

Guidelines for Catechists

- † Report to classroom at **5:45pm**. Pick up your bin in the hallway and bring it to the classroom with you.
- † **Read the newsletter.** It starts with prayer and addresses the ongoing special events.
- † Greet the children as they come in and **assign them a seat**. Seat children according to the seating chart you make out before class. Talk to the students to find out how their week went, give them something to draw, or have them write/draw in their journals.
- † **Attendance:** You or your aide may take attendance.
 - Please only write the following on the Attendance Sheet:
 - Write a “P” for each present student.
 - Write a “A” for each absent student.

***Please do not circle or write on the attendance sheet with any other markings than listed as the office will do this to note which parents have been in touch.

Your aide or a student should must **bring the attendance sheet to the office before 6:10** pm so Absent Calls can be made in a timely fashion to ensure student safety.
- † Get the children started on their **JOURNAL** Entries for the night.
- † Prepare the children to join in **STOP, DROP, & PRAY** as the School of Religion prays together over the PA system.
- † On the first night of class, go over the Classroom Covenant and have the children sign it. Post it on your display board as a reminder to the students and refer to it often.
- † Please follow the discipline policy in our handbook. **Do not hesitate to send a student to the office after being corrected numerous times.** It is the DRE’s job to help children adjust to the loving atmosphere of their classroom.
- † Follow your lesson plan. Make sure you have picked up all necessary material from the office for any projects. Vary your teaching techniques in order to help all types of learners.
- † If you have any problems or questions please come and see me or call after class time.
- † Have the children push in their chairs and clean their area. Close with the breaking open of the Word. The Sunday readings will be listed on your newsletter. You, your aide, or a student can read scripture and then share on it. Send the children off for the week with a blessing.
- † All children must be escorted to the door. If you have an aide, they should escort the children single file in an orderly manner to the front door. If you do not have an aide, you must escort the children to the door in an orderly manner. Before leaving the classroom, please make sure it is left just as you found it.
- † Always invite your students to attend Mass and tell them you will be looking for them to say hello and pray with them!
- † All children must be escorted to the bathroom by your aide. Middle schoolers will sign the Bathroom Sign Out sheet.

School of Religion Goals for Church Behavior and Reverence.

To facilitate the process of working on these guidelines, we are asking all who are involved in the formation of our children to concentrate on a setting goals each time the students are in church for liturgies and special services.

Reverence in Church: A Holy Place Where Christ is Present

Goals for the year:

- Goal #1: Blessing with Holy Water when arriving
- Goal #2: Genuflecting as a class toward the tabernacle
- Goal #3: Kneeling in prayer to begin the Experience
“Jesus, I am here in your presence. I am ready to do your will.”
- Goal #4: Quiet and appropriate behavior at all times
- Goal #5: Responding when appropriate
- Goal #6: Prayerful participation
- Goal #7: Singing using the Breaking Bread book
- Goal #8: Kneeling in quiet prayer to end the Experience; then remain seated
“Jesus, thank you for our time together. Be with me as I leave here today.”
- Goal #9: Blessing with Holy Water when leaving
- Goal #10: Orderly return to the classroom

- ❖ Communicate these goals to your students before each experience in church
- ❖ Develop a reward system for achieving these goals
- ❖ Create accountability with your students
- ❖ Model this behavior for your students

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is a very important part of any classroom. I hope the following will help you with any discipline problems you may have. The first thing to do is to establish clear guidelines and class rules. I would encourage that you do this in the first class you have with your students. This can be done by discussing what kind of behavior is expected from the students and how they are to conduct themselves when they are in class. Have the children dialog with you about the rules and guidelines and use as many examples as possible. Make sure they understand the guidelines and rules. From time to time they may have to be reminded of the rules and guidelines for their class. Have children go over their *Classroom Covenant* and sign it. We will respect our classroom, the teacher, fellow students, the building, the surrounding grounds, and myself.

Some rules that I found helpful:

1. Raise your hand if you want to answer a question or have something to say.
2. The desk you are at is not yours, please do not go into them or borrow anything from the desk.
3. Everyone has the right to express their feelings and opinions without being interrupted or laughed at.
4. Everyone should be treated with kindness.
5. Please collect all electronic devices, they are not allowed in class. Have your aide bring them to the office, and the student can pick up device after class.
6. If a student is caught texting a second time, take the phone away until after class.

The guidelines that I would like you to follow are:

1. The first time a child does not follow one of the class rules give them a verbal warning. Explain to them that they are not following the class rules and be direct about this.
2. The second time the child does not follow one of the class rules jot their name down on a piece of paper. Explain to them at the end of class what they have done that doesn't agree with the class rules and the next time a rule is not followed they will be sent down to the office.
3. The third time, send the student to the office, especially if the student repeatedly breaks the same class rule. The student and I will discuss what has happened and why they were sent to the office. The child will return to class and a note may be sent home to the parents.
4. If the student is sent down to the office and 2 notes have been sent home, the parent will be asked to accompany their child to class the following week.
5. Our aim is to show the love and forgiveness of Jesus to each student. Setting good boundaries in our class is a way to show our students respect.

Parts of the Mass

I Introductory rites

- A) Entrance Song (all stand)
- B) Greeting
- C) Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water (on some Sunday's this may take the place of the Penitential Rite)
- D) Penitential Rite (the priest invites us to recall our sins)
- E) Gloria
- F) Opening Prayer

II Liturgy of the Word

- A) First Reading (all sit)
- B) Responsorial Psalm
- C) Second Reading
- D) Gospel Acclamation
- E) Gospel (all stand)
- F) Homily
- G) Profession of Faith (all stand)
 - a) Recitation of the Nicene Creed
- H) General Intercessions

III Liturgy of the Eucharist

- A) Preparation of the Altar and Gifts (all sit)
- B) Prayer over the Gifts
- C) Eucharistic Prayer
- D) Memorial Acclamation
- E) Continuation of the Eucharistic Prayer
- F) Doxology and Great Amen
- G) Communion Rite (The Lord's Prayer)
- H) Sign of Peace
- I) Communion
- J) Period of silence or Song of Praise
- K) Prayer after Communion (all stand)

IV Concluding Rite

- A) Final Blessing
- B) Dismissal

LESSON PLANNING

1. PRAY - Ask God to open our minds and hearts and to guide our planning
2. We should call to mind the children in our classes and remind ourselves that we are doing God's work not our own.
3. SET A GOAL - Know precisely what you hope to accomplish. (Make it specific; we need to establish specific learning outcomes, referred to as objectives-statements that clearly articulate the specific expectations and outcomes of the lesson. The focus and goals must be on what the children are going to do.
For example, if we use the learning outcome, "the children will better appreciate the New Testament," it is too broad and vague. How will we ever know if we've succeeded? However, if we say what our learning outcome is, "the children will identify the four gospels of the New Testament," we have a precise statement that specifies what is to be learned.
4. Look at teacher's manual (or other curriculum materials) because it will spell out for you the possible ways you can achieve your goal. Most manuals offer a variety of ways to achieve learning outcomes-like the following: reading the text, writing, video viewing, praying, having panel discussions and lectures, playing games, making posters, drawing, listening to music, inviting guest speakers, doing projects, having group discussions, role-playing, journaling, taking field trips, storytelling, doing craft projects, and having contests.
5. Be careful what you select as an activity. If it doesn't help achieve a learning outcome, don't use it.
6. Give children very clear directions. Be prepared ahead of time to explain clearly to children what the learning outcome is and how it can be achieved. Write on the board your goals for your class that night. Go back to that goal and have them enter it in their journal.
7. Look at the Heart of the Matter. Thomas Groome, who wrote "Christian Religious Education," suggests that there are three key movements in every good religion lesson.
The first movement is where we Explore Life (Tell me what happened and why...").
The second movement is where we Share Tradition ("When I was your age..." or "Let me tell you a story...").
The third movement is where we attempt to Integrate Life and Tradition ("What did you learn from this experience/my story...?" or "So, how will you be different next time...?") These suggestions tell us to begin our lesson by focusing on experiences the children are having, and then relate those experiences to our Catholic tradition. Finally, we have to show children how to apply that tradition to their daily living and decisions. The bottom line is, **"What difference does this topic make in their lives and how can I help it make a difference?"**
8. Realistically estimate how long each segment will take with an eye toward "over planning." In other words, always plan a bit more than you need.
9. Always end the way you started-in PRAYER. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your planning. Bless your students and send them off to do God's will. This year we will bring more scripture into the class. Close by reading the scripture for the coming Sunday and sharing on that scripture.

The Effective Catechist: Managing A Classroom

Sister Carolyn Jost, SSND

The goal of classroom management is to free you to concentrate on teaching. Having the skills and techniques for running a classroom smoothly will allow you to be a more effective catechist. Research shows that 50% of classroom discipline problems can be avoided through careful planning.

WHAT IS A CATECHIST? To echo

THE CATECHETICAL METHOD: Like Jesus, the Master Teacher, we start with life experiences, listen to God's message and then apply God's Word to our daily lives.

RECOGNIZE LEARNING STYLES: The children in front of you will have a variety of learning styles. In preparing your lesson, you must provide for meeting the learning style needs of all the children in your room.

- ✓ Pointers: We learn by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and feeling.

RESPECT THE AGE OF YOUR LEARNERS: A part of your success will be to plan lessons that are appropriate to the age of your learners.

- ✓ Pointers: What are the particular needs of the age group in your class? How long can they sit and listen? What do they like to do?

WE LEARN BEST BY DOING: We remember 95% of what we do; we forget 95% of what we hear. How will this influence your lesson planning?

- ✓ Pointers: Plan some activity for every lesson. Read over every activity sheet that you give out. Never do an activity or project without doing it yourself first. Use an AV at least once a month (preview these). Children love games. Bible baseball, tic tac toe, etc.

YOU ARE THE LEADER: It is important that you approach your class with a confident, calm attitude. From the first day, you must take the leadership role in setting the tone for the classroom.

- ✓ Pointers: Children expect you to take charge. Children look to you to be firm, yet fair and consistent.

ESTABLISHING YOUR LEADERSHIP: One way to establish your role is to expect the children to listen while you are speaking. Start right from the first class to teach them how to listen. What you have to say is so important!

- ✓ Pointers: Wait for the class to settle down before speaking. Simply wait.... Never speak if the children aren't listening. Don't try to yell above the roar. Children can't do 2 things at once.

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS: Learn the names of your students quickly. Using assigned seating or name cards for the first 3 or 4 week will help you do this.

- ✓ Pointers: Assigned seating gives your control. Just saying the name of a disruptive student can often settle them down. Arrange the room so that you can see everyone.

RULES: Children need rules to feel safe and secure. Have 2 or 3 rules you want everyone to follow. Write these on a chart for all to see. Review these rules at the beginning of class for the first 3 or 4 weeks.

- ✓ Pointers: Explain rules in a clear, positive manner. Let the class know these rules are expectations for everyone for the good of everyone. Rules about raising hands before speaking and staying in seats until called upon are good rules.

ROUTINES: It is important to have specific ways of doing the routine things that need to be done each week. Establish routines during the first class and be consistent with them. This will be a real energy saver during the year.

- ✓ Pointers: Set patterns for entering the room, putting away coats, sharpening pencils, passing out papers, crayons, etc. Think through what you have to do and plan how you will do it.

PROCEDURES: If you are doing a special project, a game, going to Church or doing anything different, you must still plan all the details of how this going to happen.

- ✓ Pointers: Plan all the directions you will have to give ahead of time. The Church is here someplace....

PLANNING: There is no confidence booster like a well-planned lesson. Your manual is a great help, but feel free to add your creative ideas.

- ✓ Pointers: Be sure to allow yourself time to reflect on the theme of the lesson. Have a back-up plan (2 or 3 extra ideas). Everything you need for class should be set up before class begins.

FOCUS ON THE WHOLE: As the classroom leader, you must always keep your focus on the whole group. Never become so engrossed with one student that the rest feel you have lost contact with them.

- ✓ Pointers: Use your eyes to convey a message. Walk around the room. Stand next to a student who needs attention. Never say everything that is on your mind.

PRAISE WORKS WONDERS: An effective strategy is to praise those who are doing what you have asked. Shift attention to those who are co-operating with you. "I like the way you are listening." "Thank you for being so helpful."

- ✓ Pointers: Look for the good being done. Turn negatives into positives by using "do" instead of "don't" statements. Be sure that you are acknowledging each child in some way.

BUT WHAT IF: Let's say there is a student in your room who is acting out. First of all, remember that children act out because they are seeking attention.

- ✓ Pointers: Change seats, move them away from others. Win them over by giving them something to do (a message to the office) Ignore them. Don't over react. Talk individually with the student before class. Set up a contract with the student. Don't make negative comments, threaten, send child to the office. Do give a warning: the next time this happens, your parents will be called (do this privately, not in front of everyone).

TEACHERS ARE LEARNERS TOO: You will learn a lot this year. Some things you try will work, others will not. Even the best teachers have lessons that flop. If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek help.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU ARE DOING TO 'ECHO' THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST AS WE PROCLAIM THE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH.

LEARNING THEIR STYLES

How can you determine the learning styles of the children or teenagers in your class? There are many ways, of course, but perhaps the simplest is to observe how students use their senses. While most children use all of their senses as they learn, many of them seem to learn best through one particular sense. Educators and learning theorists seem to agree that there are three primary perceptual preferences (or learning styles) for most learners: **auditory, visual, and tactile.**

1. **Auditory Learners** prefer talking about a situation; express emotions verbally; enjoy listening, but cannot wait to talk; like hearing self and others talk; learn best through verbal instruction; move lips or sub vocalize when reading; remember auditory repetition; study well with a friend to discuss material.

Teaching tips: Sometimes tape your lessons and let auditory learners borrow the tape to listen to again or have them tape a class reading or class role play and spend time listening to them at home. Write key words or phrases from your lesson on index cards with definitions on the back. Have children review them by reading them aloud, repeating the definitions. Allow children to occasionally do oral reports instead of written ones. Finally, let auditory learners read aloud whenever possible.

2. **Visual Learners** prefer watching demonstrations; have intense concentration and ability to visually imagine information; remember faces but forget names; write down things and take detailed notes; doodle; find things to watch; look around and study their environment; facial expression is a good indication of emotions; quiet--do not talk at length; become impatient when extensive listening is involved; learn best by studying alone.

Teaching tips: Allow them to write things down, and invite them to compare notes with others in the class. Let them write key words or phrases on index cards with definitions or explanations on the back. Then use these cards to review with your class. Encourage them to highlight main facts in their textbook. Use graphs, pictures, charts and other visual aids that are available. Remember that learning from a lecture is not easy for visual learners, so summarize important concepts often for them and keep eye contact when possible.

3. **Tactile Learners** need direct involvement; fidget when reading and are not avid readers; remember best what is done, not what is seen or heard; images are accompanied by movement; easily distracted when not able to move; find reasons to move; express emotions physically by jumping and gesturing; do not listen well; try things out by touching, feeling and manipulating; need frequent breaks when studying.

Teaching tips: Allow children to experiment with ways of moving or holding onto something without disturbing the class; for example, crossing their legs, rolling a pencil between their fingers, squeezing a large rubber eraser, or doodling on a piece of paper. Also allow them to walk around during crafts or other activities if it doesn't disturb the class, and to take frequent breaks where possible. Let them act out words or biblical events with simple gestures that will aid their recall. Whenever possible, let them use graphic note-taking methods such as mapping or time lines, or invite them to write key terms in the air or with their finger on a desk top or table.

Remember that no one learning style is better than another in and of itself however, for individual learners, one particular learning style is always better than the others.

IDEAS FROM FELLOW CATECHISTS

- ✓ Plan to arrive early—15-30 minutes before your session begins. This will allow you time to organize your room, check materials, pray, and greet your students.
- ✓ Lots of class participation and discussion. Call on those who don't raise their hand.
- ✓ Be very present. Stand, walk around. Listen intently to your students' stories. Share your personal journey. Let the children see your humanness.
- ✓ Opening prayer service. Have children take turns planning it. Use your bible, candle, and cloth. Read a scripture story and reflect on how it applies in your life. Close with prayers—use prayer often.
- ✓ Cue cards-3X5 with questions on them. Children can play "Jeopardy" - always pertaining to lesson. Children love games. Be creative. Use flash cards with vocabulary words and definitions.
- ✓ Ask the right kinds of questions—There are two types! Comprehension, which checks how well the students have understood something, and discussion, which moves beyond the text and helps the students apply the lessons to their lives.
- ✓ Have children share, for a set time, one on one with a partner. Then bring back to whole group.
- ✓ Use old missalettes to explain mass. (These are on hand in the ORE office).
- ✓ Use the chalkboard. Outline briefly what you are going to cover during class, main theme.
- ✓ ***Be prepared. Preparation is the key.*** Catechists who take the time to be prepared have fewer discipline problems.
- ✓ Plan ahead for Advent/Lent/Easter
- ✓ Vary your exercises-read, discuss, art project, read again. Use journal to recap class. Allow children time to reason things out, also give children parts in the books, plays, or readings.
- ✓ Watch their body language—For a 6 year old, their attention span is usually about 6 minutes. For a 13 year old, it can be as much as 15 minutes. Use normal tone of voice.
- ✓ Stand silent, don't yell, flick lights to get students attention.
- ✓ Be very direct with instructions, caring and loving-say what you mean, mean what you say.
- ✓ Always start with a little review of the main points from last week.
- ✓ Talk to other catechists—Ask each other to share strengths and difficulties. Grade level meetings before class are required once a month. See your lead catechists for specific dates and times.
- ✓ Trust yourself—Remember why you volunteered. You were willing to share your faith and love for Jesus. Be confident in yourself. God would not ask you to teach if you weren't able to do it.

A BIRTHDAY BLESSING

To Prepare: Place a Bible on your prayer table (open to Paul's letter to the Philippians) and a lighted candle.

Catechist: Blessed are you, God of all creation.

All: Blessed are you forever.

Catechist: We thank you for the gifts you have given us, our God, especially for gifts of food and drink, for our homes and our families, and for all our friends. Today we especially thank you for our friend, _____ whose birthday it is.

Reader One: We thank you, God, for the gift of life you have given _____. We ask your blessing on _____ that she (he) might continue to honor and praise you by using the gifts and talents you have given her (him). We hope that she (he) will keep growing in age, wisdom, and grace--as Jesus grew.

Reader Two: _____, this is our blessing for you, taken from God's Word, the Bible: "We thank our God for you whenever we think of you.. .Our prayer for you is that you might have God's love in you so that you can make the best choices possible in your life. We pray that you will live a life of goodness and that you may always give praise and glory to God." The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Catechist: We thank you, God, for _____, and we ask your continued blessing upon her (him). (Invite all to extend their hands in blessing in the direction of the birthday person.)

Catechist: May you always have God's love in you.

All: Amen.

Catechist: May you always make good choices in your life.

All: Amen.

Catechist: May you grow in age, in wisdom, and in grace--as Jesus did.

All: Amen.

Catechist: _____ I now invite you to come forward, to receive a blessing of peace. (Make the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead while saying, "Peace be with you." Invite all the children to do the same.)