

Cathedral of Christ the King

Religious Education Handbook

2017 - 2018



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Dear Parents and Catechists,

The formation of the students of the Cathedral of Christ the King in the Catholic Faith is a vital and important ministry. Thank you for your commitment, dedication and willingness to share the Catholic Faith.

The Church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks, for, before Christ ascended to His Father after His resurrection, He gave the apostles a final command - to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded” (*Catechesi Tradendae*). As the General Directory for Catechesis notes, “The Lord Jesus invites men and women, in a special way, to follow Him, teacher and former of disciples. This personal call of Jesus Christ and its relationship to Him are the true moving forces of catechetical activity.”

We are looking forward to working with you this school year. It is truly a privilege to know that God has entrusted us as catechists with “the heart of the Church,” the youth. May God bless you in your catechetical efforts.

As Parents and Catechists, you demonstrate the qualities of a person who has responded to the call of Christ to give witness to His Gospel, and to be committed to the work of the Church. Through this work, you share in and are a servant of the faith community at Our Lady of Hope.

Jesus was sent to reveal the deepest truth about God. He then commissioned His Church to do the same: to teach about God, and to foster love of God and one another.

All Parents and Catechists, as Heralds of the Word, must give support to the Church's official teaching on all matters of faith and morals. We are not bearers of our own message, but rather the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You represent Christ to the youth, and speak in His name. Thank you for your service!

Sincerely in Christ,

Elaine L. McCollum
Associate Director of Family and Children’s Faith Formation

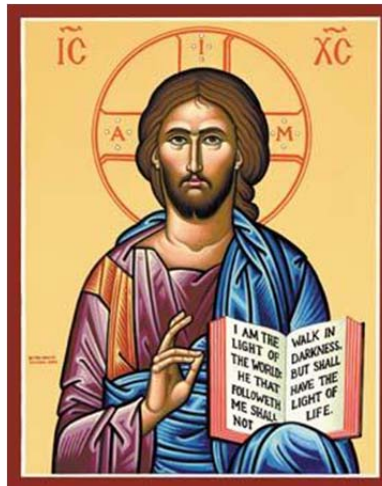
PRAYER FOR PARENTS

Heavenly Creator of the universe, we thank You for the children that You have entrusted to us.

We want to cooperate with You fully in helping them grow into free and responsible persons and mature in the faith received at Baptism.

Grant us the grace to be able to guide them in the practice of virtue and the way of your commandments - by the good example of our lives, and by the loving observance of your law and that of your Church.

Most of all, however, guide them with your Spirit so that they may know the vocation You will have for them and be open to genuine self-giving and true Christian love. Amen.



PRAYER FOR CATECHISTS

O God, our Heavenly Father, you have given us the gift of these catechists to be heralds of the Gospel to our parish family. We lift them up to you in thanksgiving and intercede for them concerning their hopes and needs.

May we be attentive to the presence of your Word in them, a Word that lifts up and affirms, calls forth and challenges, is compassionate and consoles. We pray that our parish family will always be blessed with those who have responded to the call to share in Christ's prophetic mission as catechists. May we too be open to the universal call to service that Christ addresses to all of his disciples, contributing our gifts to the communion of faith, the Church.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Overview of Program Elements

Religious Education Mission Statement

The Religious Education Ministry of the Cathedral of Christ the King is committed to proclaiming the Good News of God's unconditional love to the children and youth of our parish.

Together with parents, catechists, aides and our faith community, we seek to enable our youth to form a lifelong commitment to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ through an understanding of the Catholic Faith, Mass celebrations, prayer and the Sacraments.

The core elements listed below form the foundation and strength of The Cathedral of Christ the King Religious Education Program. The dignity of the individual, as a unique child of God, is nurtured and developed.

- The doctrine of the Catholic faith is presented in its fullness and entirety as both knowledge to be learned and as life to be lived.
- Sacramental life is central to developing the Catholic faith.
- That the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist is the center of our faith.
- The frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist is promoted.
- Reverence for God's Word is fostered.
- Mary's example, as the first disciple of Jesus, is our model.
- Parents are recognized and respected as the primary educators of their children.
- That the Gospel message and moral life expressed in the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are professed, cultivated and practiced in everyday life.
- That the virtues are fostered and practiced in everyday life.
- Reading and studying the lives of the saints as an example for us is encouraged.
- Prayer is necessary for growth in spiritual life – the Mass, the Rosary, & personal prayer

Our Sunday morning program is open to children from 3 years of age up through the eighth grade. Admission of children ages 3 shall be accepted on a space available basis.

The Parent/Catechist Partnership

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children (Catechism of the Catholic Church CCC 1653). The home is where a child should first experience the Catholic faith. The Religious Education Program aims to work in partnership with parents, in order to assist them in living their vocation as educators of their children. The Religious Education Program should merely complement, not replace, the catechesis that children should receive in the home.

Curriculum

From September through May, Religious Education classes use a variety of texts. *The Stories of God's Love* Series (RCL Benziger) is used for three, and four-year olds, the *Blest are We Series* (RCL Benziger) and Pflaum Promise Gospel Weeklies for the five-year olds and the *Blest are We Series* (RCL Benziger) for first through sixth grade. Our Pre-First students use the *We Believe* Series (Sadlier). Sacrament Preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist will leverage the *Reconciliation (Pardon and Peace)* series as well as the *Eucharist (We Give Thanks and Praise)* series (RCL Benziger). The Catechumenate for Children and Youth (CCY) class will use the *Faith Fusion* series (Our Sunday Visitor) complemented with the Sacrament Preparation series mentioned above. Catechists and families should consult the publisher websites for additional background and activities to enhance the learning of their students.

Publisher Website	Grade/Age Level
http://www.rclbstoriesofgodsllove.com/	3 and 4 year olds
www.pflaumweeklies.com	5 year olds (10:20 AM)
www.blestarewe.com	K (9 AM) – 6 th grade
www.sadlierreligion.com/webelieve/	Pre-1st
www.faithfusion.com	CCY

As of **July 20, 2017** these texts and series have been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the Subcommittee on the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Each grade level has been assigned a specific curriculum plan in compliance with the Diocesan requirements to provide a fulfilling year of study with the students.

Students and catechists are provided their own copies of the texts. Texts will remain on the campus until the end of the school year, when students are provided their text book to take home.

Catechists should not feel obligated to complete every single chapter nor give the same time allotment to all chapters as long as the prescribed lesson plans are met.

Second Grade Catechists and CCY catechists must prioritize sacramental preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion over text completion.

Life of the Parish Events

The opportunity for families to participate in Fellowship as well as additional learning (that may be in addition to or in lieu of normal PSR classes) will be offered throughout the school year. These include (but are not limited to):

Advent Wonderland - Families are invited to join us the first Sunday of December, in lieu of PSR, to explore an Advent Wonderland and learn more about holiday traditions of the Church.

Blessing of the Animals - During the month of October we focus on Saints, the process of becoming a saint. In particular honor Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and God's creation, with a Blessing of Animals. Children of all ages may bring a pet (living, photo, stuffed animal) to the Plaza on the first Saturday of October for a special blessing.

Blessing of the Easter Baskets - Easter Saturday, families join us in the European tradition of bringing baskets of food for their Easter meal to be blessed.

Cathedral Children's Pageants - At Christmas and on Palm Sunday, children of the Cathedral are invited to join us as cast members to enact the Gospel readings during selected masses.

Cathedral neighborhood Caroling - Families and children are invited to join us one evening in December to learn the religious origins of Christmas Caroling, to fellowship, and bring joy to the neighbors of the Cathedral through song.

Charitable Giving - Students will have opportunities during the year to support their brothers and sisters in need. This will include Christmas collections for the needy, as well as food and book collections in the spring.

Explanatory Masses - Families may join us for a deeper inspection of the Mass and its' meaning.

Palm Sunday Donkey Procession - Families join us on the Plaza on Sunday morning for a special blessing of the Palms with the Archbishop, and then process the block with a live donkey, simulating the return of Jesus to Jerusalem.

PSR Family nights - Families may join us for season appropriate food, fun and fellowship.

Prayer - Each class will begin and end with a prayer. Families are encouraged to pray together with their students as a means of strengthening their relationship with God.

Diocesan SAFE ENVIRONMENT Program

The Archdiocese of Atlanta is committed to our compliance with the United States College of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Article 12 of the Charter mandates that each diocese “*maintain safe environment programs... conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.*” In consideration of our responsibility to keep our children and youth safe, the Archdiocese of Atlanta is providing all parishes and schools with the Children Safe Environment from VIRTUS called “Teaching Touching Safety”.

The job of ensuring children’s safety is a challenging undertaking. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult awareness, education, and training about the nature and scope of the problem. We must also give our children the tools they need to overcome the advances of someone who intends to do them harm.

Teaching Touching Safety begins with a short introductory video, which lays the groundwork for the educator. The lessons are organized so that each child receives the full range of information in small digestible bites. Activities contained in the lesson plans help students apply the message from the lessons to their daily lives.

The Diocese requires all students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade to participate. Parents can review any of the material that will be taught in the classroom. All lesson plans used are on the Diocese of Atlanta website in the Parent Information section of the Child and Youth Protection section. The lessons are opt-in / opt-out. Parents will be notified ahead of time, and if they do not desire to have their children attend, an alternative activity will be provided for the child during normal PSR class time.

Class Dates for Safe Environment for PSR Student Training will be during normal PSR class times in the Hyland Center Assembly Room or Gym and for 2017 are:

- Sept 24: Sixth Grade Oct 15: Kindergarten thru Second Grade
- Oct 29: Third thru Fifth Grade

For the safety of the children in its care, the Archdiocese of Atlanta requires all volunteers who have substantial association with children to adhere to its *Policy on the Protection of Children*. This includes all staff and adult volunteers in the Religious Education Program. The requirements of this program are as follows:

- Complete a Volunteer Application
- Review Archdiocese policies regarding Sexual Abuse, Code of Conduct, Ministerial Standards for Educators and Educational Volunteers Who Have Regular contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Individuals, Ministerial Standards when dealing with Vulnerable Individuals, Policy concerning the Protection of Disabled Adults and Elder Persons, and Social Media Policy.
- Complete a Background Check via Sterling InfoSystems Inc.
- Complete a 3 hour class by VIRTUS - Protecting God’s Children
- Sign and acknowledge receipt and compliance with policies including Safe Environment

Program Policies

Attendance/Absentee Policy

Monsignor McNamee has established an expectation of 80% student attendance per year to ensure a full development of the understanding of their faith. Catechists will record attendance as soon as possible after the start of class. Please keep accurate records. For those classes preparing students for First Communion (First and Second Grade & CCY), no more than four absences will be accepted. *Attendance sheets are turned into the Religious Education Office each week.* These sheets are very important to the Religious Education Office in recording accurate attendance for students' permanent records, particularly when a student transfers to another parish or is preparing to receive a sacrament.

Parents should discuss excessive absences with the program director to make arrangements for some alternative or supplemental form of catechesis. For **2017/2018 we are pleased to have available eBooks from our 1st – 6th grade** publisher to enable make up of missed work and keep your students on track. Contact Elaine McCollum should you need to take advantage of these resources.

In some cases tardiness is unavoidable; however, the start of class should not be delayed because of anticipated tardiness on the part of specific students.

Punctuality of Catechists/students: Catechists are expected to be in class no later than 10 minutes before the official class time. Classes start at 9:00 AM or 10:20 AM depending on the assigned session.

Cancellations

In the case of inclement weather, the PSR program will follow the actions of the Cathedral. If the Cathedral is closed, then the PSR program will likewise be cancelled. If classes are cancelled by the parish for whatever reason, an email will be sent to each family as soon as possible. A special "weather" message will also be on the Religious Education Department phone on any Sunday morning that weather conditions affect classes. Please call (404) 233-2145 x 692.

Classroom Discipline

All disciplinary action will be administered with Christian love. Good discipline is a part of Christian education; in living by Christ's example, students have a responsibility for their conduct and actions and to respect the rights of others. Discipline is necessary to establish order in the classroom.

In the event that a student's classroom behavior is disruptive, the catechist will:

- Not allow the disruptive situation to continue to persist in the classroom
- Not embarrass the child in front of classmates
- Speak to the child and try to encourage the student to change their behavior
- Leverage seating assignments to help with student behavior
- If the student continues to be disruptive, that behavior will be documented, and may result in sending the student to the Director of Religious Education who will speak to the student.
- If this attempt is not successful, the parents will be contacted and asked to work with their child and the catechist to have this behavior corrected.

Communication

Email will be the primary form of communication. It is critical that the Religious Education office have the most correct and used email information on file.

Dress Code

Catechists and aides are expected to wear modest clothing appropriate for the classroom. Students also are expected to wear modest clothing to class. Short shorts, tops which do not cover the midriff area, pants hanging

off of hips, mini-skirts, plunging necklines, spaghetti straps, or graphic depictions or written references written on clothing (e.g., to drugs, alcohol, weapons, graphic sexual connotation, profanity) are not permitted. If a student violates this policy, his or her parents will be immediately called. The parents should bring alternative clothes for the student to change into so that he or she may return to class.

Learning Disabilities / Health Related Problems

If a child has a learning disability or health-related problem, this information should be reflected on the child's registration form, if the parents have chosen to share the information with us. *All information should remain confidential.* Catechists will speak with the parent regarding any concerns about the child. Catechists will be informed of medical conditions and allergies of students.

Mass Attendance

The first precept of the Catholic church calls us to attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation (CCC 2041). Mass is a means for parents and children to respond to God's love, encounter Christ, gather, pray and strengthen our family, and grow in a relationship with God. Parents are encouraged to attend Mass with their children. The Cathedral offers numerous masses each weekend, and conveniently has Mass celebrations before and after PSR class times to make it convenient for families to worship together.

Photo Opportunities

Photos will only be taken with the written consent of parents as communicated during the registration process.

Resource Room

Catechists may leverage Audio-Visual materials that can provide an excellent stimulus for discussion, clarification or review. Students are familiar with audio-visuals and look forward to the discriminate use of such media. DVDs, books, catechisms, activity books, music and posters are available in the Religious Education resource room located on the ground floor of the Parish Center.

Respect for School Property

Children should be told not to touch or play with any of the materials in the classroom; they belong to The Cathedral of Christ the King School and must remain where they are. If a student damages any of the school property, parents and the Director of Religious Education are to be notified. Please ensure that the students do not touch classroom artwork. If you move anything, move it back to its original position prior to leaving. Desks, tables, chalkboards, and the screen cover should be left in their original condition. **Classroom Smart Board screens are off limits to the PSR program!** It is extremely important that aides walk around the classroom during class time to prevent any children from damaging classroom materials. Otherwise, the students will quickly learn that they can do what they want. Under no circumstances should students touch the contents within the desks. The campus of **Christ the King School is considered a "Nut-Free zone"** – for the safety of all our students, NO snacks should be sent with students to their class.

Student Drop-off/Pick-up

Classes start at 9:00 AM or 10:20 AM depending on the assigned session. Parents should not drop students off any earlier than 10 minutes ahead of class start time. For students in our third grade and below grade levels, an **Adult** must drop off and pick up the child. For fourth grade and above, adults are not required to drop-off/pick-up students. If an alternate responsible adult will be picking up a child, a written permission to that effect must be provided to the Religious Education office, specifying who has the authority to pick up the students.

Class times end at 10:00 AM and 11:30 AM depending on the assigned session. As a courtesy to our Catechist volunteers, Parents are expected to pick up their students promptly at these times. In the case where students are not retrieved promptly, students will be taken to the School Cafeteria, staffed by Religious Education Staff, where students can then be picked up.

In the event students are not in class during class time, the catechist will post a note on the class door identifying the location of the out of class activity. These are in compliance with the parental permissions identified during the registration process. Catechists will also inform Religious Ed staff of location.

Student Guests

While student visitors are allowed, guest attendance will be documented.

Substitutes

If Catechists are unable to attend class on a given day, Religious Education Office should be called (Aimee McDonald) and arrangements will be made for a substitute. Only substitutes who have completed the Diocesan Child Safety requirements will be allowed in the classrooms.

Take Homes

Parents should expect each week to see some form of a take home from the student text providing an indication of what material was covered during that week's lesson. You are encouraged to discuss and review with your child.

Use of the Restrooms

Parents are encouraged to see that children tend to their personal needs prior to arriving to PSR class. In the event restrooms are needed, children will be sent in pairs. Restrooms will be visible to catechists, but Volunteers are not allowed in the restrooms with children. Parents will be contacted if a child has a "potty" accident.

Introduction to Sacramental Preparation

A very important aspect of the Religious Education program is sacramental preparation. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. The preparation involves both parents and students through parent meetings and student assignments. The Archdiocese of Atlanta expects students to have participated in Religious Education classes regularly for one year prior to the sacramental year (via a Parish Religious Education program, or attendance at a Catholic School) to give the child a firm foundation on which to base specific preparation for the sacraments. Students preparing to receive a sacrament may not have any more three absences in second grade and Catechumenate for Children and Youth (CCY) programs

Catechists for any of the sacramental classes (2nd, CCY) will assist at all functions associated with the sacraments to include: rehearsals, First Reconciliation Prayer Services, and the First Holy Communion Masses.

Catechumenate for Children and Youth (CCY)

The Sacramental Preparation for Older Children class is for students, between 3rd and 6th grades, who have not yet received the sacraments of Baptism and/or Penance and First Holy Communion. Each student will need to complete homework assignments, memorize certain prayers, and learn the tenets of their faith specific to the Sacraments being received. By the end of this one-year class, the children will have received the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion for the first time.

Parents will also be asked to attend Sacrament specific parent meetings and work with their students at home to complete supplemental preparation activities.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency:

- **Fire:**
 - Pull the fire alarm and notify 911
 - Evacuate students and catechists to a safe distance outside of the building
 - Follow normal fire drill route. Follow alternate route if normal route is too dangerous
 - Catechists for each class will account for their students.
 - Contact Facilities Manager Chris Brown, along with the Pastor
 - No one may reenter building until Fire Officer in Charge declares entire building is safe.
 - Coordinator must provide a written report of the incident for parish documentation, Pastor and parents
- **Tornado Watch:**
 - Monitor Emergency Alert Stations on battery-operated radio or National Weather Service or Weather Channel
 - Bring all students inside building (s)
 - Close windows and blinds
 - Review location of safe areas. Tornado safe areas are in basements, in an inner room on the lowest floor, in hallways, and away from windows and large rooms.
- **Tornado Warning:**
 - Move students and catechists to safe areas, away from windows and large rooms.
 - Catechists for each class will account for their students.
 - Ensure that all persons are under sturdy furniture and use arms to protect head.
 - Remain in safe area until warning expires or until emergency personnel have issued the all-clear signal.
 - If building has been damaged, administer needed first aid and order evacuations, if necessary.

Diocesan Catechist Guidelines

Catechist Certification

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has recently revised the requirements for Catechist Certification. The new requirements can be viewed at:

<http://www.archatl.com/download/?wpdmdl=4956>

It is not required for our catechist volunteers to pursue certification; however, everyone is encouraged to do so. Various programs and classes are available to assist in acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate the Gospel message effectively. Catechists/Parents may take advantage of these opportunities (and others) to work your way toward Catechist Certification.

Certification covers topics such as: Faith and Moral Development, Scripture, Catholic Morality, Church Development, What the Church Believes, Liturgy and Sacraments, Prayer and Spirituality and Early Childhood/ Elementary Methodology

August 5, 2017	Atlanta Catechist Conference	Marist High School
August 19, 2017	CGS Regional Workshop: The Prepared Environment	East Deanery Catechist Faith Formation Day, St. Joseph, Athens, GA
August 19, 2017	Living as Missionary Disciples: Day of Formation	East Deanery Catechist Faith Formation Day, St. Joseph, Athens, GA
September 30, 2017	Living as Missionary Disciples: Northwest Deanery	NW Deanery Catechist Faith Formation Day, St. Joseph Dalton
November 11, 2017	Living as Missionary Disciples: South Deanery	South Deanery Catechist Faith Formation Day, St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church, Jonesboro, GA
Available Now	Echoes of Faith (Online)	RCL Benziger

Key Contacts

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The Religious Education Office is staffed on Sunday mornings should the need arise for family support.