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MISSION STATEMENT
CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD RELIGIOUS FORMATION

“Christ calls all members of the Church to proclaim Christ to every generation. Christians evangelize by professing faith in Christ, celebrating the Christian mysteries in the Liturgy, praying and embracing the Christian way of life.” (National Directory of Catechesis Ch. 2)

Christ the Good Shepherd Parish, following the mandate of Jesus, is committed to sharing the Good News(evangelization). Its Religious Formation Program strives to reach its diverse community and lead them into communion with God by: promoting knowledge of the faith, preparing and celebrating the liturgy and the sacraments, leading people to a conversion of heart and moral commitment that motivates a Christian life committed to the good of all, preparing its members to live a life committed to the community, encouraging a deep relationship with their loving God through prayer, and a willingness to share the Good News with all the world through an active role in the missionary efforts of the Church.(General Directory of Catechesis #85)

CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS/ROLE OF THE
PARENT/GUARDIAN

Parents are the primary educators of their children and are responsible for the faith life of their children. It is the parent who communicates values and attitudes by showing love for Christ and his Church and for each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its spirit, by fostering justice and love in all their relationships. Their active involvement in the parish, their readiness to seek opportunities to serve others and their practice of frequent prayer, all make meaningful their profession of belief. Parents nurture faith in their children by showing them the richness and beauty of lived faith. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep open communication between the themselves and the Religious Formation staff: director and catechists. Choices for on-going formation for school age children are of two forms (family catechesis and weekly formation sessions).

REGISTRATION/FEES

- Early registration takes place in May. Families who respond to this get a credit incentive off their registration if paid in full by September 15th. All registration fees are to paid in full by October 15th. Families, who are unable to meet the registration fees, will never be denied catechetical formation for their children because of inability to pay. However, this must be discussed with the Director or the pastor.
- Normally classes begin the third week of September and end the week before Memorial Day allowing approximately 32 sessions per year.
- All families must be registered by the first week of September.
- Registration fees are reviewed each year. In-parish families have priority. Out of Parish families will be considered if there are sufficient catechists.

SCHEDULE

Weekly Classes:

Grades 1 to 8:

4:00-5:25 or 6:00-7:25

Family Catechesis:

(Once a month: day and time determined by participants)

Sunday School/Nursery/Children's Liturgy of the Word:

Every Sunday during the 11:00 A.M. Mass

Teen Activities :

Monthly (announced in the Vigil or see the website)

CONTENT/REQUIRED PRAYERS

All materials used in the Christ the Good Shepherd Religious Formation program are in accordance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Archdiocesan guidelines. Ask for the Scope and Sequence for particular grade level and/or Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guidelines). There is a chart of prayers to be memorized at each level. Every parent should receive this at the beginning of the year or one may be requested from the Religious Formation Office.

SACRAMENT POLICIES

Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Eucharist is done primarily in second grade. Confirmation is **most often** celebrated in eighth grade. For the children who have not received the sacraments in the ordinary sequence, there is the Catechumenate for older children that helps them prepare to receive Baptism, Eucharist or Confirmation.

-Reconciliation/Eucharist:

Since the Church now requires that children receive Reconciliation for the first time prior to First Eucharist, the children will receive Reconciliation in the early part of second grade, followed by more intense preparation for First Eucharist. Parents must enroll their children to receive this sacrament at the beginning of the year.

Requirements:

Child must be baptized and a copy of the Baptismal record submitted to the Religious Formation Office.

Parents are required to attend enrollment for the sacrament and all sacramental meetings.

Parent and child are required to participate in a morning retreat for each sacrament

Child normally has two consecutive years of instruction in Religious Formation program or the Catholic School.

Faithful attendance in the Religious Formation Program or attendance at the Catholic School are required.

-Confirmation:

Requirements:

Parent Meeting is required & Candidate participate in the Enrollment.

Baptism/Reconciliation and First Eucharist should have been received prior to the candidate seeking Confirmation.

Complete the Confirmation Book

Christian Service and a Journal of events participated in is required.

Confirmation Retreat

Interview with Pastoral Staff

Reconciliation in Preparation to receiving Confirmation

Choose a sponsor (at least 16 years of age, a practicing Catholic and one who can be a model for the candidate)

Expected to take up some of the service roles in the parish following Confirmation(Eucharistic Minister, Lectors etc.)

-Catechumenate: Older children who are not baptized or have not received Eucharist or Confirmation. These children will be prepared to receive the sacraments that will bring them into step with their age-mates. The celebration **usually** takes place at the Easter Vigil.

Requirements:

Faithful attendance to Religious Formation Classes or attend the Catholic School.

Parent and child attend all special sacramental preparation meetings determined by the Director Religious Formation.

Parent and child attend Mass regularly

GENERAL POLICIES

All Children enrolled in any of the Religious Formation Programs:

1. First and foremost attend every session and participate to the best of his/her ability.
2. When needs are foreseen to be absent from catechetical sessions this needs to be communicated to the Religious Formation Office in writing. If extenuating circumstances have been the cause of more than three absences, this will necessitate the parent seeing the Director of Religious Formation and determining what steps can be taken to insure that the child will have sufficient knowledge to progress to the next level.
3. Every child is expected to be on time for each catechetical session and stay for the ***entire duration of the session***. Repetitive tardiness or early dismissal will be treated as an ***unexcused*** absence. If a child needs to leave class early, a note from the parent/legal guardian is required explaining the situation and when picking up the child the sign-out book must be signed, with reason and date.
4. If an emergency necessitates removing a child from a session early, the “sign-out” sheet in the Religious Formation Office must be signed by the adult taking the child. If someone other than the parent/or legal guardian is to pick up the child, this must be communicated to the Religious Formation Office prior to the release of the child.
5. Every child participating in the program must be respectful of all adults in the program and fellow participants. All participants are respectful of others property. At no time are tobacco, weapons, drugs allowed on the premises. This would mean an automatic dismissal. Electronic devices of any sort are not permitted in class (cell phones, entertainment devices etc.).
6. Dress for attendance at a catechetical session should convey the respect of the learning that is going to take place during that session. Normally this means following the dress code of the schools the participants attend (no sports attire).

Parents of children entering Religious Formation Programs will be expected to:

1. Attend weekly Mass with their family.
2. Check the child's folders for notes and assignments.
3. When the child is absent, check with the catechist about what has been missed and try to make up the work.
4. Make sure the child is on time for each catechetical session and is picked up promptly after class by an authorized family member. When picking up a child after class, the pre-determined parking lot movement will be followed to insure the safety of the children.

Religious Formation Office:

1. **No medications are dispersed from the Religious Formation Office.** In an emergency a parent/guardian will be called.
2. The Religious Formation Office requires that every parent ***keep existing emergencies contacts up to date*** in the office. This is a big responsibility of the parent. In an emergency there must be someone who can pick up the child.

Cancellation of Catechetical Sessions:

In the event that catechetical sessions would need to be cancelled, the decision would be made prior to **John Paul II Catholic School beginning hour (8:00 A.M. –e.g. a blizzard already in progress)**. If a decision needs to be made later in the day, this will be made no later than 2:00 P.M. and the message placed on the answering machine. When in doubt no parent should drop off a child without checking. Since children from so many school districts are involved it is not possible to accommodate all. Most often the Mondays nearest Easter and Christmas are free.

STAFF

Christ the Good Shepherd Religious Formation Staff is entirely volunteer except for the Director of Religious Formation and the secretary. We have quite extensive staff of catechists and aides who are extremely generous in giving of their time. Most have met the requirements for Diocesan Certification by attending **27** topics in Catechist Formation.

VISITORS

Catechists normally do not discourage visitors in their rooms. However, out of respect for the catechist it is important that such a visit be arranged , prior to attending, through the Religious Formation Office. ***Visitors are never allowed just to go a classroom without checking into the office.*** In the event a parent would like to talk with a catechist this must be arranged through the Director.

DISCIPLINE

If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him or herself or others, they may be sent to the Office at the discretion of the catechist. If the problem persists, the parent will be called in for a conference with the catechist and Director of Religious Formation to try to resolve the problem. The child will not return to class until this meeting has taken place.

COMMUNICATION

Most communication from the Religious Formation Office is sent home weekly with the children, through e-mail or is distributed at family meetings. Other important information is communicated through the church paper, the Vigil and Sunday announcements in church. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parents to check children's folders and read the weekly church paper and listen to church announcements at Mass. Very seldom is important material sent out through the mail.

OFFICE STAFF

Director of Religious Formation.....Sister Rebecca Vonderhaar I.H.M.

Secretary.....Mrs. Laura Mikota

OFFICE HOURS

Sunday.....10:00-Noon
Monday8:30-7:30 P.M.
Tuesday.....8:00-3:00 P.M.
Wednesday.....8:00-Noon
Thursday.....8:00-Noon
Friday.....8:00-3:00 P.M.

Religious Formation Office: Phone 313-382-1818 Fax: 313-928-1326
e-mail: dre@christgoodshepherd.org

**CHRIST THE GOOD
SHEPHERD PARISH**

RELIGIOUS FORMATION
Parent Handbook