

St. Margaret Mary Parish Catechist Handbook - 2019/2020



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*** Catechists may view the **Family Handbook** (which contains detailed information about our program for parents) by visiting <http://www.smmp.com/education/re/index.php> .

I. Mission Statement of St. Margaret Mary Parish

As a worshipping Roman Catholic parish family, we are guided by a collegial partnership of laity, Pastor, and ministerial staff. Together we seek to foster spiritual growth through the active practice of Christianity. By the sharing of our God-given talents and resources with all God's people, we strive for peace and justice as the "Parish with Heart".

Mission Statement of the Christian Education Commission

To provide Catholic Christian-based education that is dedicated to meeting the ideals of Gospel teachings and the continuing challenges of Vatican II.

Given these two mission statements, the one flowing from the other, it is the goal of the Child and Family Faith Formation Program to provide instruction which fulfills this mission for the children and youth of St. Margaret Mary Parish.

To do so, it is imperative that our program:

- Recognizes that parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith, and that we work collegially with them to assist them in this undertaking.
- Provides instruction based on the Gospels and the directives set forth in Vatican II and the National Catholic Directory.
- Includes experiences of prayer and worship, basic Catholic catechesis, and moral guidelines appropriate to their age and ability.
- Gives the children opportunities to learn about and work for justice in their families and communities.

To accomplish this goal, St. Margaret Mary parishioners have invested time, talent and resources. This effort includes almost 100 volunteer Catechists, Aides, Subs, Liturgy of the Word Facilitators, Child Care Providers, a substantial Parish subsidy, and a professional ministerial staff. However, the parents who nurture their children through word and example are the most important part of this program.

We have all been given the responsibility to spread the Gospel Message to all people. The Child & Youth Faith Formation Program of St. Margaret Mary Church works diligently to carry out this mission in and through our families.

II.

CATECHIST REQUIREMENTS

The Diocese has adopted a Certification of Catechists Program which identifies three dimensions for catechist formation: *Being (the spiritual formation of the catechist)*; *Knowing (the study of the theological content of Catholic Faith)*; and *Doing (the ability to communicate the Gospel message with natural ease)*. Preparation for teaching includes participation in:

- **General Orientation (Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 9:00am to 1:00pm)**
- **Formation:**

Ongoing formation in Catholic faith is essential to the ministry of the parish catechist. **Joliet Diocesan policy requires a minimum of six hours of ongoing faith formation during a school year calendar.** These hours can be achieved by participating in the following events:

- a) General Orientation Meeting
- b) New Catechist Orientation
- c) Catechist In-Service Events
- d) Adult Faith Formation and Family programs offered by the parish

We encourage you to attend at least three programs in addition to the orientation meeting required for all catechists.

- **Protecting God's Children** workshop is required of all persons working with children in a parish or diocesan program. Dates of workshops are available in the office or online at www.virtusonline.org
- All new Catechists must have an **"Informational Form for Volunteers Involved with Children"** (background check) on file in the office before starting the 2019-2020 school year. Returning catechists are required to update this information every five years.

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. *Attendance:*

MARK ATTENDANCE CARDS: P FOR PRESENT; A FOR ABSENT.

Please notify the office if a child comes in after your card has been collected. Cards will be picked up within 30 minutes of the class start.

If a child is absent for more than two weeks in a row, or very frequently, please contact the parent to see if there is a problem. If you do not wish to call the parent, please NOTIFY THE OFFICE IN PERSON OR VIA E-MAIL and we will contact the parent(s).

2. *Childcare for Catechists' Preschoolers During Class Time:*

Catechists who need to use our childcare option will be given a form to register their pre-schooler.

3. *Boards:*

The writing board is for teaching purposes only. Children may write on the boards as part of a class. ONLY the markers provided for the boards may be used. **Please clean boards after class (using cleaning supplies provided in each room) and PUT MARKERS AWAY IN THE CABINET.**

4. *Books:*

Since we will be re-using the books, children should not write in them.

5. *Catechist's Mailbox:*

Each week pick up your attendance card from your mailbox before class. **Please do not have children pick up your materials from your mailbox.**

6. *Church:*

The Church is usually available for a prayer service or tour, but should be scheduled to assure there is no conflict. The children should be directed to be quiet and respectful in Church.

7. *Child Abuse:*

Any catechist who suspects that a child is a victim of child abuse should notify the Director. The professional staff will then follow through on any situations according to diocesan policy

8. *Classes:*

K - 5th Grade:

Monday: 3:30 - 4:30 P.M.

Tuesday: 3:30 - 4:30; 4:45 - 5:45 P.M.

Wednesday: 3:30 - 4:30; 4:45 - 5:45 P.M.

6th - 8th Grade

Monday: 7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday: 4:45 - 5:45 P.M.

Wednesday: 4:45 - 5:45 P.M.

9. **Curriculum:**

The children should be taught the content provided in the basic text and Sacramental Program. Other materials can be used, but the general core content should be covered. Each lesson has an objective which the children are required to know. **Please do not add any other content** without checking with Jacqui Snyder.

10. **Discipline: General rules:**

- A. No child has the right to disturb the learning process of the other children in the group.

Here is the basic plan of action:

- Tell the child that his/her behavior is unacceptable BECAUSE it is preventing the rest of the group from learning.
- If the child's behavior does not improve, send child (with a companion) to the office. Generally, for a first offense, Mrs. Snyder will discuss the behavior issue with the student and send him or her back to class. A second offense will result in calling a parent.
- If all other means have been used and have failed, the child will complete the semester in HOME STUDY.

- B. Children have a right to know what to expect. Make a few rules and enforce them.

It is good to have the children create the rules for your class--make sure you have only a few and they fit what you think is necessary. Example:

- No one may speak when someone else is talking.
- No one may make fun of another.
- All materials should be returned to their proper places.
- **No eating or drinking in the classroom.** (*Except for a treat determined by the Catechist on special occasions.*)

- C. Catechists are human.

- Come to class well prepared – this is the best discipline strategy to prevent issues.
- Don't wait to act until you are about to lose your temper -- stop situations before they become major problems.
- NEVER, NEVER use any physical aggression toward a child.
- Never keep the children after class. Keeping a class late causes problems with traffic and parents. If your clock is wrong, let us know.
- Always be fair -- if you allow one child to bend the rules, all the others should have the same privilege, SO BE CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE TOO MANY RULES!

- D. A few rules for all children:

- Children should always go to restrooms or other places in the building with a companion – never alone.
- Coats and hats should be removed and hung up during class.
- No child can write on the board before or after class--they may write on it as part of a lesson.
- Fighting, pushing, being rude or using bad language is NEVER accepted.
- **Disrespecting a Catechist is unacceptable.** Escort the child to the office.

11. *Emergencies:*

Fire Drill:

When the fire alarm rings, Rooms 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 leave by the exit at the end of the hall nearest Room 17. Go down the stairs and outside -- and walk away from the building along the edge of the parking lot.

Rooms 7, 8, 9, 10 exit the door that leads to the courtyard.

Rooms 2, 3, 4, 5 exit the Parish Center door and stay on the sidewalk until directed otherwise.

The Catechist in Rooms 5, 10, 11 should send their children outside--then the catechist checks the washrooms and classrooms for stragglers.

CHILDREN HAVE BEEN TAUGHT AT SCHOOL TO WALK IN LINE AND IN SILENCE. THE CATECHIST LEADS THE WAY. IF A CLASS HAS AN AIDE OR A SECOND CATECHIST, HE OR SHE SHOULD FOLLOW THE LAST STUDENT. IF THERE ISN'T A SECOND ADULT, TAKE A STUDENT COUNT BEFORE LEAVING THE BUILDING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOU EXIT.

Tornado Drill:

There is a loud hand bell to indicate tornado – OR IF YOU HEAR THE SIRENS, GO IMMEDIATELY TO:

- Room 17 goes down nearest stairs to hall outside Room 9 & 10.
- Rooms 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 - down the stairs near the Atrium and into the hallway opposite Rooms 7 & 8.
- Rooms 7, 8, 9, 10 - go into the hall outside your rooms.
- Rooms 2 & 3 - stay in room; go to back of room.
- Rooms 4, 5 & Parish Center - go behind Room 4 under the stairs.
- It is important to keep the children quiet!

Classroom Emergencies: NEVER LEAVE THE CHILDREN UNATTENDED

- If a child gets hurt, has a seizure, etc., send the rest of the children into the classroom across the hall or next to you. Bring the affected child to the office.
- If you become ill or hurt, bring the children to the nearest classroom and seek help from that catechist.
- **NO** medication may be dispensed by the catechist or office personnel at any time.
- First Aid supplies are available in the office. However, you can find latex gloves and a small supply of band aids in the tote in each classroom.
- All student illnesses or accidents are to be kept confidential unless the parent gives permission to the professional staff.

12. *Emergency Closing:*

In case of emergency closing due to weather conditions, check the website: EMERGENCYCLOSINGCENTER.COM. We will also notify all Catechists and families via e-mail thru Constant Contact, our mass e-mail provider.

13. **Entering/Exiting:**
Please follow these directions for the safety of all our children...
- When class is over, walk your students to the Parish Center
 - The Parish Center exit is monitored by an adult at the end of each class. Best practice is for all adults and students to exclusively use this entrance/exit.
 - All K – 5 children are to be picked up after class in the Parish Center.
 - No one may park or wait in the Handicapped areas or the space near the sidewalk.
14. **Food/Drink Policy:**
No food or beverages will be permitted in the classrooms. Compliance is appreciated due to safety concerns with allergens and to minimize distractions.
15. **Field Trips:**
Generally we do not encourage field trips. No field trip may be planned without the permission of Mrs. Snyder.
16. **Help:**
If you are in need of help, your resources are:
- Jacqui Snyder
 - Arlene Serio or Debbie Brutlag (Staff Assistants)
 - Fellow Catechists
17. **Homework Assignments:**
Assignments can be to tell parents one thing they learned or to study a prayer . . . something to enhance the lesson. You could also ask the children to prepare something for the next session. The book is a resource, not to be covered in verbatim.
18. **Library:**
The books in the Formation Office library, and those on the counter between rooms 7 & 8, and the Parish Library (outside the Upper Room) are yours to use – but **please return all items** so that they are available for others to use.
19. **Name Tags:**
Please wear your name tag in each class - this is required for safety and security.
20. **Office Hours:**
The Child & Family Faith Formation Office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday, Thursday and Friday. We are open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday.
21. **Parent Communication:**
It is important to let the parents know who you are. A phone call or email at the beginning of the year would be most helpful.
- Parents need to hear about what their children are learning. Each Catechist is asked to communicate with parents on a regular basis – monthly would be appropriate.
- If you are having a problem with a child, please call or write a note to the parents. Make sure Jacqui Snyder has also been notified of the communication.

22. **Requests:**

For craft supplies, copies, books, etc., a request form should be completed and placed in the bin on the counter between rooms 7 & 8. Please make sure you indicate date, time, room number and grade. The sooner you can turn in your request, the better. We cannot guarantee that requests received on the day of class will be processed. You may e-mail your requests to Debbie Brutlag - debbie@smmp.com .

The following is a sample of the request form:

CATECHIST REQUEST FORM			
NAME:	_____	DATE NEEDED:	_____
GRADE:	_____	DAY:	_____
		TIME:	_____
		LESSON #:	_____
VIDEO/DVD TITLE(S):	_____		
ACTIVITY PAGES:	_____	# NEEDED:	_____
MUSIC CD TITLE(S):	_____		
BOOK TITLE(S):	_____		
OTHER CRAFT SUPPLIES OR REFERENCES NEEDED:	_____		

Forgot to turn in this form? Email Debbie Brutlag (debbie@smmp.com) or call 630-369-0833 (M-W, 9am-5pm; Th, 9am-12pm.)			

23. **Resource Materials:**

Each level has an extra activity in the Teacher's Manual and supplemental materials. Please request the materials you need duplicated at least a day ahead of time (preferably a week). **Please do not automatically use every sheet provided as a resource -- use only what you see as being a useful addition to your lesson. With only an hour, the children should not be filling in page after page of fill-in-the-blank materials.**

24. **Room Care:**

Before you leave, please make sure the children have helped clean up - chairs straightened, boards erased, papers and crayons off the floor (and back in the proper storage container), tables wiped off if necessary and board markers put in cabinet. Dried markers and empty glue sticks should be thrown away. **Please leave nothing on top of the cabinets unless it is for display or a project in progress.** Please do not stack up the chairs. When using glue, a paper should be placed under the project.

25. ***Substitutes:***
If you need a substitute, please notify the office ASAP. We appreciate it if you can tell us well in advance of the date you can't be here. Of course, we understand that last minute emergencies will happen. If we are unable to have one of our volunteer substitutes teach your class, a staff member will cover.
26. ***Supplies:***
Each room is equipped with hand sanitizer, tissues, a CD player, a stapler, staples, scissors, crayons, pens, pencils, colored pencils, glue, glue sticks, markers for the board, erasers and cleaner for the board, paper towels and cleaner for tables/messes.
These are to be shared by all who use the classroom so please put them back in their place ON OR IN THE CABINET! Let the office staff know if supplies need to be replaced.
27. ***Videos and CDs:***
Videos and music CDs must have a clear **connection to the theme of your lesson**. These should be used as part of your lesson, **not** as entertainment or to fill time. You may wish to coordinate with other catechists within your grade level to join in viewing any video. All outside videos should be pre-approved by Mrs. Snyder at least one week before the scheduled class.
28. ***Restrooms:***
Make it clear to your class that restroom visits should be attended to **BEFORE** class begins. Visits should be a rare occurrence. Emergencies do arise. These should be treated on an individual basis and should not involve the whole class. Because of safety, children should always go to the washroom **with someone else.**
29. ***Cell Phone Policy***
All students are expected to turn their phones off before class and place them in the designated "cell phone parking lot area". Compliance is necessary and appreciated as to minimize classroom distractions and disruptions. If a student chooses not to comply, their catechist should send them to see Jacqui Snyder.
30. ***Videotaping, Still Photography & Social Media Policy***
Videotaping and still photographs may be taken and used for promotional efforts, but **NO CHILD SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED BY NAME**. No photos of the students are to be posted or uploaded to any social media platform or internet.

IV. PRAYER

- A. There must be a time for prayer at every session. Formal prayers (Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.) may be used or informal prayer such as scripture reading and intercessions or a student's personal prayers are acceptable. Each session should open and close with prayer.

For the children's safety, we dictate no lit candles! The office has a supply of battery operated candles and votive lights

- B. *Traditional Prayers:* Each level learns a new prayer. The following are the words to our ordinary formal prayers:

1. **Sign of the Cross:**

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

2. **Our Father:**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

3. **Hail Mary:**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

4. **Glory Be to the Father:**

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

5. **Grace Before Meals:**

Bless us, O Lord, and these Your gifts
which we are about to receive from Your bounty,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. **Grace After Meals:**

We give You thanks, almighty God,
for these and all Your gifts
which we have received
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

7. Angel of God (Grade 1):

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here;
ever this day be at my side
to light and guard, rule and guide. Amen.

8. Act of Contrition (Grade 3):

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.

9. Nicene Creed (revised 2011)

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

V. 2019-2020 Catechist Handbook Signature Page

I have read and am familiar with the philosophy, policies and procedures contained in the Catechist Handbook and accept them.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Please print this page, sign, date
and return to the office.