



St. Nicholas of Myra Parish

Hays, Kansas

Parent/Participant Handbook

2011-2012

St. Nicholas of Myra Parent/Participant Handbook

Goal Statement:

“Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted... with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #5)

Realizing that the aim of catechesis “is to lead believers to a deeper knowledge and love of Christ and the Church and a firm commitment to follow him.” (National Catechetical Directory) the goal of the faith formation process is to assist parents in the religious formation of their children by providing religious formation sessions for students Age 4 through Grade 12.

Role of the Pastor:

The Pastor is ultimately responsible for the catechesis in the parish. The Pastor oversees and provides guidance for the overall religious formation for the parish in cooperation with the Coordinator of Faith Formation (CRE).

Role of the Coordinator of Faith Formation (CRE):

The Coordinator of Faith Formation oversees the faith formation program for Age 4 through Grade 8, including First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation preparation. The CRE is responsible for recruiting catechists and substitutes, providing workshops and training materials for catechists and keeping records on attendance and compensation. Responsibilities also include ordering all materials to be used and contacting parents as the need arises. The Coordinator of Faith Formation is an ex-officio member of the Religious Education /Faith Formation Commission.

Role of the Catechist:

The Catechist has a desire to share his or her Catholic Faith and teach Catholic beliefs. Under the leadership of the parish Coordinator of Faith Formation, Pastor and Pastoral Associate, a catechist follows the designated parish religion program and provides quality instruction to the grade level assigned. Following the tradition of St. Nicholas Parish, the Catechist proclaims the Good News as expressed in the Sunday Gospel.

Role of Children and Youth:

It is desired that all children registered in St. Nicholas Faith Formation classes participate, enjoy, make new friends, grow in faith, and benefit from getting to know one another while attending formation sessions. The children and youth who attend have the right to learn about and share their faith. The Catechists have the desire to share their Catholic faith and to teach Catholic beliefs. Children are to respect others and the property of others. Therefore, the following is considered appropriate behavior.

Appropriate Behavior:

1. Respect for teachers and participants
2. Positive attitude
3. Attentiveness during class
4. Respect the property of the Church by not touching/using supplies, projects, materials not provided by and for your specific use
5. Consideration of adults and students participating in the Faith Formation Program.

For example:

- a. Listen when someone else is talking
- b. Use a moderate tone of voice (no shouting)
- c. Be Courteous – “Please”, “Thank you”, “May I?” etc.
- d. Use actions which are considerate of the well being of others

Disciplinary Policy:

As in all things there must be some order to achieve a goal. In creating a Christian learning environment, guidelines and expectations are given by Catechists and the Coordinator/Director of Faith Formation to be followed by all children. **NO CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO DISRUPT THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF OTHERS IN THE CLASSROOM.** The Catechist will remind the class of our guidelines. Each child is responsible for his/her choices and consequences for negative choices.

Should a child CHOOSE to break a guideline or guidelines, the following policy is enforced.

PK-2

1. The child will be removed from the classroom for 2-5 minutes. A verbal apology will be expected. Parents will be informed of behavior.
2. Upon a second offense, child will be removed from the class and parent will be called. An appointment will be set for discussion of the behavior.

Grades 3-8

The child will be removed from the classroom until the end of class for that session. He will come back at the end of the session and will discuss his behavior with the catechists.

The child will meet with the Coordinator/Pastor for discussion.

1. If a child's behavior warrants a third removal from class, the parent/guardian will be contacted by Coordinator/Pastor and an appointment will be set for discussion of the behavior.
2. Should a fourth disruption occur, the parent/guardian will be contacted and must attend the next class session with the child. If the child chooses to continue disruptive behavior, parent/guardian will be asked to instruct the child at home.
3. Documentation by Catechist and Coordinator/Pastor will follow each warning.

Role of the Parent/Guardian:

Parents are the first teachers of their children. By sharing their faith and through their example, parents give their values, love of God, and sense of moral living to their children. **The goal of our Faith Formation Process is to assist them.** Therefore, parents are expected to attend assigned session(s) per semester and are invited and encouraged to visit formation sessions at any time. Parents are the primary catechists in preparing children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Expectations of Parents

1. Have children at location in time for sessions (not more than 15 minutes early) and pick them up within 10 minutes after the session
2. Commit to attend assigned session(s) per semester with child(ren)
3. Call the catechist or Parish Office before the session if their child will be absent
4. Visit with their child about information presented and sign the “*Calendar of Weekly Classes*” informing the catechist that they have reviewed their child’s work
5. Teach their child age appropriate prayers – prayer card in child’s folder
6. Complete requested forms
7. Notify the catechist if their child has any medical problem such as diabetes, asthma, allergy, etc. that may require special attention.

Curriculum

In order to fulfill our mission, St. Nicholas is adopting the **Whole Community Catechesis** philosophy. Whole Community Catechesis is a concept where by we understand that we continue to learn and grow in our faith through adulthood with the very core of that learning stemming from liturgy and the Eucharist.

Pre-school through Kindergarten will participate in Whole Community Catechesis learning groups. These ages will be taught as a large group with several catechists leading different areas of the lesson. Each lesson will flow from the Gospel of the previous Sunday.

Small groups settings will be used by 1st -6th grades, but the lesson plan will follow the same flow as the PK-K grade group.

The Seventh Grade will begin class with scripture, but will follow their own program after.

The Eighth Grade confirmation class will begin class with scripture, and will follow with preparation for Confirmation.

The same theme will be taught for all grade levels at their level of understanding.

The textbooks, Catechism of the Catholic Church, and resources are tools that aid teaching about the love of Jesus through Holy Scripture. These catechetical materials are based on Scripture and the St. Nicholas of Myra Religious Education Mission Statement. Weekly classes, all grades, will hear and discuss the gospel from the preceding Sunday.

The following is the scope & sequence, Pre-school through Grade 8, for Faith Formation:

Grade PK- Overview

"Faith First Legacy Edition" series is based on a firm foundation containing three essential elements: BELIEFS, STORY, and CELEBRATION. "Faith First Legacy" provides a balance between doctrine, scripture, and the liturgical year with individual emphasis on each but integrated into the whole.

The DOCTRINES or BELIEFS taught in *Faith First Legacy* are drawn from the four pillars of faith as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Creed, Worship and Sacraments, Morality, and Christian Prayer.

In *"Faith First Legacy"* the SACRED SCRIPTURES /STORIES are the heart of Christian life. Through God's word we are nourished and revitalized. Scripture stories are included in each lesson. Children will grow in knowledge and love as they deepen their faith and their relationship with Jesus.

In *"Faith First Legacy"*, the LITURGICAL SEASONS/CELEBRATIONS are taught to their fullest. The liturgical year is a cycle which provides the opportunity for children and parents to reflect weekly on God's presence with us throughout time and history. Chapters include lives of saints of today and canonized Saints.

These important teachings are developmentally presented to each grade appropriate for their learning level. While similar material is presented each year it grows in maturity with the children.

"Faith First Legacy" and the family have the opportunity to partner with catechists in this teaching process. Each chapter includes a chapter review which can be discussed and shared at home, and "Faith First" makes available a web site www.FaithFirst.com with many resources and activities.

Grade 7 *Acension Press "Theology of the Body for Middle School"*

Grade 8 **Preparation for Confirmation** *Liguori "Confirmation for Teens" and "Welcome to the Way - Quest"*

Guidelines for Sacramental Preparation:

To be enrolled in the First Communion class a child must also have gone through the first grade program; and to be enrolled in the Confirmation class a child must have also have gone through, at least, the 7th grade program (in addition to having prepared for and received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Eucharist). It is preferable for a Confirmation Candidate to have participated in a continuous program of Faith Formation.

Reconciliation/Eucharist

Parents are responsible for preparing their child to receive the Sacraments of *Reconciliation* and *Eucharist*. The programs are family-based and are structured to assist parents in carrying out their sacred duty and privilege. Parents and children are expected to participate in a retreat day designed to assist them in preparing for First Reconciliation and another to assist them in preparing for First Eucharist. The Heartland Parishes of Ellis County and Holy Family Elementary will host these retreats together. (See "Faith Formation Calendar" for dates and times.)

Confirmation

The Sacrament of *Confirmation* is normally received by youth in the ninth grade or older who have participated in an ongoing faith formation program. Candidates are expected to attend classes regularly, participate in pre-Confirmation retreats, participate in Holy Thursday Mass, attend Lenten Seder Meal and be involved in church and community service. To ascertain whether they have sufficient information and are freely choosing to receive the sacrament, they are asked to participate in an interview. Parents are expected to attend a parent session in the fall.

(See “Faith Formation Calendar” for dates and times.)

Other Helpful Information:

Emergency Procedures

Fire and *Tornado Drills* will be held annually. The catechist will follow the procedures as stated in the “Emergency Plan” posted in their respective classrooms.

In case of accident or injury parents will be notified.

In the event that bad weather cancels or causes early dismissal by the public school district, there will be no Faith Formation Classes that evening. Notice of cancellation due to bad weather will also be announced on KJLS, KAYS and KHAZ.

Medical Forms

Medical forms should be updated annually in case an emergency should arise. We are required to have a medical form for each child enrolled in the Faith Formation Program.

Field Trips, Service Projects or other event off the premises

The necessary permission forms will be given to parents/guardians for their signature before these activities take place.

CYO and Jr. CYO

Regular High School CYO meetings will be held on the first, second & third Sundays of the month. Students will be encouraged to participate in the annual Diocesan Convention and put their “faith into action” by participating in service projects, retreats and other planned activities.

The Jr. CYO will regularly meet monthly. Watch the bulletin for meeting schedule and monthly newsletter. Students will be encouraged to attend the summer camp sponsored by the Diocese.

Complete and return this page to the CRE

Receipt of Handbook Form

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the St. Nicholas Religious Education Handbook.

Signature _____

Date _____

Discipline Policy Form

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Discipline Policy as described in the Parent Handbook (page 3).

Parent Signature _____

Student(s) Signature(s) _____

Date _____

