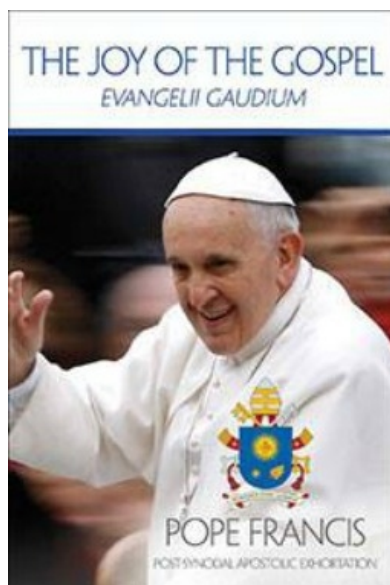


“Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adult which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systemic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.”

National Directory for Catechesis



“On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you’” (Para. 164).
Page 22 Unleash the Gospel.

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL PARISH

Religious Formation Department

1160 Penniman

Plymouth, MI 48170

Parish House Office: 734-453-0326 FAX: 734-416-9257

olgcparish.net/religious-ed

olgcparish.net/catechists

Updated 9-13-21



RELIGIOUS FORMATION DEPARTMENT

CATECHIST HANDBOOK

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**NOTE: ALL RELIGIOUS FORMATION
CATECHISTS, AIDES, & VOLUNTEERS MUST
COMPLETE ALL SAFE ENVIRONMENT
REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO TEACHING.**

<https://www.olgcparrish.net/safe-environments/>

Prayer to Unleash the Gospel

God our Father, you have called us
to be witnesses to Jesus
and have commissioned us to lead
all people to encounter him.
Send your Holy Spirit
to enlighten our minds
so that your will may be clear to us and that we may
accept it.

Dwell within our souls
and make our hearts your own.
Transform us into a band of
joyful missionary disciples
embracing the fruits of Synod 16
so as to share the good news
of Jesus Christ in Southeastern Michigan
through joyful
evangelization and service.

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle
in them the fire of your love. Amen.

Saint Anne, pray for us.



SUPPORT & SERVICES

One of the greatest fruits of being a catechist is that you will see and hear Jesus through the eyes of your students. Your faith will deepen along the way. Disciple-making is about accompanying and engaging those you teach in what a difference Jesus our Good Shepherd has made in your life and is making in theirs. Being a catechist is a vocation; a vital mission of our Church.

Support and services provided to you are:

- Reimbursement for supplies you purchase (try to limit to \$50). If need to go over this, speak with DRE.
- File folders for your students to check attendance.
- Ongoing support of DRE, RF team and Admin. Assistance.
- Catechist 2-Day Professional Development and enrichment nights.
- Ordering of supplies for you at specified times during year.
- Catechist Resource Landing Page at olgcparish.net/catechists
- Supplies for your classroom.
- Students' folders for communication to parents.
- OLG Parish pays for your catechist formation topics.
- All Catechists and RF Leadership Team - RF Tuition is waived. This does not include retreat fees for students.
- Volunteer support if needed for special projects.
- In cooperation with our catechists, we assure all children return to their parent/guardian safely and will call family to follow up.
- Arrange for a substitute if needed when the catechist has not been able to arrange one from our sub list.
- Keep track of classroom supplies – advise if running low.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goal of catechesis is the formation of disciples. Catechesis comprises six fundamental tasks that should be incorporated in all efforts: 1) Promote knowledge of the faith, 2) Promote knowledge of the Liturgy and the Sacraments, 3) Promote moral formation in Jesus Christ, 4) Teach the Christian how to pray with Christ, 5) Prepare the Christian to live in community and participate actively in the life and mission of the Church, 6) Promote a missionary spirit to be present as Christians in society (National Directory for Catechesis, pgs. 59 – 63).

To be successful as a catechist it is important that you set goals and objectives for yourself and your students keeping the above paragraph in mind. View goals in this way: 1) Goals are broad, objectives are narrow, 2) Goals are general intentions, objectives are precise, 3) Goals are intangible, objectives are tangible, 4) Goals are abstract, objectives are concrete.

The acronym SMART helps us understand that goals should be:

- **Specific / Measurable / Attainable / Relevant / Time-bound**

This upcoming year a personal goal example may be to develop a deeper relationship with Christ by attending daily mass once a week. A goal for your classroom may be to teach your students how to pray by assigning a “prayer leader” each class. Please write one personal goal and one goal for your classroom here. We will round back on this during the school year.

Personal Goal: _____

Classroom Goal: _____

WELCOME

The Religious Formation Team has one desire in mind for you and the children you teach – to encounter the Living Christ. Pope Francis, in *The Joy of the Gospel*, invites all Christians to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ. This is our hope, prayer, and goal which aligns with our parish vision to *offer everyone a life changing encounter with Jesus*.

How this goal is achieved is twofold. First, we know well that parents are the first and primary catechists of their children. What does it mean to be the primary catechist? Pope John Paul II referred to the family as the “domestic church.” In other words, our students’ homes are the heartbeat of faith; the place where God’s love and teachings are lived out every day. Every moment can be a teaching moment. Your mission as a catechist is to continue to bring students to Christ, and Christ to students. Second, looking through the lens of encountering Christ, every lesson, prayerfully guided by the Holy Spirit, can breathe with openness to change and grow along with the faith of your students. The AOD Religion Curriculum, inspired by *Unleash the Gospel*, is our anchor as we root our methods in its Encounter, Grow, Witness model. Movement and learning centers within the classroom are vital.

If you are asked, like sometimes we are, if Religious Formation programs, sessions, retreats, and other offerings are mandatory, our mindset is... Life happens. The unexpected can be expected; this we know well. Yet, if this question has to be answered let our answer be; if parents desire their children to have every opportunity to be formed in the faith and to encounter Christ, then the answer is clear to see. Catechist’s involvement with all of our offerings is vital and welcomed; you help all that we do lead to success and bear great fruit for the Kingdom.

It is our privilege to journey in the faith with each and every one of you, along with the students you catechize. We look forward to serving with you on the road ahead. Thank you for your “YES”!

On Mission for Christ,
Sandy O’Shaughnessy, MAPM
Director of Religious Education

Evangelization & Catechesis

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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FIRST RECONCILIATION/COMMUNION COORDINATOR

Lyndsey Osterholt.....734-453-0326 ext. 226

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YOUTH MINISTER (GRADES 6 – 8)

John Zylka.....734-453-0326 ext. 255

EMAIL: zylkaj@olgcp parish.net

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Kate Shortal.....734-453-0326 ext 225

EMAIL - shortalk@olgcp parish.net

BEST TIME TO CALL: Tuesday - Thursday: 9am - 3pm

PROGRAM HOURS:

CONNECT: Wednesdays - 6:45PM – 8:00PM

EDGE: Tuesday nights - 6:45pm - 8:15pm

BECOMING CATHOLIC: Thursday nights - 6:30pm - 8:30pm

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD: Tuesdays 5pm - 6:30pm

SPECIAL NEEDS: Varies based on the needs of families.

LESSON PLAN FORMAT

	WEEK
FOCUS QUESTION:	
ENCOUNTER <small>INTRODUCE STUDENTS TO JESUS</small>	
GROW <small>LEARN SOMETHING NEW</small>	
WITNESS <small>CREATE A CALL TO ACTION - A WAY FOR STUDENTS TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHERS</small>	

LESSON PLANNING

When lesson planning please consider the following:

- Pray first. Intentionally set time aside to pray before you plan your lessons asking the Holy Spirit to guide and direct you. Always begin class with prayer.
- Use the *Encounter, Grow, Witness* Lesson Plan format (this does not apply to Catechesis of the Good Shepherd except for using this format to follow up with parents what the children learned in the atria)
- Create a beautiful prayer space that your students help to prepare every class. Read from your Bible or a special class Bible.
- Incorporate movement and Encounter, Grow, Witness learning centers/stations into every lesson.
- Invite a priest to be a guest presenter in your classroom on several occasions. Schedule them at the beginning of the school year.
- Please speak no more than 10 - 15 minutes at a time. Your students should be engaged, and verbally contributing to the class more than the catechist.
- Our testimonies are important for the students to hear. We are wired from birth to listen to stories. Seek windows of opportunity in your lesson planning to share age appropriate and suitable personal faith stories.
- Share ideas and brainstorm with other catechists. Catechist Enrichment Nights will be collaboration time. Exchange emails with other catechists.

INTRODUCTION

The mission and ministry of catechesis is to “bring about in the believer an ever more mature faith in Jesus Christ, a deeper knowledge and love of his person and message, and a firm commitment to follow him” (*National Directory of Catechesis*).

Hence, we strive to:

- Encourage others to have a friendship with Jesus and be His disciple.
- Support parents and children to grow in faith together.
- Challenge parents to participate in ongoing faith formation.
- Recognize the gifts and charisms we all possess.

The tasks of catechesis are in promoting:

- Knowledge of the faith.
- Knowledge of the meaning of liturgy and the sacraments.
- Moral formation and living in Christ.
- A life of prayer and virtue.
- A sense of community where all are welcome.
- Mission and service.

Expectations of Catechists:

- Daily prayer.
- Catechists are representatives of OLGC and the Catholic Faith; attire, language, behavior are to model our virtues.
- Begin every class in prayer.
- Have a commitment to share your faith with your students.
- Desire to share and grow in your own faith.
- For your students to see the Face of Jesus through you.
- Arrive prepared 30 minutes before class begins.
- Follow the Encounter, Grow, Witness lesson plan format; creating movement and engaging lessons.
- Convey the truths of the Catholic faith; raise any questions about lessons to the DRE.
- Teach Circle of Grace at the beginning of the school year.
- Pursue completion of Catechist Formation Topics.
- Participate in Fire & Tornado Drills as they occur.

CIRCLE OF GRACE

Parents are given an “Opt Out” form if they do not desire their child to receive this instruction. During the lesson, an “opt out” student will remain with RE staff until lesson ends.

Parents of students who are absent from the lesson receive a follow-up letter and brochure with direction to teach their child about the Circle of Grace at home.

Below is a brief outline of what a Circle of Grace lesson plan conveys to the students.

Grade Lessons

Kindergarten: What is the Circle of Grace?

Activity - The Stoplight: Feelings Touch and Secrets Safety Plan

1st Grade: What is the Circle of Grace?

Activity - The Stoplight: Feelings Touch and Secrets Safety Plan

2nd Grade: What is the Circle of Grace?

Activity - The Stoplight: Feelings Touch and Secrets Safety Plan

3rd Grade: What is the Circle of Grace?

Activity - Boundaries and our limits of our Circle of Grace Action Plan

4th Grade: Internet Safety

5th Grade: Understanding the Influence of the Media on our Circle of Grace

6th Grade: Circle of Grace: Pieces of the Puzzle, Safe Relationships: Putting the Puzzle Together, Boundaries: Every Piece has its Border, Safety PLAN: When Something Doesn't Fit

7th Grade: Saying "No" to Disrespect: Honoring

Activity - Everyone's Circle of Gracer

8th Grade: How to be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture

ATTENDANCE & SAFETY

AOD Requirements: The Education Department of the Archdiocese of Detroit requires a minimum of 30 hours of religious education per school year. Taking attendance is required of the catechist.

- The catechist should contact parents of students who miss two consecutive classes with a “cc” to the DRE.
- Continued absences will be handled via the DRE. No more than 5 absences of a student are allowed. Repeated tardiness should be brought to the attention of the DRE.

Catechists who will be absent must first seek to attain a substitute. If this is not successful, please notify the RF office to attain assistance.

Classrooms will be opened 30 minutes before the start of classes.

Safe Environments: Catechists must have completed these requirements prior to teaching in class. All of this information can be found at:

<https://www.olgcparrish.net/safe-environments/>

- Review Safe Environment Policy found on parish website
- Sign Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Complete Protecting God's Children Workshop
- Authorize a Criminal Background Check

Texting: Under no circumstance should a catechist/core person text a student.

Guest Policy: All parents and guests to the classroom need to sign in at the check-in desk before proceeding to the classroom.

First Aid: Please assign a “helper” student to accompany a student needing assistance to the check-in desk. A first aid kit with Band-Aids and other supplies is kept on hand. For emergencies in the classroom, please use the classroom walkie talkie, call an RF Staff Person, and if severe emergency, call 9-1-1.

Snacks: must be approved by DRE, abide by allergy concerns, and all parents notified.

Expectations of a catechist (continued from page 4):

- Establish a "Classroom Covenant".
- Review special notations on class roster (allergy, ADD, ADHD, etc)
- Provide all documentation as required by the AOD and OLGC
Catechist Application form, copy of front and back of baptismal certificate, certification classes taken.
- Refrain from anything that could be viewed as humiliating / ridiculing.
Offensive language toward students or parents is never permitted.
- Comply with Safe Environments Policy for OLGC and AOD.

Be able and willing to complete these normal classroom administrative tasks:

- Modify classroom tables and chairs to configuration needed for your lesson plan, and clean-up before departing.
- Take attendance precisely (write "A" for absent).
- Maintain an updated class list and have a copy at home.
- Distribute materials.
- Develop a parent email list and communicate weekly with them.
NOTE: Copy DRE on all emails to parents.
- Oversee arrival and dismissal of students.
- Arrange for a substitute if needed.
- Keep track of classroom supplies – advise if running low.
- Turn in receipts for items purchased with your name and address on it for reimbursement.
- Invite clergy to teach a brief lesson.
- Catch students "doing good" and offer positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Follow "1 – 2 – 3" approach to discipline.
- Share with DRE and concerns.

The Expectations of a catechist aide:

- Daily prayer.
- Support the catechist.
- Help encourage positive behavior and choices.
- Participate in classroom discussions.
- Collect materials for classroom as necessary.
- **Arrive at least 10 minutes before class begins.**
- Request or make necessary copies, projects, etc. well in advance.

CIRCLE OF GRACE

CIRCLE OF GRACE

Circle of Grace is the approved safe environment training program for elementary and high school students enrolled in religious education in the Archdiocese. The goal of the Circle of Grace program is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.

Circle of Grace is the love and goodness of God that surrounds us and all others. It is the recognition that God is with us always and is there to help us in difficult situations. Through the Circle of Grace Program, catechists assist children to recognize God's love by understanding that each of us lives and moves within a Circle of Grace.

The Circle of Grace program teaches children and young people to seek help from a trusted adult, reinforcing God's presence in their real life struggles.

Every catechist is required to incorporate a Circle of Grace lesson plan (provided by RE Office) into a classroom session at the beginning of the school year and write the date on attendance sheet.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We provide a safe environment for our students in which positive experiences and the most fruitful learning setting is established. The purpose of discipline is not punishment but to help a child become a contributing class member by catching them “doing good” and reinforcing positive behaviors and choices.

Here are things to be aware of as an OLCG Catechist:

- If a student is struggling after positive encouragement, catechists please practice 1 – 2 – 3 way of discipline. This means #1 Redirect behavior, #2 Verbal Warning, #3 student sent to check-in desk and parents notified. If further disciplinary actions are needed, a plan will be decided upon between DRE and parents (parent attending the class is an option).
- Catechists please communicate issues to DRE.
- Parents are required to notify the RF office if there are any special needs of their students; see the detailed class roster.
- Catechists should create and display the “Class Covenant” in collaboration with your students. These should be written on a chart and displayed during class time. Tying expectations into Virtues is encouraged. Examples are:
 - Only one person speaks at a time.
 - Respect and listen when someone is speaking.
 - No bullying (name calling, picking on someone, etc.)
 - Pay attention.
 - Keep your hands to yourself.
 - No cell phones.
 - Keep your area clean.
 - “Bio Breaks” - all take a break and use the restroom.
 - All are expected to clean up at end of class.
- Students are expected to:
 - Be polite and respectful toward staff and students at all times.
 - Speak positively; no abusive or insulting language.
 - Have NO cell phones, electronics in classroom.
 - Be attentive to classroom rules and to not leave classroom without permission.
 - Arrive to class prepared for their lesson.
 - Complete missed work as assigned.