

# St. John the Baptist Parish Office of Religious Education

Marion Catholic Community  
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## Religious Education CCD Catechetical Team Handbook (Revised 6/2020)



### Mission Statement

St. John the Baptist Religious Education Program seeks to reach children from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade by proclaiming Christ's message through instruction, prayer experiences, and the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. We realize that our ministry is accomplished in *partnership* with the parents who are the primary catechists. Together we will proclaim Christ's message, help develop a better faith community, lead the students in prayer and worship and motivate them to do Christian service.



It is our responsibility to work *with* our parents to help our children grow in their faith.

It is the responsibility *of* our parents to work with us to help our children grow in their faith.

### **+Our Philosophy+**

Our ministry of religious education flows from the mandate of Jesus to go into the whole world and teach the Good News. The Church has, throughout time, initiated and developed systems to proclaim Christ's message, to foster community, to call people to worship and to challenge them to service.

Catechesis is about the conversion of the whole person to God, Jesus Christ and the Church. It is living and learning in the midst of a Christian community that shares, nurtures, and strengthens the faith of the individuals to make up the Body of Christ.

The aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and in intimacy with Jesus Christ, who alone can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit.

### **+Religious Education Program Creed+**

WE BELIEVE, that the purpose of our catechetical ministry is to proclaim the message of Jesus, to foster the understanding of and build community in all areas of life, and to encourage service to each other for the good of all.

WE BELIEVE, that you have entrusted your children to us to deepen the faith you have given them as parents.

WE BELIEVE, that with your cooperation, such as, attending Mass, celebrating the Eucharist and other Sacraments together, attending parent sessions and reinforcing Christian values in your homes, we can help you & your child grow in their faith as they journey with you in life.

WE BELIEVE, that the goal of our faith formation program is to make us aware of the action of God in our lives, both within us and outside of us.

WE BELIEVE, that together we will awaken an awareness in your children and encourage them to gradually accept responsibility for their own Christian development as they are able.

### **+Catechetical Staff+**

Catechists are women and men who are members of our parish family and have agreed to represent all of us in a specific area of ministry. In this ministry catechists work as assistants to the parents who are the primary catechist. Our role as catechists is to help, not to replace the vital role parents have in the home or domestic church. It is the role of the Church to help the parent's journey with their children as they deepen their faith and love for our Lord.

### **+Role of our Parents+**

We believe that parents are the primary teachers of their children and that the home environment is the most important source of a child's religious development. While we can provide the formal education, the parents provide the lived-out experience of faith. Therefore, we encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's ongoing development in the Catholic faith, especially by participating in weekly Sunday Mass together.

### **+Role of our Catechists+**

Catechists in our parish religious education program are Catholic persons of faith who share their time and talent to share the gift of faith with the young of our parish. Catechists strive to build up along the youth a community spirit which will strengthen and nourish them, and which will call them to call, witness, proclaim and enrich the Gospel message to grow in faith.

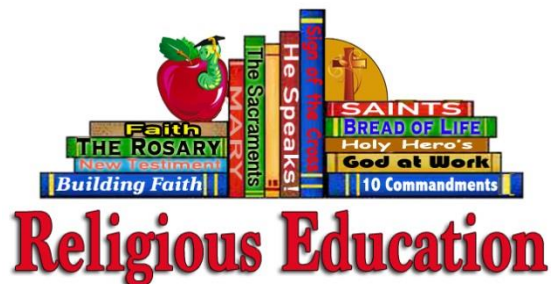
### **+Role of our Support Staff+**

Our religious education support staff consists of catechist aides, office help, hall monitors, traffic monitors, gym monitors and class parents. The service of these volunteers is essential to the smooth running of our program and enables the catechists and the C/DRE to better fulfill their specific roles.

### **+Appreciation From Our Parish+**

The pastoral staff of the Marion Catholic Community and our own parish community are incredibly grateful for all of our volunteer catechetical personnel for their generous assistance with the challenging and awesome ministry of Religious Education.

Our program is sustained by the goodness of God, graciously mirrored in the goodness of our families. We believe that every person has talents, gifts, and abilities to be shared for the building up of the Body of Christ. Each year we ask each family to take an active part in carrying out the many and varied tasks which encompass our program.



## **+FROM THE COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION+**

Core Christian values such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, and caring are basic to the moral life of individuals and we all have a right to expect and promote these values which affirm our human dignity. Being called to be Christ for each other, we can do no less than he did when relating to others. It is right and just that these values are protected and lived. This is most urgent in situations where children are concerned. Children have a right to be protected and they count on adults for that protection. If we fail them, then they soon lose faith. Faith in God has its roots in the faith that we have in each other. Jesus has issued a call to us about children and how we are to be in relationship with them. Besides moral implications involved in our work as catechists and administrators, there are also legal implications of which we must be aware.

Those responsible for religious education at all levels must understand that they have legal responsibilities. The reluctance of courts to intervene in church and religious matters is a thing of the past. New challenges are presented to us at this time in history and it is important that all involved in our parish programs be made aware that they are accountable. This includes the entire operation: those serving and those being served as well as the use of property/buildings, the hiring & supervising of employees and volunteers, the organization of field trips, and the protection of children. It is your obligation to know what your responsibilities are.

This handbook is a tool to ensure that all people on our catechetical team here at St. John the Baptist are aware of their rights, expectations, and legal responsibilities.

## **+CATECHISTS' RESPONSIBILITIES+**

### **Being a Catholic**

Catechists **MUST** be in full communion with the Catholic Church and must agree to convey the official teachings of the Catholic Church, not private opinions. Catechists are to attend Mass weekly, participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and be the light for others so they can better experience Christ in their lives.

### **Preparation for Class**

Being prepared is essential to making sure you have a good class with your young people. Each catechist needs to spend adequate time prior to CCD planning the lesson for that week. Every catechist should arrive to their classroom early enough to get prepared for the evening, have all supplies ready and pray.

## Record Keeping

Every catechist needs to make sure attendance records are kept current. Catechists receive a master attendance sheet at the beginning of the year. It is especially important that they are marked correctly each week and turned back in at the end of the catechetical year. Catechists are also required to keep all special memos from parents regarding a student as well as special requests.

## Homework

Catechists are given the discretion to assign homework to their class. If you give homework, please make sure it 1) has a purpose 2) is recorded and 3) is reviewed with the student after completion.

## Confidentiality

St. John the Baptist maintains a standard on confidentiality. Catechists are encouraged to send emails weekly to parents. Please always “cc” the Coordinator of Religious Education and “bcc” all family email addresses. Please do not give out any personal information on a student to anyone. If someone asks for information, please direct them to the Coordinator of Religious Education. If a student comes to a catechist with a confidential situation that is life threatening, the catechist must report that to the Coordinator of Religious Education.

## Certification

Every catechist will take part in the VOCARE certification program directed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Additional training within the parish might be offered as well.

## Catechetical Staff Meetings

It is important that we come together from time to time to share ideas, discuss what is happening in our classes, etc. All catechists are expected to attend all meetings. A list of meeting dates will be provided at the beginning of the catechetical year.

## **+Program Details+**

### Class Hours for Sunday Morning Preschool Religion

Sunday: 10:30am – 11:30am

### Class Hours for K-12 CCD

Wednesday: 7pm – 8pm

## Discipline Policy

Following Jesus' command, "Love one another as I have loved you", our Religious Education staff and students should treat each other with mutual respect. Religious catechesis is a process that provides instruction on the truths and traditions of our Catholic faith while incorporating the formation of students into full membership in our Church for ministry and mission.

Our program has expectations that concern attitude, behavior and attendance. Catechists, together with the students, discuss and agree upon a few, clear basic classroom rules assuring a respectful, Christian environment for learning and interacting. Realistic, appropriate consequences are also discussed and agreed upon. In general, students who disregard classroom or program rules are given timely warnings. A student, who continually disregards classroom rules after timely warnings, warrants that involvement of administration and parents to determine the course of action to be taken. Ridicule and public humiliation are to be avoided at all times. Corporal punishment or any type of physical form of discipline is never permitted.

The following behavior is deemed unacceptable:

- The display of belligerent attitude by way of words, gestures, or actions toward the staff or other students
- The display of anger by way of physical or verbal abuse toward the staff or other students
- The display of unchristian-like behavior by way of put-downs or practical jokes toward the staff or other students
- The display of willful destructive behavior by the misuse of the buildings and furnishings as well as the personal property of the staff and other students
- The display of disregard for the safety of others. This includes possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products and weapons of any kind

For severe or ongoing behavior problems, the student may be expelled by the C/DRE, with immediate notification of the parent/guardian.

A student may be expelled from the religious education program for the following, non-inclusive reasons:

- When a student's behavior is of a serious nature, or constantly disruptive
- When the student resists all attempts at correction by the catechist, hall monitor, C/DRE and the parent/guardian

- When the student has a negative impact on the learning environment of the classroom to diminish other students' opportunities to learn

If a student is expelled and wants to come back to our program, there is a re-admission process that both the student and parent/guardian must follow. The parent/guardian and student will meet with the C/DRE to determine if the student's unacceptable behavior has been resolved and there is an assurance of cooperative behavior. After that meeting, the C/DRE will decide on re-entry. The student will then be responsible for making up any work that was missed. The student might have to be retained in a certain level due to missing so many classes.

### Search and Seizure

If a student is suspected of having weapons, drugs or alcohol in his/her possession, the C/DRE is required to investigate. The procedure that will be followed is:

- Reasonable suspicion of possession
- The student will be walked into a secluded area with at least two adults
- In the student's presence, the situation will be explained (by the catechist or the person who suspects something)
- The student will be questioned about the suspected item, and if he/she admits possession of it, will be asked to give it to the C/DRE.
- Parents will be notified of the incident whether an item was found in the students' possession
- If a student denies having such an item, and there is reasonable suspicion that he/she does possess it, or admits having it and refuses to give it to the C/DRE, the parents will be contacted to come and assist in the search
- If parents refuse to cooperate, the student may be excluded from the program immediately
- If a weapon, alcohol, or drugs are found to be in the student's possession, the pastor and law enforcement will be notified. Pending review of the situation, the student may be expelled from the program.

### Use of Buildings

We "rent" the facilities from Marion Local Schools. Students are to not touch anything that is not part of the religious education program in the classrooms. Students are to take all items with them before they leave each session. Food IS NOT allowed in the buildings. This includes gum, drinks, candy, etc. Specific permission must be obtained from the C/DRE for an exception to this rule. When permission is given, it is the responsibility of the catechists and aides to have all trash collected in a garbage bag and brought to the dumpster or outside trash area. The classrooms must be left in perfect order.

## Incllement Weather/Emergencies

In the event of bad weather, we will post closings on the Marion Catholic Community Cluster Facebook page. We will also send out a text and email reminder via our Flocknote communication system. It is important that the religious education office always has an updated cell phone number and email address on file. If Marion Local Schools close, then there will be no CCD that evening.

## Guest Speakers

Guest speakers are welcome. *Prior permission from the C/DRE is mandatory* for all guest speakers. Guest speakers should check in with the hall monitor before going to a classroom.

## Off Grounds Trips

It is important that we stay on school property. If a catechist would like to take students off grounds, the catechist must obtain prior permission several weeks in advance. Parents will be expected to sign a permission form which releases the parish from liability before the student can go on any type of field trip.

## **+Safety & Emergency Procedures+**

### Reporting to the Classrooms

Students will be escorted by the hall monitors to their respective classrooms from the assigned meeting places before class.

### Drop Off and Pick Up

Please refer to the addendum to the handbook labeled "Arrival & Dismissal Procedures."

### Safety Procedures

Students and staff are expected to follow all safety procedures outlined by Marion Local Schools in the event of a fire, tornado or lockdown.

### Accidents

If an accident were to occur, proper emergency treatment would be executed and then notification of parents/guardians.



## Emergency Care

Since children are with us such a short time, we expect all medications to be administered before or after class. However, it is understandable that there may be a need, such as the need to use an inhaler, which would warrant medication to be brought to class. The C/DRE must be informed of any medication a child will be bringing to class and appropriate forms will then need to be completed by the parents.

## Snacks in the Classroom

Because many children and youth suffer from allergies it is important that we are careful when bringing in any type of snack. We also must adhere to the policies of Marion Local Schools. Catechists should advise students not to bring in food during class. If you want to bring in a snack, please talk to the Coordinator of Religious Education prior to doing so.

## **+Code of Christian Behavior+**

### Dress

We believe that attitudes are affected by what one wears. Students are to dress neatly and appropriately for class. Clothing that is torn, bears obscene or inappropriate messages or carries a logo for alcoholic beverages or cigarettes may not be worn. Halter tops, short shorts, or any immodest apparel is prohibited. Shoes must always be worn. Catechists should also dress neatly and appropriately for class and follow the same guidelines as our students.

### Safety

Religious Education personnel take every reasonable precaution to ensure the safety of those in their care and to notify the administration of any unsafe conditions. Students are never left alone or unsupervised. Please do not leave your classroom unattended for any circumstance. If you have an emergency, contact the Coordinator of Religious Education or flag down a hall monitor. Please make sure all of your students are picked up prior to leaving the building.

### Child Protection

St. John the Baptist will follow the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati regarding child protection. Every catechist must agree and adhere to the Decree on Child Protection. Each catechist will have access to this decree.

## **+PERSONNEL POLICIES+**

### Supervision of Catechists

The Coordinator of Religious Education has a right and a responsibility to make sure the programs in place are running smooth and adhering to our curriculum standards. The Coordinator of Religious Education will periodically (at their discretion) observe in the classroom, have a conference with the catechist and even be present in the school hallways.

### Absences

We have a list of people willing to fill in when catechists are unable. If a catechist cannot teach a class, it is their responsibility to find a substitute and contact the Coordinator of Religious Education as soon as possible. Catechists are responsible for having a prepared binder with lesson plans included. The binder and/or lesson plans must be made available to the substitute for the class.

### Expenses

The office of Religious Education has an operating budget that must be adhered to. If a catechist wants to be reimbursed for any expense, that expense must be approved by the Coordinator of Religious Education prior to any purchase.

### Arrival/Dismissal

Catechists are expected to arrive in an adequate time before class in order to prepare and pray. Catechists are responsible for staying after class until their students are picked up.

### Agreement

All members of the catechetical staff are expected to sign a statement that they have read, understood, and accepted these terms specified in the handbook.