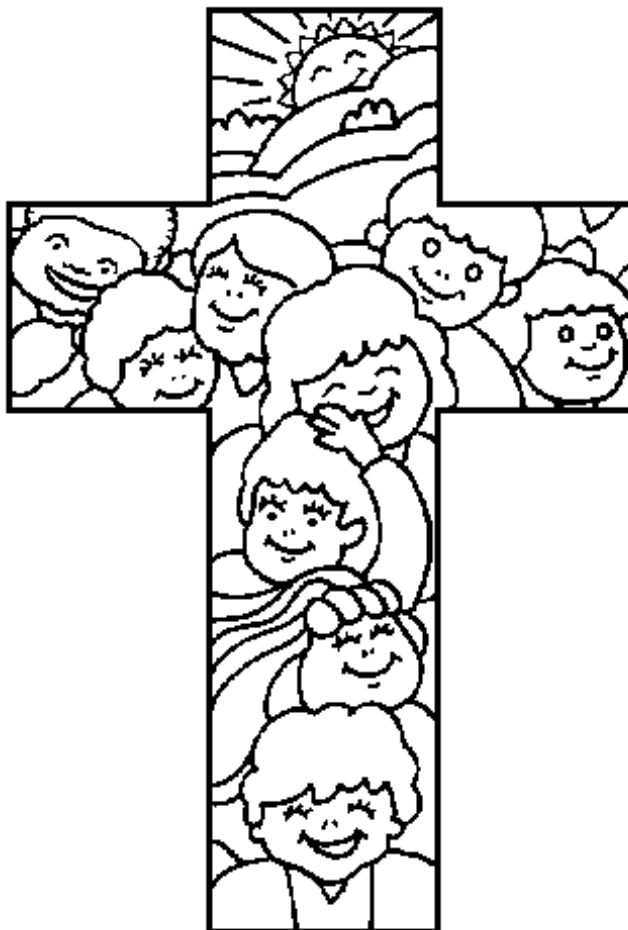


St. Francis Xavier Parish, Burbank
Office of Religious Education

Handbook for Catechists



"Let the children come to me...
for the kingdom of heaven belongs
to such as these." (Mt. 19:14)

Mrs. Rosie Roope
Coordinator of Religious Education
818-504-4411
E-mail - rosie.roope@gmail.com

Religious Education Website
<http://www.sfxfamilyprep.weebly.com>
Parish Website: www.sfxrccburbank.org

Dear Volunteer Catechists,

*May the Lord be with you as you work with the children and families you have so graciously agreed to serve. We thank you for your ministry.
God bless you.*

Lord God,
Source of all wisdom and knowledge,
You sent your Son, Jesus,
To live among us and to proclaim a message
of faith, hope and love to all.

In your goodness, strengthen us
With your gifts of the Spirit
That we may teach by word and example
The truth that comes from you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

As our late Holy Father Blessed John Paul II told us, "Each child is a precious and irreplaceable gift of God." And remember, YOU are also God's precious and irreplaceable child gifted by our Loving Creator with love, compassion, energy and talent beyond measure.

We are profoundly grateful that you have chosen to share your gifts as we all work together to share the gift of faith with the children of our parish family.

St. Francis Xavier Parish

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

We, St. Francis Xavier Parish Religious Education Program, strive to nurture and deepen the faith of our families through our commitment to faith-filled and family centered catechesis. Our mission is to make our Catholic faith come alive in the hearts, minds and actions of our children and their families. We share scripture, traditions, prayers, and along the way, prepare our children for their sacraments. Throughout, we seek to form a partnership with families connecting faith to the everyday lives of our children.

PROGRAM GOALS

Catechetical programs operate out of a clear set of goals that help everyone involved know what the program is striving to accomplish in a more specific way. The goals flow from the mission statement, make it more concrete and demonstrate how the mission statement is being implemented. The goals of the parish catechetical program are:

- Goal 1.** To provide a program of formal religious instruction for the children and youth of the parish.
- Goal 2.** To support parents in their role as primary catechists of their children.
- Goal 3.** To offer sacramental preparation for children as they become ready to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- Goal 4.** To help the children discover the richness and challenges of Scripture and the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.
- Goal 5.** To build a strong Catholic Identity among the children of the parish.
- Goal 6.** To give the children an experience of the Church as community.
- Goal 7.** To deepen the prayer life of the children.
- Goal 8.** To motivate the children to live lives rooted in charity and justice based on the moral teachings of the church.
- Goal 9.** To expose students to the liturgical and sacramental richness that is part of Catholic Tradition.

CATECHISTS

Persons who volunteer to be catechists in parish catechetical programs are assuming great responsibilities. Parents are trusting that catechists will responsibly assist them in nurturing the faith growth of their children. Catechists are responsible for providing an environment which nurtures the faith life of their students and which provides for their safety. In order to do this, it is crucial for all catechists to be aware of their responsibilities and have a clear understanding of their duties. This handbook provides information that will enable catechists to be aware of their responsibilities, perform their duties and minister effectively.

CATECHESIS

The Church has issued many documents that describe the ministry of catechesis. *The General Directory for Catechesis*, *The National Directory for Catechesis*, *On Catechesis in Our Time*, an encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* provide a framework for the ministry of catechesis for dioceses and parishes in our country and around the world. The following is a summary of the directives for the ministry of catechesis provided by Scripture and the Church and a clarification of how they help guide parish programs.

The ministry of catechesis must first of all be seen in the light of the mission that Jesus gave to the apostles after his resurrection.

"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28: 18-20 NAB)

John Paul II in *On Catechesis in Our Time* describes what is entailed in the ministry of catechesis.

"Catechesis is an *education in the faith* of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life." (#5)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes catechesis in the following way:

Catechesis aims at putting people ...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Trinity. (#426)

Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they may have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the Body of Christ. (#4)

The General Directory for Catechesis describes catechesis in this way:

Catechesis is one of the moments--a very remarkable one--in the process of evangelization. (63)

"Authentic Catechesis is always an orderly and systematic initiation into the revelation that God has given of himself to humanity in Christ Jesus, a revelation stored in the depths of the Church's memory and in Sacred Scripture, and constantly communicated from one generation to the next by a living active traditio." (66)

The *General Directory for Catechesis* offers the following general goals for catechesis

- To put people in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ, (80)
- To apprentice people to Jesus promoting full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps... (67)
- To incorporate people into Christian community, (69)
- To promote the integral development of the human person and all peoples. (103)
- And ultimately to build up the reign of God. (103-104)

The Six Tasks of Catechesis as developed in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (85-87) are:

- To promote knowledge of the faith.
- Liturgical Formation (understanding what liturgy/the Mass is)
- Moral Formation (am I a loving person? Do I follow the teachings of Jesus?)
- Teaching to pray (sharing ritual understanding, blessings and ways to pray).
- Community Life (what is happening in our parish?)
- Missionary Initiation—We are a church to go out and evangelize.

The National Catechetical Directory further clarifies what elements should be a part of a catechetical program.

Like other pastoral activities, catechetical ministry must be understood in relation to Jesus' threefold mission. It is a form of the ministry of the **word**, which proclaims and teaches. It leads to and flows from the ministry of **worship**, which sanctifies through prayer and sacrament. It supports the ministry of **service**, which is linked to efforts to achieve social justice...(NCD 32)

Finally, *Echoing the Word of God*, the diocesan statement on the ministry of catechesis offers further guidance.

Within this context of God's revelation and the human faith story, catechesis is the process through which believers are formed, informed and nurtured in the faith of the Catholic tradition. The ministry of catechesis is the creative endeavor of fashioning a people of God. This process of forming and informing begins with the invitation to all to become aware of, to tell the story of, and to celebrate the mystery of God breaking into our lives. Catechesis is about empowering us to tell the story of our being embraced by a loving God and to respond to this love with a life of discipleship. (*Echoing the Word of God*, p.5)

Guided by the principles found in the documents of the Church on the ministry of catechesis the parish catechetical programs will include the following elements:

Message: The story of scripture and the teachings of the Church will be communicated within the context of the faith story of each person and the signs of the times in society and the world.

Community: Efforts will be made to form Christian community through interaction and faith sharing.

Prayer and Worship: The participants will be exposed to many forms of prayer and worship the goals being to help them become persons who have a close relationship with God that is expressed in prayer and to enable them to participate fully, consciously and actively in liturgical and sacramental life.

Service and Justice: Participants will be exposed to the call to service and justice, which is inherent in the message of Jesus and the teachings of the Church.

YOUR ROLE AS CATECHIST

It is important that each catechist has a clear description of their role in the program and how they are expected to carry it out. The following job description is written with the volunteer catechist in mind.

The Role of the Catechist: *A catechist is called to...*

- Be a witness to the Catholic faith and a model of the attitudes and actions of a disciple of Christ.
- Be willing to share his/her faith story, when appropriate, with the students.
- Be a practicing Catholic who accepts the teachings of the Church and follows its laws.
- Be a person of prayer
- Share the love of Christ with the students through openness, listening, respect and forgiveness.
- Be a witness to the Good News of Christ in his/her actions.
- Continue to grow in his/her own understanding of Christ's call and Church teachings.
- Continually evaluate his/her performance as a catechist and try to improve insofar, as is possible.
- Follow the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.
- Communicate the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Pray and celebrate liturgy with the students
- Challenge the students to live lives of justice and love based on Scripture and the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Foster community among the students in the classroom.

DUTIES OF THE CATECHIST

When a person accepts the role of catechist in the parish program of religious education, it is assumed that the person is willing to complete the following tasks and accept the following responsibilities. Catechists who have questions about any of the following duties should discuss them with the director/coordinator.

Each catechist will...

- Attend meetings and training sessions scheduled by the coordinator.
- Be present for each catechetical session at least 15 minutes in advance of the scheduled starting time and remain at least 15 minutes after the session is finished.
- Spend an appropriate amount of time planning before each class.
- Follow the format provided in the textbook for each session.
- Supervise the students in the class he/she is teaching, making sure to provide for a safe catechetical environment.
- Use the time during class to form and inform the faith of the students in his/her care.
- Work toward completing the requirements for catechist certification.
- Maintain discipline in the classroom following the policies outlined in this handbook.
- Provide prayer experiences for the students in the class.
- Follow diocesan and parish policies regarding catechesis.

CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

Volunteer catechists are aware that their ministry offers many challenges. In order to effectively carry out this ministry, training and resourcing is essential. Pope John Paul II in his first encyclical letter *Catechesi Tradendae* states:

As the twentieth century draws to a close, the Church is bidden by God and by events...to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy...in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. This is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith. And an attitude of faith always has reference to the faithfulness of God, who never fails to respond. (CT 15)

In order to carry out this call for trained catechists, the archdiocese provides Catechetical Certification. For information regarding a program in our area, please speak with the parish Director of Religious Education, or go to the "Catechist" tab in our religious Ed website for information

SAFETY FIRST

VIRTUS Training / Fingerprinting Required

Those interested in volunteering as catechists are asked to complete a St. Francis Xavier Volunteer Application Form and participate in an interview with the Director of Religious Education.

All Adult volunteers must attend Safe Environment (Virtus) Training prior to interacting with the children and youth in any St. Francis Xavier program.

The first training is “Protecting God’s Children”.

Every four years following, volunteers and staff are required to take the 90 minute follow-up training called “Keeping The Promise Alive”.

Catechists must also be fingerprinted by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (even if previously fingerprinted by local public schools or police agencies). Safe Environment (Virtus) classes and fingerprinting sites are provided by the Los Angeles Archdiocese Safeguard the Children Office and scheduled at parishes on a regular basis. Information is available on our St. Francis website at www.sfxrcceburbank.org (on the left, click the “Safeguard the Children” tab); or at the website of the Los Angeles Archdiocese: ww.la-archdiocese.org.

Once the training and/or fingerprinting has been completed, please provide our Office of Religious Education with your verification forms and be sure to register your Safe Environment training on line as instructed by your training facilitator.

SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN PROGRAM: Teaching Touching Safety

Each year the religious education department will be presenting two sessions of the *Teaching Touching Safety (TTS)* program to all students during one of their regular class days. The TTS programs were developed consistent with guidelines established by the Church. They assume that the primary education of children is in the hands of the parents and that responsible, thoughtful, classroom instruction can enhance and reinforce the parents' teaching and increase the child's ability to resist the overtures of potential child molesters. In order for the child to participate in this program parents must sign the permission form which are included in their registration packet. Because this class is taught during a regular class day, Catechists may be asked to instruct a portion of the class (all materials provided) and/or assist the TTS instructor. The calendar of TTS dates/topics is available in the religious education office.

PHOTOGRAPH POLICY

Parents are informed that during the school year there may be times where the child’s picture may be taken in class or during Liturgies. This is for St. Francis to record memorable moments of our activities throughout the year. These photos may be included in our parish bulletin, or brochures only. Photos **are never** to be accompanied with the child’s personal information.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Guidelines to be followed in case of an emergency (fire/earthquake)

FIRE EVACUATION: Catechists are responsible for evacuating the children in their class to safety in case of fire. Catechists' primary duty is the evacuation and safety of the children, not extinguishing the fire. In case of a fire the following steps are to be followed.

If a fire is discovered, catechists should set off the fire alarm in the building, if that is possible, without endangering the children.

Catechists are to lead their class in a calm and orderly manner to the outside parking lot near the playground equipment.

Catechists are to take role when they arrive at their gathering point.

Students must remain at the gathering point until dismissed by the catechist

Children can only be released to parents, guardians, or any individual listed on the registration form in the emergency information section unless permission is given in the form of a signed note. In that case any person picking children up that are not in our records must bring a signed note, an ID.

INJURY: If one of the students is injured, the catechist is to inform the director/coordinator and apply first aid as appropriate. A first aid kit is available in the RE office. Gloves are provided in the first aid kits so that the catechist can avoid contact with blood. The director/coordinator will send a first aid provider to help, if there is one available and inform the student's parent. If the injury is serious, the director/coordinator will call 911 or transport the child to the hospital or doctor.

Accidents and injuries must be reported to the director/coordinator of the program using the INCIDENT REPORT FORM. Catechists are to read the health forms of the students in their care to anticipate any health problems that may arise. A copy of the child's health form will be in your class folder.

Parents—Signing Child Into & Out Of the Classroom

All children in our St. Francis Xavier Elementary Religious Education Classes must be signed in and out of class by a parent or other designated adult. The parent must provide the office and the teacher with the name of any other person who will be bringing the child to class or leaving with the child after class.

In the cases of child custody arrangements: The Office of Religious Education must be informed in writing if a non-custodial parent is picking up a child from class. The Office will then inform the classroom teacher that the non-custodial parent is expected instead of the custodial parent.

Classroom catechists should always ask the name and request to see a photo ID of any unfamiliar adult who comes to pick up a child.

Suggest to parents that a child use the restroom prior to the start of class. Children are not to be allowed to visit the restroom alone. Classroom aides are to accompany groups of children to the restrooms. DO NOT use the “buddy system”.

Student Tardiness and Absences

If the child arrives late, the parents are to go to the office to pick up a tardy slip prior to the child arriving to class. The slips are signed by the parent and will be attached to the sign-in sheet. Tardiness is sometimes unavoidable and most parents are very apologetic if they fail to get the child to class on time. If tardiness seems to become a habit we will contact the parents and ascertain the reason for the chronic tardiness.

Picking up prior to the bell is also necessary. If parents arrive early to pick up their child, they will come to the office for an “early release: slip prior to going to the classroom.

Absences are also unavoidable but must be dealt with quickly. At 4:00 P.M., your attendance chart will be collected. If there is a child with an unexcused absence, we will call the parents immediately to ask after their health and to assure the family that we are thinking of the child and hope she or he will be well enough to attend next time. Frequent absences may result in a delay in reception of the Sacraments or the need to repeat a level of faith formation.

Student Illness / Injury

If a child complains of illness, have the aide bring him or her to the RE Office immediately. We will contact the parent and ask that the child be picked up and signed out from our office.

Scrapes, cuts, etc. are easily handled by the Office. You do not have to keep supplies of band aides with you. Hand sanitizers and tissues will be on your classroom cart.

INJURY: If one of the students is injured, the catechist is to inform the director/coordinator and apply first aid as appropriate. A first aid kit is available in the RE office. Gloves are provided in the first aid kits so that the catechist can avoid contact with blood. The director/coordinator will send a first aid provider to help, if there is one available and inform the student’s parent. If the injury is serious, the director/coordinator will call 911 or transport the child to the hospital or doctor.

Student's Behavior

Parents are responsible for informing our Religious Education staff and volunteers if a child has a diagnosis that may cause behavioral problems or social interaction challenges. Misbehavior can be caused by many things, some of which are not obvious. If a child frequently appears out of sorts and sad, we need to extend an invitation to his or her parent to stay for a little time after class so we can express our concern for the child and for the family and determine if there is any way we, as Christians, can be of help.

If a child is deliberately disruptive or disrespectful, please make a clear statement regarding expected behavior: "You need to sit quietly." "You need to stop kicking the chair in front of you." "You must raise your hand and wait to be called on." Always state the expectation: "You need to stop interrupting when I am speaking."

Although we want to avoid sending a child to the office when possible, If the child makes no effort to comply, it is not fair to the other student that they remain in the classroom. Please send the child to the office and, if the child is unable to act appropriately, the parents will be called.

Respect for Privacy

Catechists must respect the students' right to privacy and refrain from casually sharing personal or evaluative information about the students. Special care must be taken not to inform other catechists about student behavior problems unless it is important for the growth of the child and the effectiveness of the catechist. Any information shared should be objective in nature, constructive and relevant to the program. No information about students should be shared with anyone outside the program except for those who are responsible for the student's care.

Relationship with Students

Often as catechists work with students, they form caring relationships with them. Good relationships with the students can help foster their faith growth. However, great caution must be used in the relationships that develop between catechists and students. We ask that all catechists read the *Model Code of Pastoral Conduct* (attached here) and sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct form.

Some guidelines for catechist-student relationships are:

The catechist is the one responsible for making sure relationships with students are appropriate.

Catechists should avoid situations that would appear to be inappropriate.

Caution must be used when touching a child. Any touch that could be interpreted as sexual must be avoided. Hugs should be public, non sexual, appropriate and initiated by the child.

Catechists should not give students a ride home. Call the parent and wait with the child.

If a relationship with one child keeps the catechist from meeting the needs of the other students on a regular basis, the relationship should be examined.

Catechists who drop by to visit students, frequently telephone students, take social trips with students, or find themselves sharing their personal problems with students are, most likely, going beyond what is appropriate.

KEEPING STUDENT CONFIDENCES

Often students will share their personal problems with catechists. This can be very beneficial. Catechists must make the students aware; however, that there is a point at which the catechist must share information with the student's parents or someone else who is responsible. A brief statement such as, "I will keep your confidence unless the life health or safety of yourself or others is involved," can help students understand that catechists are responsible to pass on such information.

If, in the course of class work or a retreat program, a catechist requires the students to write journals and hand them in, the catechist is responsible to read them. And again, if there is any information that involves the life, health or safety of one of the students, the catechist must report that information to the director/coordinator, the pastor/pastoral administrator and to the parent.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Catechists must be vigilant regarding sexual harassment, whether between or among catechists and/or catechetical leaders, among students or between catechists/catechetical leaders and students.

Sexual harassment is defined as:

- Threatening to impose adverse employment, academic or disciplinary or other sanctions on a person unless favors are given; and/or
- Conduct, containing sexual matter or suggestions, which would be offensive to a reasonable person.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, imitations or comments
- Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures
- Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements, or interfering with work, study or play because of sex
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a conditions of employment, grades or other benefits or to avoid some other loss and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors
- Retaliations for having reported or threatened to report sexual harassment.

Any incidence of sexual harassment is to be reported immediately to the director/coordinator of the program and to the pastor/pastoral administrator.

Any incident of sexual harassment must be reported to the director/coordinator on the INCIDENT REPORT FORM.

Parking—School Traffic Rules

- ◆ Enter and leave from the East Driveway (closest to Horace Mann School). If you are driving up Buena Vista, St. you would make a right at Scott Rd. and a left at the first driveway.
- ◆ Remember to drive slowly – no more than 10 miles per hour.
- ◆ Park in the lower parking lot in front of the benches. (Half of the parking lot will be coned off where the after school children play.)
- ◆ Always pay attention.

Plan Your Lesson In Advance

“Failure to Plan is Planning to Fail” Coach John Wooden

Because of the importance of planning and organization in order to teach effectively, each catechist is expected to spend sufficient time each week planning his/her class. A lesson plan is to be written for each class. Planning is important not only for the individual class session but also for the entire year. Sample lesson plans are readily available in the RE Office. Also, make use of the on-line resources provided by the textbook publishers, there you will find wonderful supplementary activities.

Also, the RE Office has a wide and varied supply of resource material and craft supplies. If you wish to show a DVD/Video, please request a TV cart a few days ahead of time. Placing a cart in the rooms when classes are about to begin is very difficult.

Arrival / Set-Up

Because we share our classroom with the school, some “set up” is required in order to be appropriate for faith formation classes. Arrive to class at least 30 minutes prior to allow yourself enough time to gather what you need from the religious education office (your classroom cart, books/materials and any supplies) and get your classroom ready prior to the children entering (we recommend to arrive no later than 3:15 P.M. however, you may arrive to the Religious Education Office as early as 2:00 P.M. to prepare.)

Families begin to arrive at 3:15 at the lunch benches for after school snacks which our parents take turns providing. If you can have your classroom set-up and ready in time to be out at the lunch benches by 3:30 to welcome your students it is always nice.

Copies

If you would like to make copies of activities for your class, you may use the copy machine in the RE Office. However, please arrive at least 30 to 45 minutes prior to the start of your class to leave you enough time. If you need assistance with copies, please provide the material one week prior to your class date with instructions as to number of copies.

Prayer

The Lifting Up of our Hearts and Minds to God

Catechists are expected to provide the young people in their class with an opportunity to experience a variety of prayer forms and learn the traditional prayers of the Catholic Church. In this process catechists rely on the child's experience of prayer within their family. Below is a list of the traditional prayers that are to be learned **WITH THE COOPERATION AND HELP OF THE FAMILY** through the early elementary years. Catechists should contact parents about these prayers and let them know of their responsibility to pray with their children as they learn their prayers in class.

FIRST GRADE: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross

SECOND GRADE: Prayer before Meals, Bedtime Prayer, and Act of Contrition in addition to the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Sign of the Cross

THIRD—Fifth GRADE: Apostles Creed, Rosary, Acts of Faith, Hope and Love in addition to the Prayer before Meals, Bedtime Prayer, Act of Contrition, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Sign of the Cross

A booklet guiding students in the Stations of the Cross is available for Elementary students as well as Confirmation Teens. Please see the RE Coordinator/DRE to check out the booklets for your class.

Liturgy

In order to provide the students with a well-formed catechetical experience, they are offered an opportunity to participate in prayer services as much as possible. Catechists may be asked to assist in the process of planning these prayer services, or participating themselves in the prayer service. Students may be involved in the planning as well. Guidelines for planning liturgies with children are available from the director/coordinator of the catechetical program.

It is essential for all catechists to take the opportunity to deepen the young peoples' experience of liturgy. Discussing the Sunday readings, the seasons of the Church year, holy days and saints feast days, rituals, liturgical practices and symbols can go a long way toward helping the children understand their Catholic heritage.

Substitute Catechists

Catechists who have to miss a class session are to call the director/coordinator as far in advance as possible so that a substitute may be contacted. It is the responsibility of the catechist to have a lesson plan available for the substitute to use.

Visiting the Church

We are fortunate to be able to use our Church during class time and visits to the Church are highly encouraged. Please let the DRE know ahead of time if you are planning to visit the church.

When visiting the Church, make sure all boys remove any caps prior to entering the Church.

When entering, have each child make a reverent Sign of the Cross with the holy water.

It is appropriate to make a profound bow in front of the altar.

Never visit the church without taking time to offer prayer.

Children are never permitted to run in any part of our Church unless the building has caught fire.

Use a Prayer Center in your Classroom

There are many sacramentals in the RE office you can use. Feel free to bring a holy object from home or ask your class to take turns bringing in a holy object from their house for the table.

Ask one of our Priests or Deacons to Visit Your Classroom

To ensure that both the Priest or Deacon and students can make the most of these visits, have a plan in mind regarding what you want discussed.

Explore the RE Office

Check out our posters which include prayers, maps of where Jesus lived/walked, Beatitudes and Ten Commandments. There are many supplies at our disposal including construction paper stickers, and reproducible books. See our resource baskets that are sorted by theme including: The Mass/Bible, Advent, Lent, Liturgical Year, prayers, Sacraments, Special holidays, etc...

Crafts

Crafts add a great deal to the learning experience by engaging the children's imagination and creativity.

Take time to "test market" the craft unless you are sure it can be done in the allotted time. Remember to limit crafts to those that are faith-themed. If the craft is not religious in nature, it does not belong in the religious education class.

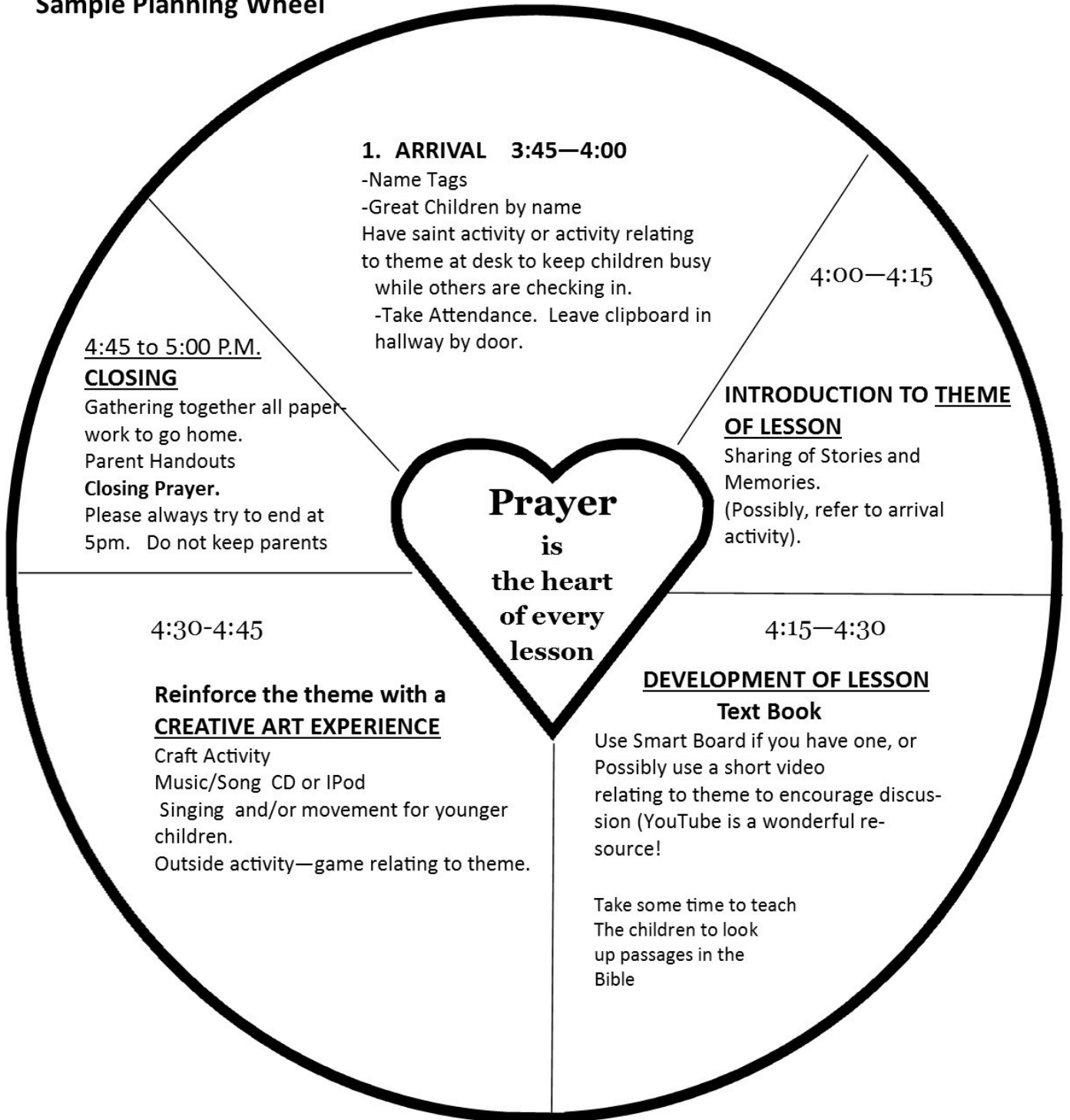
Please do not use paint in class. If you do have a project that involves paint, please go outside with your class to the lunch benches, and be sure to clean up afterwards.

Only use washable markers in class.

Outreach activities such as letters to shut-ins, the elderly, those in the military are encouraged.

(Please speak with your DRE as to elderly parishioners who may appreciate letters from your children and contacts for military letters.)

Sample Planning Wheel



Movement keeps children interested and awake. Change activity every 15 to 20 minutes.

Do not stay in the classroom for the full hour. Find a time to go into Church each class. (bless with holy water & bow at altar). Explore one aspect of church relating to the lesson theme. End at Reservation chapel for prayers. Or, go outside, point out things relating to theme of lesson (creation/ trees birds, plants, etc.), visit the Grotto or go outside for a game on the playground relating to the lesson plan.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Catechist Name _____ Date _____

Name(s) of Students Involved in Incident _____

Date and time of occurrence _____

Location of Incident _____

Description of the incident _____

Response/Action taken by Director/Coordinator _____

Signed: _____ (Catechist) Date _____

Signed: _____ (Supervisor) Date _____

Forward a copy of this report to the pastor/pastoral administrator and keep a copy in the catechetical office.

EVALUATION OF CATECHIST

This form is to be used by the director/coordinator when observing and evaluating the Catechist. An evaluation will be done for each catechist yearly. It can be based on in class observation as well as observation of the catechist's overall performance.

Name of Catechist _____

Grade Level _____ Date _____

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT:

DISCIPLINE:

ORGANIZATION:

USE OF CATECHETICAL PROCESS:

RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS:

PRAYER:

INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS:

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

IV. Volunteer's Code of Conduct

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of our *[parish, school, facility, diocese, etc.]*.

As a volunteer, I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at Church activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and *[the local Child Protection Services agency]*. I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

As a volunteer, I will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.

I understand that as a volunteer working with children and/or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer with children and/or youth.

Volunteer's Printed Name

Volunteer's Signature

Date