



Do not be afraid any longer, *little flock*,
for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.
Gospel LK1232

Catechist Handbook

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Corpus Christi, Texas

Catechist's Prayer

Gracious and all-loving Father, out of love for all people you spoke your Word who became flesh for our salvation. May your Word transform me so that the message of your Son, our Lord, may be echoed through my teaching. Allow me to guide the hearts of those whom I teach in such a way that they will enter more deeply into your way of truth and salvation. Grant me the insight needed to lead them to know, love, and serve you. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may they become hearers and followers of your Word, so that they might help transform the world to follow the way of life to which your Son has called us all, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

OATH OF FIDELITY

I, N., with firm faith believe and profess each and everything that is contained in the Symbol of faith, namely:

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.

With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.

I also firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.

Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act.

“Next to home and family, the witness of the catechist may be pivotal in every phase of the catechetical process. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, catechists powerfully influence those being catechized by their faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the transparent example of their Christian lives. For catechesis to be effective, the catechist must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. They must firmly believe in his Gospel and its power to transform lives.” *National Directory Catechesis*

QUALIFICATIONS OF A CATECHIST

A catechist is more than a volunteer and the task is more than “helping Father.” A volunteer and a helper can quit. But if ministry flows out of one’s baptism, it should be discerned and then embraced with enthusiasm and commitment. Not everyone is called to be a church minister. Most laypersons are called to the mission to the world. But if you have determined that God has called you to work in, with and for the parish, consider the following qualifications for Christian ministry. The basic qualifications of a catechist are those of a disciple of Jesus:

1. **Person of Faith:** A practicing Catholic who is faithful to and living a lifestyle consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. No amount of training can make up for a lack of living faith in a catechist. A belief that one is created by and for God and that one is only returning the love of God who first loved us in and through Christ. A trust that no matter what happens, that it will ultimately be for one’s good and the good of others.
2. **Person of Prayer:** Fostering a personal prayer life through regular Mass attendance, reception of the Sacraments, daily prayer, scripture reading and/or participation in retreat opportunities. This includes both a praying spirit that erupts spontaneously during the day in gratitude, adoration, love, repentance and petition. Participate in the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy which is the source and summit of our Christian life. If one has a prayer life then one will be **Open to the Spirit**, which is another qualification, but does not usually exist apart from a spirit of prayer.
3. **Servant of the Community:** A catechist is a lay minister. The word “minister” comes from the Latin *minor* which means “less.” Originally it meant servant and “ministry” was the service given by the servant. Therefore, first of all, a lay minister must have the willingness to serve. To be a servant is to model Jesus, who washed the feet of his disciples and said: “As I have done for you.”
4. **Witness of the Gospel:** A person who seeks to teach “in the name of Christ” must seek to live his or her life according to the gospel. “Seek” is the operative word here, because he or she is always a work in progress. However, if one’s sins and faults are so prominent that they would give scandal to the community, he or she may have to work on those sins and faults before stepping forward to speak for Christ and his community.
5. **Witness of the Church:** A person who seeks to teach “in the name of Christ” has to be faithful to the Church, has to support the Church and can’t go around tearing down the Church, its leaders and its members in the universal Church as well as the local parish. That doesn’t mean that a catechist cannot ask questions and work to renew the Church, but a catechist has to be wise, kind and use common sense to do so.
6. **Builder of the Christian Community:** The Holy Spirit gives scriptural *charisms* and practical gifts not for the aggrandizement of individuals, but for the building up of the Body of Christ, whether universal or local. We must allow the Holy Spirit to use us well by working cooperatively and even collaboratively with the leadership and the members of the local parish.
7. **On-Going Faith Formation:** Attend Adult Faith Formation Classes, Faith Educators’ Workshop (Diocese of Corpus Christi), SOLT Silent Retreats and Spiritual reading.

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Responsibilities of a Catechist:

1. Prepare for class every week
2. To attend each scheduled class & be fully present for each class
3. Classroom Tips
 - a. Smile & make good eye contact
 - b. Cell Phones only for emergency
 - c. Follow discipline practices of the parish.
 - i. Verbal Warning
 - ii. Coordinator Correction
 - iii. Call to Parent by Coordinator/Pastor
 - d. Comply with all Diocesan policies.
 - e. All Catechists should keep the health and safety of the children in mind at all times. Children should always be under adult supervision. No child should ever be left unsupervised.
4. Contact Little Flock Coordinator of Approved Substitute in case of upcoming absence.
5. Dress appropriately and arrive 15 minutes early on each scheduled Sunday.
6. Foster Personal Prayer Life: attend scheduled catechist meetings, workshop, etc.

Training Required:

- Completion of background check, volunteer application form, and a CMSE certification.
- Catechist Workshops with Fr. Vasquez
- All catechists will determine additional needs for learning and develop a learning plan in consultation with the Director of Faith Formation.

Christian Attitudes in the Classroom

Mutual respect, loyalty and support between the administration and the team are required for a good working relationship. Communication must be honest and direct. Catechists are asked to support the decisions of the administration and refrain from discussing professional differences with students or parents.

It is our policy to discipline with love and understanding. Do not allow a behavior problem to continue, immediately give a verbal warning to the student. If behavior persists, inform the Little Flock Coordinator immediately who will consult with child and call the parent if necessary. The Coordinator/Pastor will make final decision for any and all serious matters. We are here to assist you as Catechist to have a happy and functioning class time.

Confidentiality:

Students need to know that they are able to share in class without ridicule or gossip being spread outside of class meeting. If any issue is revealed in class, at first opportunity, document everything you can remember on the “Incident Investigation Report” form found at the end of this manual. If a catechist or aide observes anything that leads them to believe a child is in trouble (truancy from school, pregnancy, physical abuse, drug abuse, etc.) the Director of Faith Formation or Pastor is to be **immediately notified**. The Pastor will handle all situations of this type.

Child Abuse

If any issue is revealed in class, at first opportunity, document everything you can remember on the “Incident Investigation Report” form found at the end of this manual. Inform the Coordinator of your concern as soon as possible. Please also send an email to the Coordinator so that the concern is documented. All concerns will be forwarded to the Pastor for consideration and action.

**Diocese of Corpus Christi - Director of Office for Safe Environment &
Child and Family Resources**

Stephanie Bonilla

Office: 361.693.6686 Cell: 361.658.8652

Child Protective Services:

24 hour hotline: 1-800-252-5400

www.txabusehotline.com

Classroom visits by Coordinator

The Little Flock Coordinator will routinely visit and observe classroom lessons. It is the responsibility of the Coordinator and Pastor to ensure the best learning environment for the children of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. Visiting the classrooms will help catechists feel supported, develop a stronger relationship between Catechist and Coordinator, as well as allow the Coordinator the opportunity to get a full picture of the entire program.

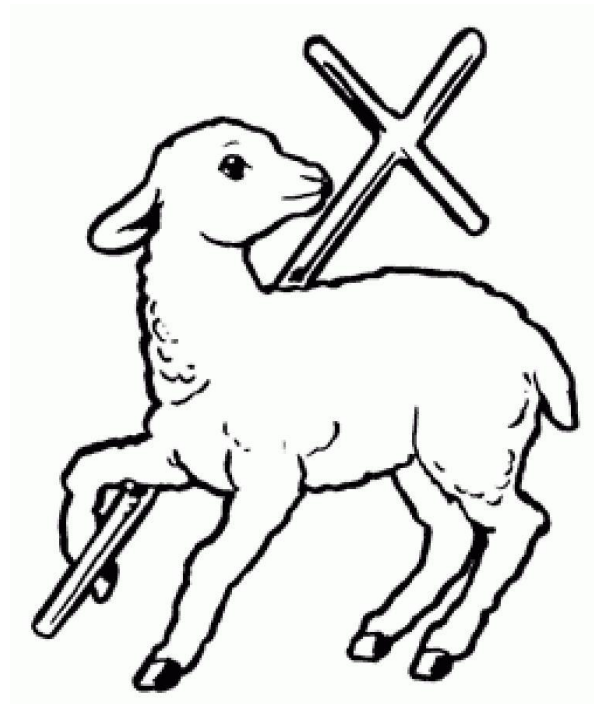
Classroom visits will always be supportive in nature.

Cell Phone Policy

- You should proceed with the upmost discretion for use of cell phones during class.
- Cell phones may be used for pictures to be sent to Coordinator only.
- Student cell phones are permitted on school grounds under the following conditions:
 - Student cell phones are in the OFF position during class.
 - Other students are not to be made aware that the cell phone is present.
- No harassment or threatening of persons via the cell phone is permitted.
- Those who violate any of the rules regarding cell phones may forfeit their privileges of bringing them to the program.

“At the origin of the catechist’s vocation, therefore, apart from the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, there is a specific call from the Holy Spirit, a “special charism recognized by the Church” and made explicit by the Bishop’s mandate. It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize the supernatural and ecclesial significance of this call.”

(Guide for Catechists, 2)



**Let no one ever come to you
Without leaving better & happier.
Blessed Mother Theresa**

CATECHIST WEEKLY PROCEDURES

Preparation for the Catechist

- For the catechist to communicate to their class, they must know their material well.
- Pray regularly for guidance from the Holy Spirit for you and your students.
 - Plan Opening Game, Song, Welcome activity
 - Take attendance at each Little Flock session.
 - Short beginning prayer
 - “Read” Lesson, Scripture & Catechism surrounding the lesson.
 - Formal Prayer Time - Blessing
 - Plan ending Activity or Craft (Supplies in room 4. Special requests by Wednesday)

The Attitude of the Catechist toward the Class

- Be confident, yet have a humble sense of your mission to speak the Good News.
- Be realistic about your abilities, your responsibilities and your limitations as a catechist.
- Be enthusiastic, interested, cheerful and unafraid to show a sense of humor.
- Be open to learn and to grow in your faith from experiences in the classroom and from your students.
- Use pleasant speech and conversational tone.

The Attitude of the Catechist toward the Student

- Be sympathetic and understanding of each student. Make each one feel important and a part of the group.
- Learn to listen to what each student says, verbally and non-verbally, before, during and after class.
- Be fair and treat each student alike during class.
- Try to discover everyone’s need and work from there.

THE SIX TASKS OF CATECHESIS (SIX KEY ELEMENTS OF CATHOLIC LIFE)

To be an effective instructor in parish or school catechetical programs, the following six tasks of catechesis are essential catechetical instruction:

- **Knowledge of Faith** – *What We Believe*
- **Liturgy and Sacraments** - *How We Celebrate*
- **Morality** - *How We Live*
- **Prayer** - *How We Pray*
- **Education for Living in the Christian Community** - *How We Live in the Community the Church*
- **Evangelization and Apostolic Life** - *How We, as Individuals and Community Live in Service to the World*

These six key elements of Catholic life “constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.” (GDC, nos 85-86; NDC, pp. 61-63)

As Pope John Paul II stated:

...within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus ... endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know this “mystery,” the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promises contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him. (CT # 20)

Thus the components of a holistic systematic approach to catechesis create a full plan for teaching the mysteries of the faith. All of these elements are necessary. As the vitality of the human body depends on the proper function of all of its organs, so also the maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, evangelization and apostolic life (missionary spirit). When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development.

On this point it is opportune to make some observations. Each element of Catholic Life realizes, in its own way, the object of catechesis. Morality – how we live, for example, is essentially Christological and Trinitarian. It is deeply ecclesial, while also open to social concerns. The same is true of liturgical formation. While essentially religious and ecclesial, it also strongly demands commitment to the evangelization of the world.

These elements of a Catholic Life are interdependent and develop together. Each great catechetical theme—catechesis of God the Father, for example—has a cognitive dimension as well as moral implications. It is interiorized in prayer and appropriated in witness. One element echoes the other: knowledge of the faith prepares for mission; the sacramental life gives strength for moral transformation.

To fulfill its tasks of preparing disciples to live the Catholic Faith, catechesis avails of two principal means: transmission of the Gospel message and experience of the Christian life. Liturgical formation, for example, must explain what the Christian liturgy is, and what the sacraments are. It must also however, offer an experience of the different kinds of celebration and it must make symbols, gestures, etc. known and loved. Moral formation not only transmits the content of Christian morality, but also cultivates active evangelical attitudes and Christian values.

The different dimensions of faith are objects of formation, as much of being given as received. Knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, the following of Christ are each gifts of the Spirit which are received in prayer, and similarly a duty of spiritual and moral study and witness. Neither aspect may be neglected.

Every dimension of the faith, like the faith itself as a whole, must be rooted in **human experience** and not remain a mere adjunct to the human person. Knowledge of the faith is significant. It gives light to the whole of existence and dialogues with culture. In the liturgy, all personal life becomes a spiritual oblation. The morality of the Gospel assumes and elevates human values. Prayer is open to all personal and social problems.

As the 1971 Directory indicates, **"It is very important that catechesis retain the richness of these various aspects in such a way that one aspect is not separated from the rest to the detriment of the others"**.

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Reading and Understanding of Catechist Handbook

I have received and reviewed the Little Flock Catechist Handbook. I understand the policies, rules and regulations stated therein and agree to abide by them.

Signature

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Contact Information

Virginia Metz – Coordinator of Children’s Formation



Private Cell phone: 361-737-3350

vmetz@sjbcctx.org

Youth Formation Office:

361-991-4400 Ext 1006

Jessica Underbrink- Director of Youth Formation

junderbrink@sjbcctx.org

**Monica Ramon - Coordinator of Teen & Young Adult
Formation**

mramon@sjbcctx.org

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT FOR INJURIES Complete this report for all incidents/injuries. (Also, complete this report for near-miss incidents/injuries). This report is for information only. All claims should be reported immediately to Catholic Mutual Group at (800) 228-6108. Please read each question carefully and answer all questions as completely as you can. Please do not leave any blanks, unless the question does not apply.

Name of Injured Person: _____ Phone: _____

Complete address: _____

Names of Witnesses and their complete addresses and phone numbers:

Describe the Incident: (State what the individual was doing and all circumstances leading up to the incident. Try to reconstruct the chain of events leading up to the incident/injury. Be specific.) Who was involved? _____ What took place?

When did it occur? Date _____ Hour of incident _____ AM PM

Where did it happen? _____

Why did it happen? _____

How did it happen? _____

Corrective Action:

1. In your opinion, was this incident preventable? Yes _____ No _____

2. If yes, state why. _____

3. What action have you taken or do you propose taking to prevent a similar incident from taking place?

Training: Have you provided any training to prevent this incident? If not, describe training to be conducted.

Incident Investigation conducted by: _____

Signature of individual in charge

Date report prepared _____