

Holy Family Catholic Church

Religious Education Handbook



*“Teaching the truths of our Catholic Faith to inspire
our students to know, love, and serve Our Lord*”

Catechists

All catechists, aides and helpers are volunteers and deserve and will get the utmost respect from all people involved. They give many hours preparing for their classes and attending training sessions. Each classroom has a minimum of two catechists present for each session. Parents are needed and urged to volunteer in the program. If you are interested please contact the Parish Office at (979) 532-3593. Dedication to your faith and a love for children/youth are the key characteristics of those we seek to work in this ministry. Everything else we can teach you.

Catechists will keep information about your children confidential. Please let the CCD director and catechists know if you have a child that may need modified work or some other accommodations. **Parents are still the primary teachers of the faith.**

If a problem arises with a catechist, please seek to solve it by meeting with them privately. If the private meeting was not successful, submit your complaint in writing to the CCD director within five days of the private meeting. The CCD director will respond with a written decision within five days of the written complaint, detailing the action to be taken. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision or, if no decision is received within five working days after the complaint is sent to the CCD director, the complainant may appeal to the next level. If you have any questions regarding complaint procedures contact the CCD director (979) 453-1331.

Tardiness

The bell rings at 5:30pm for grades 1-6 and 7:00pm for grades 7-12. Students are considered tardy after this time. Please make sure that your child is in their classroom on time.

Absenteeism

1. A notification by the parents is appreciated when a child will be absent. This can be done by a phone call, text, or email to the CCD director.
2. **Students preparing to receive the sacraments of First Holy Communion, First Penance, or Confirmation, should miss no more than three absences during the CCD year.**

Classroom Rules

As we are made in the image and likeness of God, we deserve to be treated with care and respect. Therefore, **classroom behavior by all should exemplify virtuous living.** We are called to react towards one-another with love, respect, patience, humility, fairness, and modesty. Each student is asked to be attentive by listening and participating in classroom activity while being both courteous and polite.

Discipline

We ask that the students not disturb classes by unnecessary conduct or talking during class. In the event that misbehavior occurs, the following procedures will apply.

1. First consequence – The student is asked to improve their behavior.
2. Second consequence – The student is asked to improve their behavior and may be asked to leave the classroom.

3. Third consequence – The student will be sent to the office to meet with the CCD director. Upon this meeting, the student will be asked to write a letter to their catechists and classmates explaining their wrongdoings, describing how they will improve, and asking for forgiveness. Depending on the time remaining and/or catechist preference, the child may return to class or may remain in the office until CCD is over.
4. Fourth consequence – The parents will be notified and asked to come pick up their child early; the parents will need to schedule a meeting with the CCD director.
5. Fifth consequence – The student may be suspended from CCD for the remaining of the year

Dress Code

1. Be properly dressed when attending class. No short shorts, short dresses, or short skirts (shorts must be no more than three inches above the knee, and skirts/dresses must cover the knees when standing). No undergarments are to be visible at any time. No tank tops, inappropriate wording, or pictures on clothing. **Students should be mindful that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.**
2. No earrings should be worn by male students. Inappropriate chains on any students will not be allowed.
3. Caps are not to be worn during CCD.
4. The above guidelines are the same during scheduled Masses on Wednesday night, weekends, holidays, and any Parish/CCD sponsored event. Parents will be called if their child abuses the dress code and students may be asked to leave CCD.

Pick Up and Drop Off of Students

On regular CCD nights: students in grades 1-8 and 11 are to be dropped off and picked up at the front of the CCD building. Students in grades 9, 10, and 12 are to be dropped off/picked up in the church/Family Life Center parking lot. Assigned catechists will help students in grades 1-6 enter vehicles during pick-up at 6:45pm. Students should not arrive at the CCD building prior to 5:00. **Parents should be aware that there are no assigned monitors outside the CCD building prior to 5:30pm. Parents are responsible for their child's activities until the CCD bell rings at 5:30pm.**

Safe Environment Training & Abuse

The information below comes from the Diocese of Victoria Handbook: *How to Protect Children from Child Abuse: A Parents Guide*. This handbook is available for pick-up at the CCD office and outside the office at the check-in desk.

Every adult volunteer or staff member on campus working with children at any time is required to take the Safe Environment Training class and have a clear background check. No adult is allowed to work with students in any form without this program being completed by the first CCD class day. Please check with the Parish Office if you would like to take this course.

Unfortunately, many young people have experienced the trauma of physical abuse and neglect and/or sexual abuse. Catechists may learn of such abuse from a young person or see the signs

of such abuse due to regular contact. When catechists learn of such situations, they have a moral and legal obligation to take action.

Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect MUST report his/her suspicions to the Texas Department of Human Services or local or state enforcement agency within 48 hours of learning of the abuse. The report can be made by calling the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400) or online at www.txabusehotline.org. This incident should be kept in complete confidence between you and the pastor.

If church personnel are involved: First contact civil authorities. Second, contact the Bishop or the chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at 361-573-0828 or the Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach: Rev. Gary Janak at 361-575-4741 or Sr. Emilie Eilers at 361-575-7111

Bad Weather Policy

If at all possible, we will hold classes. But, if bad weather is expected or does occur and CCD must be cancelled, parents will be notified via email or text message by 3:00pm on CCD days.

Communications

Cell phones may be brought on campus, but they must be turned off before entering the classroom. If a phone or beeper goes off during class time, **the catechist has the option to pick up the phone and keep it until class is over.** If you need to reach your student during class time call the Religious Education Office at 979-532-3747, and we will send someone to deliver the message or bring your student to the phone. Students are always permitted to use the office phone to call parents. No electronic items such as ipods, ipads, MP 3 players or other such items are allowed at CCD.

Parents will be kept informed of upcoming events during the school year primarily by email. Memos and notes may also be sent home periodically. Please check weekly with your student for any notes that are sent through them to you.

Medical Release Forms

Each student is required to have a medical release/permission form on file in our offices. Please notify the office of any change in your address, phone numbers or insurance information as soon as possible.

Sacramental Preparation

It is very important that those preparing to receive a Sacrament attend all classes. Second grade students prepare all year to receive the Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion. Students in the second grade must be interviewed and attend a half-day retreat. Eleventh grade students receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and are asked to do service projects and attend a spiritual retreat. **A parent meeting will be scheduled at the beginning of each CCD year that parents are required to attend in order for their child to receive these sacraments.** Parents need to bring their child's original baptismal certificate to the parent meeting; specific rules & requirements for each sacrament class will be reviewed in detail at this parent meeting. Students preparing for the sacraments should miss no more than three classes and attend Mass weekly.

Hall Monitors

There will be a minimum of two hall monitors during each CCD session. The responsibility of Hall Monitor One includes monitoring who enters and exits the CCD building at the main door by the CCD office. Hall Monitor One locks up the CCD building approximately five minutes after the start of CCD in each session and ensures students do not leave the CCD building without permission and/or a supervising adult. Hall Monitor Two monitors the main hall and assists teachers in taking students to/from the bathroom (but does NOT enter the bathroom with students) and water fountain, taking notes to/from the classroom and office, and making copies for catechists. Hall Monitor Two also ensures the two side doors of the CCD building remain locked during each CCD session. Both Hall Monitors assist catechists in emergency situations as detailed below.

Emergency Procedures

Catechists, assistants, and hall monitors should be aware of the following procedures in case of an emergency. Training will be provided at the beginning of the CCD year and procedures posted on the bulletin board by the main CCD entrance as well as in each classroom. These procedures will be practiced at the beginning of the year and once more during the CCD year. Procedures are as follows:

Fire/Bomb Threat:

1. Bell will be rung three times quickly and consecutively, 911 will be called, and the Pastor will be notified. Ed Korenek will be contacted to turn off the gas/electricity as necessary.
2. Hall Monitors will be notified of the place of the fire and Hall Monitor One will notify grades 5, 6, and 1 (classrooms to the right) of fire/bomb location. Hall Monitor Two will notify grades 2, 3, and 4 (classrooms to the left) of the fire/bomb location. Hall monitors will assist catechists in getting all students out of the building safely, closing the doors and turning off the lights.
3. Catechists will lead their students through the nearest exit opposite the fire/bomb and away from the CCD building to the meeting area between the church and rectory. The floor plan for evacuation will be posted in each classroom.
4. Catechists should take attendance registers, keys, purse, and cell phones with them as they exit, close the doors, and turn off the lights.
5. Catechists should count to be sure all students exited the building successfully.
6. Remain calm, and wait for further instructions.
7. Parents will be contacted and medical attention provided as necessary.

Shelter-In-Place:

(Weather emergencies or hazardous substance is released)

1. Bell will be rung five times quickly and consecutively and 911 will be called.
2. Hall Monitors will be notified of the type of emergency and need to shelter-in-place. Hall Monitor One will notify grades 5, 6, and 1 of the need to shelter-in-place. Hall Monitor Two will notify grades 2, 3, and 4 of the need to shelter-in-place. Hall monitors will assist catechists in the below procedures:
3. Close all windows.

4. Lead students into the interior hallway and have students assume the “duck and tuck” position.
5. Catechists should take attendance registers, keys, purse, and cell phones with them as they exit, close the doors, and turn off the lights.
6. Catechists should count to be sure all students exited the classrooms successfully.
7. Catechists and Hall Monitors assume the “duck and tuck” position after all students are settled and in the correct position.
8. Remain calm, and wait for further instructions.
9. Parents will be contacted and medical attention provided as necessary.

Active Shooter

(Seek cover within classrooms)

1. Ideally the front door will remain locked and Hall Monitor One will notice the disturbed person in the parking lot and alert the CCD director of impending danger and the need to alert catechists /students to seek cover. Gun shots may also be heard within the building to alert catechists of danger.
2. If possible, the CCD director will ring the bell with one continuous long ring (5-10 seconds long) to alert catechists that something is wrong. In addition to the long ring, Hall Monitor Two will notify classrooms to the north (grades 5, 2, 3, and 4) by consecutively yelling, “Seek cover!” as loudly and quickly as possible. Hall Monitor Two will seek cover in the last classroom notified. Hall Monitor One will leave the locked front door after notifying the CCD director of the disturbed person in the parking lot in order to notify grades 1 and 6 of the need to seek cover by loudly yelling “seek cover!,” and seeking cover in the first grade classroom.
3. Meanwhile, the CCD director will call 911 and assess the situation. The CCD director will help as needed to get all students in safe locations and seek cover in the office or in a classroom if deemed necessary.
4. Catechists should “seek cover” by following these procedures:
 - a. Lock classroom doors.
 - b. Have children sit in the “duck and tuck” position in the corner “least visible” from the classroom door window (shown on the “Seek Cover” floor plan in each classroom). Catechists also stand/sit in this corner where room allows.
 - c. If possible and time allows (no gun shots have been heard in the building), tip tables on the side with the legs still extended and place in front of the students in order to totally block all visibility of students from the closed & locked classroom doors.
5. Remain calm and wait for further instructions.
6. Parents will be contacted and medical attention provided as necessary.