A Holy Ground of Loving and Learning

St. Columba Parish Religious Education

Catechist Handbook

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OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. Monday – Thursday in the Convent Building

CLASS HOURS:

Grades 1-5: 4:30-6:00 PM Tuesday and Thursday, St. Columba Religious Education
9:00-10:30 AM Saturday - St. Columba Religious Education

Grades 6-8: 6:30-8:00 PM Tuesday, St. Columba Religious Education
6:15-5:45 PM Wednesday, St. Columba Religious Education
4:30 – 6:00 PM Thursday – St. Columba Religious Education
9:00 – 10:30 AM Saturday – St. Columba Religious Education

I.   INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Religious Education and Spiritual Formation is a foundational and vital part of parish life. The goal is the proper formation of both children and adults in the rich tradition of the Roman Catholic faith, including essential doctrines about the Triune God and the Person of Jesus Christ, the study of Sacred Scripture and Church History, enhanced understanding of the Mass and Sacraments and a deepened sense of personal prayer, liturgical worship, sacramental preparation and a life of communal service and mutual support. The entire parish community, including not only children, but also clergy, religious, parents, youth, entire families and single adults are encouraged to participate.

Policy of Non-Discrimination:

The guidelines followed by the Office of Religious Education reflect the Church's core belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, discrimination based on age, race, gender, national origin, disability, or marital status (except as it affects one's status as a practicing Catholic) is prohibited. The Office does, however, reserve the right to act on the basis of its religious principles regarding the acceptance of volunteers as well as the supervision of their various activities.

II.CATECHISTS

A. The Role of a Catechist

The purpose of a catechist is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and cooperate with the Holy Spirit by providing the appropriate context for spiritual, intellectual and moral growth. Such growth may take place in a variety of programs and locations.

The six fundamental tasks of a Catechist are to:
1. Promote the knowledge of the Roman Catholic Faith
2. Direct moral formation
3. Provide liturgical education
4. Teach various forms of prayer
5. Educate for community life.
6. Initiate into a life of mission.

The Catechist is essential to the mission of the parish. As stated in the General Directory for Catechesis:

No methodology, no matter how well tested, can dispense with the person of the Catechist in every phase of the catechetical process. The charism given to Catechists by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life constitutes the soul of every method. **Only his/her own human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other catechetical instruments.**

B. Requirements for Acceptance as a Catechist or Catechist Assistant

The applicant must be a practicing Catholic who is faithful to, and living a life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Because catechists serve primarily as role models for their students, it is extremely important that they have a strong personal prayer life, attend Mass faithfully, frequent the sacraments, and participate in retreats and study whenever possible.

C. Opportunities and Responsibilities Outside of the Classroom

In addition to the classroom teaching experience detailed in Part III, the applicant should be willing to do the following:
1. Participate, at no cost, in the Archdiocesan Catechetical Formation Program, a series of classes offered throughout the county throughout the year. (See Level I and Level II Topics in the Appendix.)
2. Attend orientation sessions for new catechists offered in September
3. Attend 2 faculty meetings (1 at the beginning of each semester).
4. Attend the annual Archdiocesan Catechetical Congress in the fall when possible.
5. Spend 2-3 hours each week preparing for class, using the lesson plan outlines and class calendars provided, Catechist editions of the text, other supplementary materials and the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis.*
6. Know and abide by the directives and the leadership of the pastor and his appointed catechetical director.

D. The Application Procedure:

All volunteers, including prospective catechists, substitutes, classroom assistants, and office aides, **must** complete an application form requesting information on the applicant's religious and educational background along with two references and complete an Authorization & Disclosure Form for a Background Check. The disclosure of previous termination or conviction of a criminal offense is required by the Archdiocese. An interview then takes place between the applicant and the Director/Coordinator or designated assistant. At this meeting, the Director/Coordinator will review the form, ascertain the readiness of the applicant and provide the applicant with such additional information as is requested. Applicant will be selected by the Director, but must receive final approval by the Pastor. Upon acceptance the volunteer must take the prescribed "SAFER SPACES" Seminar provided free of charge by the Archdiocesan Office of Safe Environment. This seminar is offered online with a backup copy on DVD.

E. Orientation of New Catechists

Prior to the beginning of classes in September, morning or evening orientation sessions are required for new catechists. These workshops provide the opportunity to meet other new and experienced catechists, obtain detailed information about the program, learn about the certification process and share any lingering concerns. At this time the new catechist will familiarize him/herself with the classrooms, other parish facilities and available instructional resources. Specific topics covered during these sessions include:

1. The Person of the Catechist and his/her Call
2. The Nature of Evangelization and Catechesis
3. Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis
4. Classroom Management and Discipline
5. Lesson Planning and Student Learning Styles

F. Responsibilities of the Catechist

Some of the responsibilities associated with the catechetical ministry include:

1. Planning and Preparation:
    a. Knowledge of long-range goals and short-term teaching objectives. Catechists are provided with a teaching calendar by the grade level coordinator at the beginning of the year to assist with long range planning.
    b. Familiarity with the Archdiocesan Guidelines and the student text.
    c. Weekly written or electronic lesson plans which include the review of previous material, presentation of new material and reinforcement of both.
    d. Ordering and use of audio-visual resources and additional supplies to supplement material covered by the text. REQUESTS FOR DUPLICATION should be sent to stcolumbareled@parishmail.com: Indicate the following information NAME OF CATECHIST, DATE NEEDED, NUMBER OF COPIES NEEDED
    e. Preparing questions for discussion.
    f. Assigning homework to reinforce the class lesson. (life practice, reflection, devotions, exploration of the arts, reading, critical thinking, research)
2. During Class:
    a. Creating a joyful, caring Christian learning environment
    b. Witnessing the Gospel by word and example.
    c. Developing a faith community.
    d. Manifesting an attitude of enthusiasm for learning.
    e. Fostering an attitude of mutual respect and understanding.
    f. Helping students to become creative, cooperative and self-disciplined.
    g. Guiding students to apply knowledge of their faith to life situations.
    h. Setting high expectations and encouraging individual growth.
3. Evaluation and Reporting:
    a. Administering oral or written tests provided by the text and/or the Office.
    b. Learning the individual student's background insofar as it relates to his or her faith development, health and learning needs, and classroom behavior.
    c. Monitoring and evaluating student growth on a weekly and semester basis.
    d. Addressing academic, attendance and/or behavioral problems and, when necessary; referring these matters to the Director or appropriate Coordinator.
    e. Completing report cards for the close of each semester (Lesson 15 and Lesson 30) and preparing progress reports as needed.
4. Catechists should inform the office about any planned or unplanned absence as soon as possible. Catechists should engage the help of parents to serve as substitutes and should also

elicit the help of family members, friends or fellow catechists when substitution is necessary. An additional list of substitutes can also be obtained from the office.

G. Professionalism

As religious educators entrusted with the sacred task of handing on the Faith, catechists are expected to reflect their role appropriately by their appearance and, most importantly, by their respectful, gracious demeanor. Record keeping should be neat, accurate and timely. It is absolutely essential that **all personal information about students and staff be kept confidential at all times.**

H. Inappropriate Behavior or Unsatisfactory Performance of a Catechist.

The Director/Coordinator reserves the right to consult with the catechist regarding inappropriate behavior or unsatisfactory performance in the classroom. Whenever possible, the staff will work with the catechist to modify behavior and/or improve performance. There may be situations that warrant a written account and notification to the pastor.

I. Reasons for Dismissal of a Catechist

If unacceptable behavior or substandard performance persists, the Office may dismiss the catechist or other volunteer from further service. Allegations of child abuse result in immediate suspension and must be reported to the Director, who, in turn, must inform the Pastor, the Regional Catechetical Office and the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. Additional grounds for dismissal include:

1. a lifestyle in serious violation of Catholic moral values
2. inability to manage and control a class effectively (with pastoral skill, not aggression)
3. failure to adhere to the *Archdiocesan Guidelines* or grade-level curriculum
4. continuous resistance to the directives and guidance of the pastor, director or coordinator
5. excessive absences, frequent tardiness or last-minute cancellations
6. generally negative or divisive behavior
7. physical, mental or emotional incompetence

J. Catechist Formation

The Bishops of New York have mandated that all catechists in the Archdiocese should actively pursue certification. The *General Directory for Catechesis* states that:

> "Catechesis needs to consider, as it primary task, the preparation and formation of Catechists in the deep riches of the Faith . . . The quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel. The instruments provided for catechesis cannot be truly effective unless well used by trained catechists. Consequently, Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists."

K. Catechetical Sunday

Catechetical Sunday is celebrated nationally on the 3rd Sunday of September at a scheduled Mass to honor those about to embark on a year of catechetical ministry. All catechists are commissioned by the celebrant and recognized by the congregation. **All catechists are expected to attend the Mass celebrated for this purpose in order to receive the prayerful support and recognition of the parish they serve.** The date of the celebration in the local parish will be determined by the pastor in consultation with the Director.

L. Catechetical Forum
A Catechetical Congress is an annual Archdiocesan or Regional event that brings together all those involved in catechesis. This day-long Saturday program is held in the northern and southern sections of the Archdiocese and includes Mass, catechetical workshops, prayer and exhibits of various catechetical publications and resources.   Catechists who have served the parish for at least a full year, abiding by the standards indicated in this handbook, may attend this conference. When possible, the parish will cover this expense for eligible catechists. Application forms are available from the Parish Office of Religious Education. Carpools can be arranged as needed.

M. Catechist Certification
Catechist Certification is a two-stage process by which catechists acquire and refresh their basic knowledge of the Faith and the catechetical principals needed to communicate it to others.

LEVEL I consists of the following online courses offered by Fordham University:

AN INTRODUCTION TO CATHOLICISM
This course will introduce students to the multifaceted nature of Catholicism in a historical framework. Students will be introduced to key concepts such as the meaning of faith, the nature of revelation, the analogy of faith, the concept of social salvation, and an awareness of the Church as a "mystery." In short, the course will help students to see the connection between their lives as Catholics and a God who uses history as a form of communication, who becomes incarnate, and who forms a sacramental community of faith.

UNDERSTANDING THE CREED
Students will be briefly introduced to the historical context behind the creeds before turning to consider the articles of the creed. The lectures will follow the Catechism's treatment of the 12 articles of the Nicene Creed, with some particular care in addressing the issue of the final judgement.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SCRIPTURE
This course will introduce students to basic concepts that are necessary for reading Holy Scripture. The students will learn how the books of scripture were comprised, the various types of scripture, and how the early Church chose books for inclusion in the Bible. The relationship between Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and in the life of the individual believer will be treated in the latter part of the course.

UNVEILING THE SACRAMENTS
This course will explain the meaning of a sacramental worldview and its significance for human happiness. Students will receive a brief history as to the development of the seven sacraments and particular instruction on the history and spiritual significance of each sacrament. Particular attention with be paid to baptism and Eucharist.

MORAL AND SOCIAL TEACHING
Students will be introduced to a Catholic understanding of what it means to be human and how to reach fulfillment or happiness in life, which the Catechism sometimes refers to as beatitude. The course will cover how the Church understands conscience, sin, virtue, and the common good. Students will learn key distinctions such as the difference between an act being immoral and being sinful.

TRINITY AND CHRISTOLOGY
Trinity and Christology are fundamental aspects of the Catholic faith, but they can be difficult for modern people to grasp. This course will explain why these doctrines developed as they did and will point to their spiritual significance. While part of the course will cover the major councils that developed these doctrines, it will also show how our understanding of Christ and the incarnation has adapted to cultural conditions in the past. Students will learn the difference between high and low Christology and hoe they are both legitimate ways of understanding Jesus Christ, which can be useful for both evangelization and catechesis.

In addition to the above courses, the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education will offer live Spirituality and Methodology workshops. These topics are:

> **The Person of the Catechist and his/her Call**
> **The Nature of Evangelization and Catechesis**
> **Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis**
> **Classroom Management and Discipline**
> **Lesson Planning and Student Learning Styles**

LEVEL II courses include the following:

REQUIRED COURSES: Live workshops offered by the Archdiocese

(8 hours)

1. Old Testament	2. New Testament

ELECTIVE COURSES
(8 hours)
CHOOSE ANYTHREE ELECTIVE COURSES

1.Contemporary Moral Issues	4. Christology	*Parish Catechists Only*
2. The Church in the Modern World	5. The Apostles' Creed	8. Special Religious Education
3. Prayer and Worship	6. Multi-Cultural Catechesis	

At the completion of each course, an attendance slip (blue - Level I, or pink card - Level II) signed by the instructor will be issued. This card MUST be submitted to the Parish Office of Religious Education so that the information of completion can be recorded in each catechist's professional file.

In addition to the requirement to attend the above-mentioned workshops, classroom observation, a subsequent conference and written evaluation are also required. (For a copy of the required workshops for Level I and Level II certification, see the appendix.) When the requirements for Level I and/or Level II are completed, copies of the application for certification, the record of attendance and the written classroom evaluation are forwarded to the Regional Office, which

grants certification for five years. Once Level II Certification is achieved, catechists may file for renewal by participating in a variety of catechetical formation events that fulfill the requirements.

In addition to certification, all catechists are strongly encouraged to seek **ongoing formation** (spiritual and educational development) on an individual basis. Additional opportunities at varying levels of difficulty, commitment and cost include the following:

1. Parish Adult Education Opportunities: Several times a year qualified instructors come to the parish and offer courses for adults on such varied topics as dogma, morality, spirituality, church history and the Bible. These are free, but pre-registration is generally requested for planning purposes.
2. The New York Catholic Bible School: The Archdiocesan Catechetical Office and the Center for Spiritual Development co-sponsor 2 and 4-year sequences of in depth Bible study. The commitment is a serious one. There are textbooks, tuition and fees, homework and tests. New classes begin each September. Further information is posted at www.nyfaithformation.org.
3. The Institute for Religious Studies, located at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, offers Master's to qualified applicants.
4. Many opportunities for individual retreats and days of prayer are available throughout the Archdiocese at various times of the year. These are posted at www.nyfaithformation.org.

N. Classroom Observations and Written Evaluations

Classroom observations and written evaluations of all catechists by the Director/Coordinator take place during the first year and, at the discretion of the Office, annually thereafter. The catechist is notified at least a week in advance of the observation. The observer will note how the concepts were explained, what materials were used, how closely the written lesson plan was followed and the quality of the interaction between the catechist and his or her students. The observer will then note commendable aspects of the classroom experience along with any recommendations for improvement and suggestions for implementation. Soon thereafter, the Director/Coordinator and catechist meet to discuss the written evaluation. Once reviewed and signed, a copy is given to the catechist and the original is placed in his or her file.

THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

A. Supervision of Students:

The catechist is responsible for all students assigned to him/her from the time of their entry into the classroom until they are dismissed. Since supervision is both a mental and physical act, the catechist must be attentive to the various needs of the students in addition to being physically present. The catechist should:
1. Arrive 15 minutes early to set up the classroom with needed displays and material.
2. Greet students as they enter the classroom
5. **NEVER** leave the classroom unattended.
6. Monitor the absence of students when they need to leave the classroom. They should never be gone more than a few minutes.
7. For grades 1 – 5: release students to parent or designated adult at dismissal time.
8. If the student is being released early, only do so when the child is called to the office; **NEVER** release the child early unless the child has been called to the office by office staff. This guarantees supervision and documentation of early dismissal.

If an emergency occurs, such as catechist illness or student accident, call the office (ext. 20 or 26) on the classroom phone or send a messenger to the office for immediate assistance. In extreme cases, send the entire class to another supervised classroom. In all cases of emergency, it is important that students remain calm, quiet and, preferably, in their seats.

In case of a FIRE or fire drill, students are to proceed to the fence-line adjacent to the A&P leaving the building according to the map and instructions (see appendix) in the catechist's attendance folder. **The entire class should practice the drill during the 1st or 2nd week of class.** Silence and order are essential in this matter. Catechists must take their attendance folders with them and check attendance once outside the building. Report any missing children immediately to the Director or Coordinator.

In case of a SAFETY EMERGENCY or safety drill, the catechist is responsible to be familiar with and follow the procedures stated on page 11 of this Handbook.

Be aware that the St. Columba Religious Education periodically conducts fire and safety drills.

B. Confidential Information:
The Director/Coordinator will inform each catechist on the printed student roster regarding any student who has special needs which can affect the teaching or learning environment, such as: medical conditions, allergies, physical or learning disabilities, custody issues, etc. Such information **must be used with discretion and kept strictly confidential.**

C. Curriculum:
The St. Columba School of Religious Education conforms to the Guidelines for Catechesis developed by the Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York. The themes, objectives and appropriate prayers for each grade level are found in these Guidelines. Because it is considered more important than the children's textbooks, a copy of these Guidelines is available to each catechist online at www.nyfaithformation.org. It is a valuable resource that should be checked frequently, to determine whether required concepts are, indeed, being covered.

It is important to keep in mind that our program is designed to assist parents in their sacred responsibility to educate their children in the Faith. It complements, but can never replace, parental obligations, for "Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children." (National Catechetical Directory)

D. Doctrine:
Because catechists are commissioned to teach the truths of the Catholic Faith, they should never offer their personal opinions about matters of faith or morals. If uncertainties arise, the Director/Coordinator or clergy should be consulted.

E. Student Evaluation:
1. Homework is encouraged because it reinforces classroom learning and provides opportunities for independent study, creative thinking, life application, prayer and service.
2. Testing, whether oral or written, should take place on a regular basis. Whether short and informal surprise quizzes or lengthier unit tests, the objective is to monitor student growth, group progress and the overall effectiveness of the teacher.
3. Report Cards are distributed at the end of each semester (after the 15th lesson and at the 30th session). Their purpose is to communicate to the parent a student's individual strengths and weaknesses. A sample is found in the Appendix.

4. Notice of Concern forms are available in the office. These should be used as needed to notify the parent/guardian of attendance, behavior or academic problems. See sample in the Appendix. Alternately, an e-mail can be used for this purpose. The director/coordinator must be copied on such an e-mail.

If a child has not fulfilled grade level requirements at year's end, a meeting takes place with the parents, the catechist and the Director/Coordinator to determine the appropriate course of action. Prior documented communication with the parents should be copied to the Director throughout the year so that all concerned parties are aware of the ongoing difficulties.

F. Lesson Planning:
To assist the catechist in planning the lesson, the catechist is provided with the following:
· The Catechist Manual for the text used on that grade level (student text is imbedded in manual)
· Electronic copy of the Archdiocesan Guidelines/Resource (www.nyfaithformation.org)
· Supplementary materials for the grade level at www.webelieveweb.org, parish website www.stcolumbaonline.org (Catechist resources), the general internet, and books available in the school office
· The teaching schedule for the school year

A lesson plan is a guide for the catechist and the key to a successful classroom experience. When deciding upon a lesson plan, the catechist determines what experiences and activities will best communicate to the students the desired aim and learning objectives. It also gives a sense of the overall flow of things and helps to budget time.
A good lesson plan includes:
1. The focused Aim of the particular session: What are the students learning for this class? and the objectives: What will the student know, understand, and be able to do?)
2. Directions for the various activities (How will the learning, understanding and action happen?)
3. Prayer related to the lesson.
4. A list of materials and resources needed to promote the objective.
5. Some form of assessment to determine whether each objective is met.
Because lesson planning is so critical to the success of the class and the program, lesson plans are required each week. A weekly electronic e-mail report to the parents summarizes the weekly lesson may substitute for the written form of the lesson plan. The Director of Religious Education should be copied on the e-mail sent to the parents. Blank electronic lesson plan outlines are provided on the parish website page with the lesson plan schedule. Each week, the catechist is to prepare a lesson plan prior to class. Catechists are strongly encouraged to share a summary of the class with the parents by using e-mail.
Time for attendance, announcements and prayer or Bible reading should always be budgeted into each lesson plan. A connection to the Mass, the great prayer of the Catholic community should also be made. At the end of class, the catechist should note what changes should be made for next year and provide an honest self-evaluation of the lesson. Sharing with colleagues and the Director is encouraged for purposes of mutual growth, assistance and encouragement.

Tips for Lesson Planning:
1. Look ahead. Preview the Guidelines and the entire textbook to get the "big picture" for the year and to see how much time there is to accomplish your goals. Get a sense of how one lesson builds on the previous one and lays the foundation for the next. Most textbook companies provide a scope and sequence chart in the teacher text outlining the course at each grade level and sequencing the topics.

2. Get to know your primary resources. Besides the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis and the student/teacher text, supplemental material is available for every grade level. Bibles, posters, videos, rosaries and other sacramentals, and many craft supplies are available in the office along with The Catechism of the Catholic Church, which can be used as a reference. Outstanding resources can be found at www.nyfaithformation.org as well as on the parish website under Religious Education: Catechist Resources.

3. Examine the Teacher's Notes in the Instructor's Manual (Teacher Text). These are the beginning catechist's best friend, for here the lesson is laid out like a blueprint, and step-by-step instructions are offered.

4. Visualize yourself teaching the lesson. Practice using your imagination to teach specific concepts and/or to experience various classroom situations.

5. Make adjustments to fit your particular class. Your class may not be ready for a specific concept or the recommended method of teaching it. Be flexible and make the necessary adjustment.

6. Remember your goals and objectives. It is crucial that you know the purpose of your lesson. Goals and learning outcomes should be stated concretely and in measurable terms, i.e. When do you know a student has learned something?

7. Have materials ready. If supplies, videos or copies are needed from the office, please call the office a day in advance to ensure your request or, complete a Teacher Request Form (see appendix). When leaving a telephone message, be very specific about your request, stating your name, grade, day, and room number along with your phone number.

8. Have " Plan B" ready. Remember copy machines break down and staff absences occur. Decide on alternative ways to communicate the goals and objectives of the lesson in case your plan isn't working. Also, in case the lesson needs to be shortened due to unforeseen circumstances, decide in advance what portions can be eliminated or delayed until the following week.

Classes without the direction of a lesson plan become vulnerable to boredom, discipline problems, lackluster performance and poor participation. Also, unchallenging lessons have a similar effect. Maintain high standards.

Reminders for Lesson Planning:

1. A lesson plan is an instructional "road map." There are many routes to the destination, any one of which may be the most appropriate on a given day with a particular group.

2. Beginning catechists tend to stick too rigidly to a designated plan. Remember that the Holy Spirit is guiding your lesson, so feel free to let the Spirit take over with His plan.

3. Don't feel duty bound to cover every point in exact order.

4. Never teach without a plan. It is easy to forget or become confused in front of a group of children!

5. Attention spans of individuals and classes as a group vary widely. Adjust your methods accordingly. Over-plan to avoid dead and wasted class time at the end.

6. You must be comfortable with your own teaching style. Do not attempt to imitate the catechist next door or his/her lesson plan.

7. Be honest in your evaluation of the lesson, as the Director/Coordinator will be particularly interested in finding out what worked and what didn't.

8. It is OK not to know all the answers to the questions your students ask. They will respect you more if you research the answer and "get back to them" next week.

9. Expect the unexpected. Your calm demeanor will be reassuring to your class.

10. Keep your sense of humor.

11. Invite the parish priests and deacons to your class.

H. Seating Plan
Classroom seating plans (see appendix) are <u>required</u> for all grade levels. Blank seating charts are provided in the attendance folder. Such charts are of great importance to substitutes, but also provide a sense of order and consistency, assist in the early identification of each student, and provide an important reference should an incident arise over the misuse of the room or lost articles. This plan can be challenged by the rearrangement of seats by the daytime teacher. Be flexible.

I. Attendance Roster:
Catechists should take attendance as soon as the bell rings. The Attendance Roster (see appendix) should be <u>completed with blue or black ink</u>; <u>corrections should be made in red ink</u>. This is a legal document and must be accurately maintained.

J. Class List:
Catechists are supplied with a class list (see Appendix) at the beginning of the school year. This will be updated as needed. The catechists should keep the list at home so that they have it for reference, if the parent/guardian needs to be contacted. The Office will not give the catechist's phone numbers to any parent/guardian.

K. Early Dismissals:
Always begin the class promptly (at the bell). Children arriving late may disrupt the beginning of class somewhat, but waiting for them will only encourage future tardiness. Consistent tardiness should be noted and addressed. Make certain to record the attendance of the tardy child before returning the attendance roster to the office, i.e. no blank spaces on the roster. Whenever possible, the teacher assistant should deal with the tardy child, giving him or her any needed materials or instructions.

Occasionally a child needs to be dismissed early. Prior notice to the instructor is helpful for planning, but not required. The parent or designated representative must come to the office and sign the child out. The office will then call the child from class via the PA or in person.

L. Restrooms and Water Fountains
Parents should be encouraged to attend to these needs prior to class. Students should not leave the classroom unless the need is urgent. The classroom assistant should accompany children in the afternoon and morning classes to the bathrooms (Grades 1 – 5). In the older grades (6 – 8), do not dismiss more than one student at a time to use the bathroom otherwise there is likely to be delay and trouble while outside the class. Expect students to report back to class in three minutes.

M. Discipline
The Gospel values of charity, kindness, honesty, respect, sharing and obedience to legitimate authority should be exhibited in the classroom at all times. No violence, prejudice, abusive words or inappropriate behavior, language or tone should be employed or tolerated.

A well-organized catechist and a well-prepared, skillfully executed lesson plan are the best defense against poor student behavior, but situations will invariably arise which force the catechist to take disciplinary action. To minimize such instances, the following guidelines may prove helpful:

1. Establish rules during the first class and adhere to them consistently. For instance, remain in seats (unless the activity calls for leaving seats), no throwing of objects, one person speaks at a time, and respect everyone.

2. Students should bring only textbooks, homework assignments and items assigned by the catechist into the classroom. Any additional items will only prove to be a needless distraction and should be held by the catechist and returned at the end of class.

3. Get to know the students' backgrounds, especially any family, peer or social influences that may be affecting behavior. Private discussions with parents or the Director/Coordinator may prove helpful here.

4. Affirm good, or improving, behavior, and use minor misbehavior as a positive "teachable moment" whenever possible.

5. No physical discipline (corporal punishment) or verbal humiliation is permitted.

6. Serious or persistent problems should be referred to the Director/Coordinator. Any student sent to the office should be accompanied, preferably by a Catechist assistant, who can provide information about the situation. Alternately, use the phone in the classroom. Dial 20 or 26.

N. Classroom Maintenance

Nearly all classrooms are used by others the majority of the time, so there will be many items, projects, etc. which are "off limits" to the children in the School of Religious Education. Please remind your students to respect the property of others with whom they share the room, desk, etc. If you choose to rearrange classroom furnishings, return them to their original locations. This includes putting chairs on desks, closing windows and locking the door. Classrooms should be left in the same conditions that you found them. Art project material and debris should be cleaned up. The recycle bin is for paper only. Electronic equipment may be used but this equipment should be used with great care. The catechist is responsible for its good maintenance. Any difficulties should be reported in writing to the Parish Office of Religious Education.

O. Safety

1. **Fire**
    - Alarm pulled
    - Know the exit plan for your room (see appendix)
    - Class exits designated doors, meets at fence-line by the supermarket
    - Assistant at beginning of line, Catechist at end
    - Attendance folders and room key should be taken, attendance checked
    - Administrative Assistant checks designated rooms and hallway
    - Evacuation through emergency windows in classrooms if needed
    - Alternate location for prolonged evacuation and/or pickup is at the Church
    - Electronic system will notify parents as to where to pick up students

2. **Medical Emergency**
    - CPR person and/or 1st Aid will be notified by general announcement that help is needed in a specific room
    - Classroom coverage will be taken care of by an announcement to a specific catechist for assistance in the affected classroom
    - Removal of students to another location may be made by office personnel.

3. **Body Fluids**
    - Messenger should be sent to office to notify that help is needed
    - Gloves should always be worn when assisting

4. **Unauthorized Persons In the Building**
   - Class room doors should always remain locked
   - Lights should be turned off
   - Children should be moved to hallway side of classroom and be seated on floor
   - Catechist should await further instructions (cell phones should be silenced: text messaging will be used)

5. **Unauthorized Persons Outside of Building**
   - Blinds should be down completely covering the windows
   - Children should be moved to the window side of the room and seated under the windows out of view
   - Lights should be turned off
   - Catechist should await further instructions (cell phones should be silenced: text messaging will be used)

6. **Fight in School**
- Situation should be handled in classroom by catechist but the office **MUST** be informed
- Messenger should be sent to office or to adjoining classroom if assistance is needed

7. **Weather Emergencies (while class is in session)**
- Snow or Icy Conditions: Announcement will be made electronically to parents by the office staff.
- Tornado/High Wind: Children should be moved into hallways away from windows. Children are to be seated on the floor against wall.
- Power Outages: Classes will remain in session until dismissal. Directives for dismissal will be communicated.

8. **Communication**
   - All information to parents regarding any emergency will be handled through the Religious Education office and through the Pastor. Catechist should not speak to any media person.

9. **Emergency Information**
- Emergency information and medical needs for each student and catechist is highlighted in the electronic data base and partially on the form in the Attendance folder.
- Parents are required to re-register and update information each year.

P. Safe Environment Student Sessions
Each year the students must receive instruction regarding Safe Environment. These lessons are specific for grade levels. Lesson Plans for these sessions can be found on the internet posted on the parish website: www.stcolumbaonline.org. Look at the top of the page indicated for Lesson Plans. These lessons must be completed before Christmas. (Specific dates are given on the Religious Education Calendar.)

Q. Legal Issues
Remember to keep all information confidential. Information will be provided to the catechist as deemed necessary. Further information is available in the office concerning Archdiocesan policies.

R. Blood Borne Pathogens
Catechists must take all precautions necessary when dealing with blood and body fluids. Office and maintenance staff should be informed so that appropriate cleaning can be done. Further information can be found in the Appendix.

APPENDIX

CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM FOR CERTIFICATION
LEVEL ONE
(The topic titles in parenthesis indicate the topic name before 1997)

SPIRITUALITY: Live workshops offered by the Archdiocese

Christian Prayer and the Catechist (6 hours)
1. The Call to be a Catechist *(Vocation to the Catechetical Ministry)*
2. Christian Prayer *(Nature & Role of Prayer in the Catechetical Ministry)*
3. Faith and Discipleship *(Formation of Faith)*

THEOLOGY: Online through Fordham University

UNDERSTANDING THE CREED
Students will be briefly introduced to the historical context behind the creeds before turning to consider the articles of the creed. The lectures will follow the Catechism's treatment of the 12 articles of the Nicene Creed, with some particular care in addressing the issue of the final judgement.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SCRIPTURE
This course will introduce students to basic concepts that are necessary for reading Holy Scripture. The students will learn how the books of scripture were comprised, the various types of scripture, and how the early Church chose books for inclusion in the Bible. The relationship between Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and in the life of the individual believer will be treated in the latter part of the course.

UNVEILING THE SACRAMENTS
This course will explain the meaning of a sacramental worldview and its significance for human happiness. Students will receive a brief history as to the development of the seven sacraments and particular instruction on the history and spiritual significance of each sacrament. Particular attention with be paid to baptism and Eucharist.

MORAL AND SOCIAL TEACHING
Students will be introduced to a Catholic understanding of what it means to be human and how to reach fulfillment or happiness in life, which the Catechism sometimes refers to as beatitude. The course will cover how the Church understands conscience, sin, virtue, and the common good. Students will learn key distinctions such as the difference between an act being immoral and being sinful.

TRINITY AND CHRISTOLOGY
Trinity and Christology are fundamental aspects of the Catholic faith, but they can be difficult for modern people to grasp. This course will explain why these doctrines developed as they did and will point to their spiritual significance. While part of the course will cover the major councils that developed these doctrines, it will also show how our understanding of Christ and the incarnation has adapted to cultural conditions in the past. Students will learn the difference between high and low Christology and hoe they are both legitimate ways of understanding Jesus Christ, which can be useful for both evangelization and catechesis.

RELIGION TEACHING SKILLS (10 hours) **: Live workshops offered by the Archdiocese**

1. Guidelines and Culture in Catechesis:	Part One: using the Guidelines
	Part Two: appreciation of cultural differences
2. The Learning Environment:	Part One: components of an effective teaching environment
	Part Two: positive discipline, an indispensable ingredient
3. Planning a Lesson	Part One: how to plan a lesson
	Part Two: ways in which students learn
4. Understanding the Student	Part One: ages/stages of development in students
	Part Two: meeting the needs of the special child
5. Media and Values	Part One: significance and use of media in teaching
	Part Two: effects of media on the formation of values

LEVEL TWO CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

REQUIRED COURSES: Live workshops offered by the Archdiocese

(8 hours)

1. Old Testament   2. New Testament

ELECTIVE COURSES

(8 hours)
CHOOSE THREE ELECTIVE COURSES

1.Contemporary Moral Issues   4. Christology   *Parish Catechists Only*
2. The Church in the Modern World   5. The Apostles' Creed   8. Special Religious Education
3. Prayer and Worship   6. Multi-Cultural Catechesis

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT CARD
ST. COLUMBA RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Hopewell Junction, New York 12533 - 845 221-4900

DIRECTOR: Sr. Marie Pappas, C.R.
SUPERVISORY ASSISTANT: Linda McMahon
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS: Mrs. Michele Cassieri, Bernadette Bode

1. Parents have the moral obligation to see to the religious education and spiritual formation of their children. We, at St. Columba School of Religion, are pleased to partner with you. Together we can raise up a new generation of Catholic leaders. We ask you, therefore, to examine this report.

2. Please know that the parish Director and your child's Catechist are willing to have you contact them about your child.

3. Please give your child the example of your own lived faith and encourage your son or daughter to worthily receive Our Lord in Holy Communion each week at the Saturday evening or Sunday Mass. The Sacrament of Reconcilaition is available each Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

4. Kindly sign this card and have the pupil bring it to the next weekly class.

Name of Student: _____ **Grade:** ☐ **DAY OF WEEK:** _____

Catechist: _____ **Room:** ☐ **Teacher Contact Info:** _____

ATTENDANCE:

First Term: 15 SESSIONS	Second Term: 15 SESSIONS
☐ Number of Sessions Student was **PRESENT**	☐ Number of Sessions Student was **PRESENT**
☐ Number of Times Student was **LATE**	☐ Number of Times Student was **LATE**
☐ Number of **EARLY DISMISSALS**	☐ Number of **EARLY DISMISSALS**

CONDUCT	**EFFORT**	**ACHIEVEMENT**
Students are expected to be on time, be present for the entire session, be respectful and attentive.	Students are expected to try their best, seek help when needed, be participative and complete homework.	A specified body of knowledge, understanding, and practice of the Catholic faith is required at each grade level.

1st TERM	2nd TERM		1st TERM	2nd TERM		1st TERM	2nd TERM	
☐	☐	**VERY GOOD**: All the requirements above have been met.	☐	☐	**VERY GOOD**: Student seems to be working to capacity.	☐	☐	**VERY GOOD** (90-100) knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith
☐	☐	**GOOD**: Most of the requirements above have been met.	☐	☐	**GOOD**: Student is achieving but is capable of better work.	☐	☐	**GOOD** (80-89) knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith
☐	☐	**FAIR**: Improvement is needed in meeting the above requirements.	☐	☐	**FAIR**: Student is not applying best effort.	☐	☐	**FAIR** (79-70) knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith
☐	☐	**POOR**: A meeting is necessary to discuss problems.	☐	☐	**POOR**: There is little or no effort evident.	☐	☐	**POOR** (69-60 or lower) knowledge & understanding of Catholic faith

SCHOOL YEAR _____ **TO** _____ ☐ Student **IS** promoted. ☐ Student **IS NOT** promoted.

1ST TERM: PARENT SIGNATURE

_____

2ND TERM: PARENT SIGNATURE

_____

St. Columba
School of Religious Education
P.O. Box 368
Hopewell Junction, NY 12533
(845) 221-4900

<u>NOTICE OF CONCERN</u>

___ Attendance   ___ Behavior   ___ Academic

Student _____   Date _____

Grade ____ Day ____ Room ____ Catechist _____

Comments/Reasons: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____   _____
Catechist Signature   Date

Please return this form to the Office of Religious Education.

_____   _____
Parent's Signature   Date

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LESSON PLAN FORM

LESSON PLANNING: CCC, SCRIPTURE, & ESSENTIALS

DOCTRINE

SCRIPTURE: TEXTS AND STORIES

THE HOLY TRINITY

LITURGY

TOPIC:

AIM:

JESUS CHRIST

OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES	ACTIVITIES

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

LIFE IN CHRIST

FOR MEMORIZATION

THE CHURCH

PRAYER

HUMAN DIGNITY

LESSON PLANNING REFERENCE

LIFE EXPERIENCE
- Which of my students' life experiences will I draw upon to encourage their enthusiasm and to explain this lesson?
- Should I use the life experience in the textbook?

FAITH DEVELOPMENT
- What is the Archdiocesan Guidelines Faith Development (Core Doctrine) for this lesson?
- What is the Teachers' manual Faith Development?
- In my own words, describe the faith development (ie. church doctrine, Bible lesson, tradition, church law, etc.) I will teach.

SACRED SCRIPTURE
- What are the Archdiocesan Guidelines and Teachers' Manual References for Sacred Scripture?
- Do I wish to use any other Bible references?

PRAYER AND WORSHIP
- What is the NY Archdiocesan Guidelines and Teachers' Manual suggestion for Prayer and Worship?
- What prayer experience will I share with my students? What special intentions should we remember to pray for? Should I include reference to any Holy Day or Church Season? How does this lesson relate to this Sunday's Mass?
- What prayer do I want to review or teach?

FAITH RESPONSE (CHRISTIAN LIVING)
- What is the NY Archdiocesan Guidelines Christian Living Response (Lived Faith Response for this Lesson?)
- What lived Faith Responses do I expect from my students and how will I encourage and motivate this lived response?

TEACHING METHODS:

What teaching methods will I use and how will I use these methods?

___ Bible Reading and Reflection	___ Demonstration
___ Examining a basic concept	___ Activity
___ Memorization	___ Project
___ Drama	___ Game
___ Reading	___ Story Telling
___ Art	___ Music
___ Discussion	

Other _____

TEACHING MATERIALS

What teaching materials will I use and how will I use them?

___ Textbook	___ Video
___ Bible	___ Film
___ Activity Book	___ Powerpoint
___ Information Sheets	___ Audio file
___ Worksheets	___ Musical Recording
___ Blackboard/Whiteboard	___ Posters
___ Posters	___ Pictures
___ internet	___ Guest presenter

OTHER _____

HOMEWORK

What homework assignment will help my students and their families to better understand and live Christ's message?

Something to think about _____

Something to write about _____

Something to do _____

Something to review _____

CATECHIST'S PERSONAL EVALUATION

To be filled in after teaching the lesson:
- Did I accomplish the aim of the lesson?
- Did I teach with conviction and enthusiasm?
- Did I emphasize the main point of the lesson?
- Did I hold the attention of the students? If no, why?
- Did the students seem to grasp what I communicated?
- What could I have done better?
- Did a problem arise that needs to be addressed? Whom do I consult?

TEACHER REQUEST FORM

TEACHER REQUEST

Teacher: _____

Grade: _____ **Day:** _____ **Room:** _____

Request: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

No. of copies: _____ **Date Needed:** _____

Thank You!

SEATING CHART

Back of the Room

Front of the Room

WINDOWS
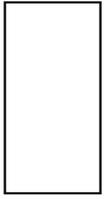
SAMPLE ATTENDANCE

Do not leave any spaces blank.
  Absent = A
  Tardy = T
  Present = X
  Excused = E
  Early Dismissal = ED

If you receive an excuse note, use a RED pend to change the A to an E. All changes to attendance sheets MUST be made in RED pen.

Class Attendance

Class: 6-09   **Session:** TE   **Room:** 09

Student	Sep 09	Sep 16	Sep 23	Sep 30	Oct 07	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 04	Nov 18	Dec 02	Dec 09	Dec 16	Jan 06	Jan 13	Jan 20
Canavan, Christopher	X															
Coppola, Blase	X															
DiMarino, Gianna	X															
Kalanz, Danielle	X															
Mahoney, Sean	A															
Mahoney, Kelly	X → to TE Rm 10															
Mauro, Thomas	X															
McLaughlin, Tyler	X															
Monahan, Alyssa	X															
Murray, Jake	A															
Passarella, Stephanie	X															
Rispoli, Brandon	X															
Sclafani, Sofia	X															
Uguna, Danny	X															

CATECHIST EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD

St. Columba Religious Education / Hopewell Junction, NY

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

In Case of Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Doctor _____ Phone _____

Hospital Preference _____

Medications _____

_____

_____

Important Medical Information for Emergency Personnel (drug allergies, previous medical conditions, etc.)

FIRE DRILL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make sure you know the exit and the route to take. Be sure the students are familiar with the exit route also.
2. At the sound of the alarm, close all windows, shut off the lights, and leave the room quickly and quietly. Teachers take your **ATTENDANCE FOLDER** with you.
3. The last person to leave the room closes the door of the classroom.
4. **WALK IN SILENCE** and single file along the wall to the nearest exit.
5. Walk to the basketball hoops by the Rectory.
6. Teachers should then take attendance to see if all children have cleared the building. If someone is missing, contact D/CRE on duty.
7. Wait in **SILENCE** for the "all clear".
8. Return to the building in **SILENCE**.

Unscaled St. Columba Floor Plan
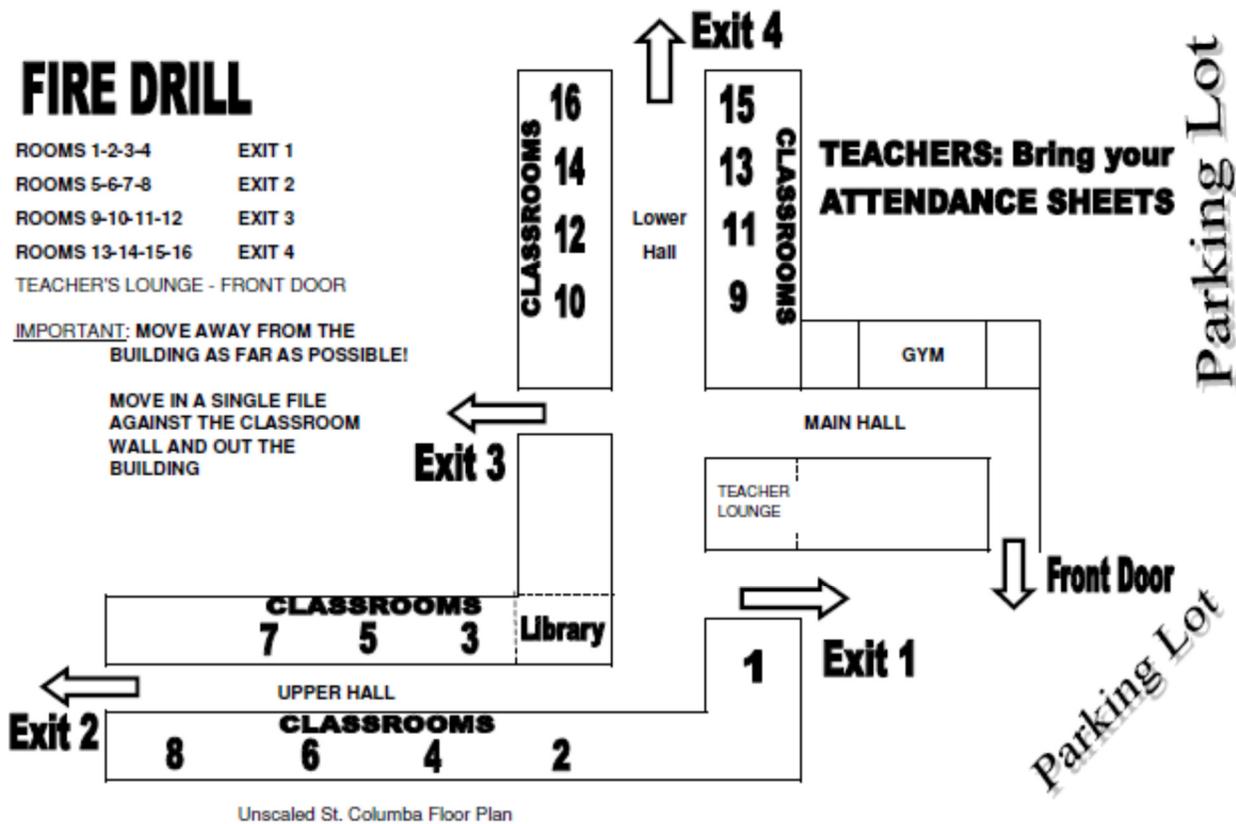
SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLANS

Go to website: www.stcolumbaonline.org
Click on "Religious Education"
Look for Lesson Plans in the drop-down menu
SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLANS ARE ON THE TOP OF THE PAGE. THERE ARE
THREE DIFFERENT LESSONS: ONE FOR
PRIMARY GRADES (1, 2, 3)
MIDDLE GRADES (3, 4, 5)
JUNIOR HIGH GRADES (6, 7, 8)

BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
FOR
CATECHISTS

Catechists/Teachers should always direct or help an individual involved with a blood/body fjuid incident to care for him/herself with minimal contact to the staff person. However, there are stiuations when you will need to intervene and provide assistance that requires contact. Therefore, you should always implement a barrier between yourself and the individual in need of assistance, using clean materials or latex/vinyl gloves. In most instances, you should not be expected to clean up the blood/body fluid spill or the environment. Appropriate custodial staff should be called for clean-up.

When a teacher or volunteer needs to intervene and implement "universal precautions" they do so from an informed, voluntary response under the "Good Samaritan Act" and using prudent public health protective procedure.

1. If an accident involving a blood spill occurs, the individual should be encouraged to tend to his/her own injury. For example, if a student has a bloody nose, hand him/her the tissues and instruct the student to pinch nose. If a student has a bleeding injury (cut, abrasion) hand him/her clean paper towels to hold over the injury. If this is not possible provide assistance using a barrier between yourself and the individual.

When providing assistance:
    a. Wear disposable latex gloves and use disposable towel/tissues for each injury.
    b. any blood stained materials should be placed in a sealable plastic bag.
    c. Remove gloves following proper procedures.
    d. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water using Hand washing procedures.

2. Keep students away from area of blood/body fluids still, cover with paper towels until area is cleaned and disinfected. Call the catechetical leader or parish staff immediately for clean-up.