

2010-2011  
Religious Education



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# Catechist's Guide

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Dear Catechists:

Just this morning I had a wonderful conversation with someone about how important the routine things of our lives are in setting the patterns for extra-special things we would like to happen in “Spiritual City”.

Maybe it’s a function of age or longevity in the job, but more and more I am coming to treasure the importance of the people who work so hard, year in and year out. I am fully aware that there is always the danger of falling into ruts, or some people building kingdoms and all the rest of the human foibles that can afflict us.

But when I think of all of you I don’t think of ruts. I think of faithfulness, the kind of faithfulness that builds foundations for faith. And so, as I said to the parents, I smile. I also told the parents that you all must be the best, because good things make people smile, and I am smiling more than any pastor I know when I think of the Religious Education program of this parish.

You may never see the fruit of your labor this side of the grave. I promise you that the faith-filled people who line the road cheering you into heaven will all have been in front of you here on earth! Have a fantastic year.

In Christ our brother,



James F. Fetscher, Pastor

Dear Catechists:

Thank you for responding with a “Yes” to God’s call. Forming children in the Catholic faith is a profound task and the responsibility may seem enormous; however, you are not alone in this endeavor. The Holy Spirit will help you to bring each child into union and intimacy with Christ.

The following statement from the General Directory for Catechesis may sound like a tongue twister but it is true that “catechists catechize others by firstly catechizing themselves” (GDC #239). We encourage you to take advantage of the different faith formation activities that are available through our department and at the parish level.

As a teacher of the faith, may you grow in joy and fulfillment in handing on the revelation of God’s love through the person of Jesus Christ.

Our office doors are always open for you and we are here to assist you.  
Sincerely yours in Christ,

Maria-Teresa Lopez, DRE

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Absenteeism:** If you will not be able to attend class, please contact your assistant so that she/he can prepare and notify the office. If a substitute teacher will be needed, please contact the office with as much notice as possible so that we may find someone qualified to handle your class.

**Accidents and Illnesses:** Please report all accidents and illnesses to the office. We have a supply of band-aids and can provide ice but no medication should be given to any student.

**Accreditation:** The Archdiocese of Miami recommends all catechists be working to achieve at least a Level One Certification.

**Attendance:** All students should have their name listed on the pre-printed attendance sheet supplied by the office. Please indicate **(A)** for **absent** and the parents to initial the log at dismissal time to indicate attendance for each student every week. If you have a student who does not appear on the attendance sheet, bring them to the office; he/she may be in the wrong class. A student who is out several classes in a row or has an attendance problem should be brought to the attention of the office. Leave attendance sheets in your box.

**Arrivals:** With the exception of the first day, all students will meet in the Main Sanctuary prior to class. Parents are instructed to walk their children to the Main Sanctuary and wait for teacher's supervision.

**Authorization Pick-Up Cards:** Each parent will be given an orange authorization pick-up card when they drop off their child on the first day of class. They will need to display this card when they return to pick up the student for the remainder of the school year. **DO NOT RELEASE A STUDENT TO ANYONE WITHOUT THIS CARD.** If a parent shows up without the card, send them to the CCD office where they may get another card by showing ID and verifying that they are authorized to pick up that student.

**Bathrooms:** Each classroom downstairs has its own bathroom. Be sure the light is out before you leave. For classrooms upstairs, communal bathrooms are located at both ends of the hall. Please encourage students to use the bathroom before class starts but if a student must leave the classroom to use the bathroom an assistant or a "buddy" student should accompany them. **Students should never leave the classroom alone.**

**Beginning of School Year:** You will receive a class attendance roster. Please do not add names to this list or accept any student whose name is not printed on the attendance sheet. He/She may be in the wrong classroom. There may be frequent changes in the first few weeks of class but hopefully in October all the changes will be complete.

**Books:** Each student will receive a book that is theirs to keep. Students may write in their books and/or tear out send-home pages at the end of each session. If a student wishes to take his or her book home throughout the year, remind them to remember to bring it back otherwise, they will not have a book for class. Lost books must be replaced by purchasing them for \$30.00. We recommend that books be kept in the classrooms until the end of the school year.

**Chapel:** With the exception of the first class, all students should report to the Main Sanctuary for prayer. Please sit with your class or send adult supervision and encourage all parents and siblings to join your class in prayer.

**Class Parties:** We will be permitted to have a party at the end of the year that will usually be held in the Family Center or in the outside courtyard. We cannot collect money for these parties

but we can ask parents to bring snacks and drinks. Please ask students and parents to help with the parties and the clean up after.

**Classroom Management:** Maintain class discipline by setting the rules at the beginning of the year. In a loving fashion explain the need for order and the procedure that will be used when order is disrupted. Remind students at the beginning of class about rules. Usually softening your voice instead of raising it will calm things down quickly. A student will be told twice that he/she is disruptive, once silently, if possible, the second time verbally. If behavior continues to be a problem, bring student to the office. If need be his/her parents will be asked to accompany student who is continually disruptive in class.

**Communication Procedures:** All messages will be emailed and/or left in your class boxes. Please be sure to check your box before class as there may be important updates or information to be sent home with the students. General parent communication will be through email and class letters. Teachers who wish to send letters/flyers home should first obtain approval by the office. If you need to reach us during class you may do so by dialing ext. 300 directly from your classroom phone. Announcements will also be posted on the religious education section of our website: [www.stlouismiami.org](http://www.stlouismiami.org)

**Dismissal:** During dismissal time, parents should display their orange authorization pick-up card and sign their initials next to their child's name on the attendance log. If a parent does not have their authorization card, please send them to the CCD office where they will be asked to show ID and authorization can be verified. Please do not release any student to anybody under the age of 18, even if they are holding the orange card. After 10 minutes of dismissal, any remaining students may be brought to the CCD office where a designated adult will supervise them until they are picked up. Please also bring the attendance log to the CCD office so that it may be initialed when the student is picked up.

**Dress Code:** Please dress professionally. No shorts or bare midriffs in the classroom. We must set the example of how to dress in Church.

**Fingerprinting:** All teachers, assistants and volunteers 18 years old and over **MUST** be fingerprinted. As of July 2007, the Archdiocese digital processing system must be used. Please note that they will be conducting digital fingerprinting here at St. Louis on Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> between 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. If you are unable to schedule an appointment on that day, please register online at [www.adom.sofn.net](http://www.adom.sofn.net) for other places and times that it can be done. There is no cost for you.

**Hall Monitors:** A volunteer who arrives 15 minutes before chapel will make sure that there are no students walking or running around unsupervised before class begins. If you can, please recruit a parent from your class to volunteer for this assignment and instruct them to come to the office to get an ID.

**Implement Clean Up:** Designate one or two students each week on a rotating basis to be classroom helpers. All rooms have multi-use so please leave tables, desks and chairs in the same order you found them. Erase boards only if you used them. Take special projects home. Turn off lights and set air-conditioning units to 80.

**Name Badges** will be provided for teachers and assistances and must be worn during class time. An occasional volunteer or parent must check in at the office for a Visitor's ID. An individual may visit the classroom only three times without completing the background check, fingerprinting and Virtus training. Please notify the office if you recruit someone to help in your classroom on a regular basis.

**No food or Drink in Classroom:** Even though you are very conscientious in cleaning up, stains remain and bugs are attracted to papers and crumbs left overnight in the trash. If there is something special you are doing and plan to have some type of food or drink, please contact the office ahead of time and we will arrange a location outside your classroom.

**Photocopy:** If you need material copied for class, please give the office 24 hours advance notice. Many times we can provide copies with less notice but cannot always guarantee delivery. No one is authorized to operate machinery except the office staff. Please call ahead of time if you need a special book or additional equipment for class.

**Punctuality:** It is very important that you are here on time to supervise your class in chapel. If you anticipate arriving late to class please call your assistant to be sure they will be able to cover for you until you arrive and also notify the office.

**Report Abuse:** If you suspect any type of abuse, whether it is physical or mental, it must be reported to Maria Teresa Lopez immediately. Even if there is very little or no evidence to support your suspicion, do not hesitate to mention it, as it is always better to be safe than sorry.

**Shared Prayer:** The Religious Education staff prays regularly for our students, teachers, all who assist us and their entire families. Should you have a special need or prayer request please don't hesitate to submit it to our office and we will gladly include it: "Again, I tell you, if two of you join voices on earth to pray for anything, it shall be granted to you by my Father in Heaven. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst." (Matthew 18:19-20)

**Supplies:** Pencils, crayons, markers, glue, etc. are available as needed from the CCD Volunteer room. For your convenience, you may want to select your supplies at the beginning of the school year and keep them stored in your classroom cabinet. Please let us know if you need any other supplies.

**Teacher Meetings & Workshops:** are essential for fellowship, opportunities for accreditation, and effective teaching. You will be notified of these events.

**Volunteer Applications:** The Archdiocese of Miami requires all teachers, assistants and volunteers to successfully pass a national criminal background screening, participate in the Virtus training program and sign a Code of Conduct.

**Visitors:** Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the religious education of their children. Visits to the chapel are always welcomed. Classroom visits must be coordinated through the Religious Education office and an ID must be issued. Please do not allow parents or visitors in the classroom unless they have a Visitor ID.

**Virtus Training:** "Protecting God's Children" is a national program for the protection of children from any form of child abuse and is required by the Archdiocese of Miami.

**Adults:** All volunteers 18 years old must attend the Virtus workshop. Please check the CCD calendar or the Archdiocese website at [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org) for a list of the Virtus training dates.

**Teens:** Volunteers between the ages of 16 and 18 years old will be encouraged to attend a Virtus training prepared specifically for their age group.

**Children:** This year we are required to provide two (2) Virtus classes for the children on an age appropriate level. Lessons are on-line.

**STUDENTS MUST HAVE ADULT SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES**

**NO EXCEPTIONS!**