious Education ahead of time so that the child may be brought to the pickup location at the appropriate time. Students will only be released to those persons listed as authorized to pick up.

In case of inclement weather, Holy Children will follow the City Public Schools for class cancellations. We will also communicate via email and text message.

Dress Code and Use of Electronic Devices

Students should dress comfortably according to the weather, while maintaining modesty. Articles of clothing with inappropriate images or sayings (drugs, alcohol, profanity, weapons) are not permitted. Short shorts, ripped shorts, bare midriffs, low-hanging pants, and pajamas are not permitted. Hats must be removed before entering the building.

Students who bring cell phones, smart watches, or tablets to class must keep the device silenced and out of sight. At no time during class are students permitted to use these devices, unless required for a specific classroom activity (ex. Kahoot). Failure to comply may result in the confiscation of the device, with the parents having to pick it up after class.

Sacramental Preparation

Students preparing for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation are required to have two years of faith formation. Several requirements specific to sacramental preparation are detailed in separate sacramental preparation packets.

The best preparation to celebrate these sacraments is through faithful attendance at Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation. If your family is struggling to make Sunday Mass a priority in your family's life, please contact the Religious Education Office to discuss how we can help you.

Health, Learning Disabilities, & Other Challenges

If your child has a learning disability, behavioral, or health related issue please indicate this on the registration form. All information will remain confidential but will be shared with the catechist for their reference in teaching your child.

A child will never be denied access to religious education based on disabilities or special needs. If the parish is unable to serve your child in a safe way, we will invite you into an intentional conversation to discuss how we can best serve and support your child and your family.



Safe Environment Training

All program employees, staff, and volunteers who have direct contact with children are subject to a background check, completion of the Diocese of San Angelo Ethics and Integrity in Ministry class, and compliance with all diocesan safe environment policies.

Holy Children Parish, in accordance with diocesan guidelines, participates in and adheres to the Safe Environment Training Program—*Empowering God's Children*. This program provides age-appropriate lessons on the topic of personal safety. More information on implementation dates and topics covered will be provided at the parent meeting. If you would like to review the lessons, or discuss options for doing the lessons at home, contact the Religious Education Office.

Parent Expectations

Parents are the first and most important educators of their children in the Catholic faith. Our religious education program is designed to support and strengthen the faith formation that begins in the home. Occasionally, we will provide you with specific resources to help with the faith formation that happens at home. In addition, we ask you to partner with us by embracing the following expectations:

1. Participate in Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Religious Education classes are intended to complement, not replace, participation in the Eucharist.
2. Participate in Family Activity Night. These nights do count towards attendance for your child's classes but provide an opportunity for the entire family to come together around a particular liturgical season or feast day to learn and grow together. The activities of these nights are designed for each child to participate with an adult companion.
3. Encourage family prayer. Pray together regularly as a family and foster an environment where faith is lived and discussed in everyday life.
4. Support your child's faith formation. Take an active interest in your child's lessons, complete any family activities or assignments together, and encourage your child to grow in knowledge and love of God. This includes ensuring regular attendance in class and promoting respectful behavior.
5. Communicate with the parish. Keep the Religious Education Office informed of changes to your family's contact information, medical concerns, custody arrangements, or other circumstances that may affect your child's participation. We are here to support you and work with you.
6. Volunteer when possible. Parents are encouraged to share their time and talents by assisting with parish events, sacramental celebrations, classroom activities, or other opportunities throughout the year.
7. Participate in parish life. We are not meant to navigate life alone and an essential aspect of our faith is participation in the life of the community. We encourage you to explore the opportunities for involvement in various parish activities and ministries and actively participate in some of the various offerings.
8. Pray for the program. Support our catechists, clergy, staff and all families through your prayers as we work together to form young disciples of Jesus Christ.



2026-2027 Calendar

Classes meet on Wednesdays from 6:00pm-7:15pm

September 2026

16–Parent Meeting in Parish Hall
23–Class
30–Class

October 2026

7–Class (Empowering God's Children Lesson)
14–Class (Empowering God's Children Lesson)
21–Class
28–Class

November 2026

4–Class
11–Class
18–Family Activity Night
25–NO Class (Thanksgiving)

December 2026

2–Class
9–Class
16–Class
23–NO Class (Christmas)
30–NO Class (Christmas/New Year)

January 2027

6–NO Class (New Year)
13–Class
20–Class
27–Class

February 2027

3–Family Activity Night
10–NO Class (Ash Wednesday)
17–Class
24–Class

March 2027

3–Class
10–Class
17–NO Class (Spring Break)
24–NO Class (Holy Week)
31–Class

April 2027

7–Class
14–Class
21–Family Activity Night
28–Class

May 2027

5–Class (May Crowning)

