



SAINT PATRICK PARISH

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF HUDSON, WISCONSIN

FAITH FORMATION

Elementary Catechist Handbook

2015-2016

St. Patrick Faith Formation
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“Remember what Christ taught and let His words enrich your lives.”
(Colossians 3:16)

Dear Catechist,

Welcome to Formation Ministry at St. Patrick Parish!

In an increasingly secular world your commitment to formation ministry is a powerful witness of Catholic Christian faith in action. For many of our young people, you will be the only exposure they have encountering Jesus in the Bible, at Mass or in another person of faith. St. Patrick Formation Ministry is about faith development and the sharing of that faith with the students and families of St. Patrick Parish. We look forward to the coming year as an experience of faith and as a partnership between our young people, catechists, parents, and formation ministry staff.

As in any human process the success of a faith formation process depends on dedication and cooperation of all the people involved. The basic policies and procedures in this *Catechist Handbook* are established to promote a welcoming, safe atmosphere for our young people and catechists. We encourage you to review these policies and procedures for the Elementary Faith Formation process at St. Patrick.

Your questions and comments are very important to us and should be directed to a staff member at St. Patrick Faith Formation. Faith Formation is a partnership and we are here to assist you in your ministry.

May God Bless you with abundance in your ministry and may your commitment to Formation Ministry at St. Patrick be a rewarding and faith-filled experience for you and all those to whom you minister.

Sincerely,

Ms. Katie Preston
Secretary

Mrs. Pamela Phillips
Administrative Assistant

Formation Ministry

Initial Faith Formation

On one level our mission in Faith Formation is simple, to lead people to Christ. In the initial faith formation of children, our mission is to lead young people to Christ and into full participation in the Christian life.

We accomplish this task by helping our young people to encounter Christ as they prepare for and complete their sacramental initiation into the Christian community. Our hope for our young people is that when they celebrate their First Communion and Confirmation these sacraments of initiation are truly outward signs of an inward reality of the grace of God already active in their lives.

The Catechist

Teachers or spiritual guides in the Faith Formation process are called Catechists. In the words of one of the great religious educators of our time, Maria Harris, “A Catechist is one who echoes the Word of God. Catechists are gifts of the Church. They are seers, believers, co-creators, dancers, teachers, prophets... and their ministry is the work of the entire community.”

Each Catechist contributes time and service toward achieving their primary goal and objective in the Faith Formation process which is to “teach as Jesus taught.” Catechists teach the curriculum while sharing their faith and love for the Lord. This contribution goes far beyond teaching the simple facts of our religion to being an authentic adult Christian role model from whom faith can be “caught.”

Catechists should be collaborators with their Co-Catechists or Catechist Assistants if they have one. They are expected to work closely together to develop lesson plans and faith sharing experiences that might include welcoming activities, storytelling, prayer, games, etc. These activities must always be planned with age appropriateness and the theme of the lesson in mind.

Specifically it is envisioned that the Catechist/Co-Catechist will be responsible for:

- Participating in Catechist formation sessions before the year begins, as well as in-service sessions during the year.
- Preparing weekly lessons in consideration of the yearly overview provided and session time allotted.
- Arriving at least 15 minutes before session begins.
- Dismissing students on time following the dismissal plan.

- Maintaining discipline during class sessions and liturgical celebrations.
- Keeping track of each young person's progress, noting absences and make-up lessons.
- Informing parents of class topics, special projects, and any instances of inappropriate behavior concerning their child.
- Being responsible for the care of classroom furnishings, supplies, and A/V materials.
- Informing the Faith Formation Office, in advance, if a substitute is required, so we may secure a substitute for that class.
- Providing any substitute with any special lesson plan and all necessary materials to implement the planned lesson.

Catechist Assistant

Catechist Assistants are invaluable to our Catechists. They are “Catechists in training!”

A Catechist Assistant is an important part of the catechetical session. The Catechist and the young people depend on the Catechist Assistant's presence and assistance all year long. Please plan on being present at every class from September to May, as many children form a special bond with their Catechist Assistant. Please join in all activities with the children so that you can model for them... sing, play, make crafts and enjoy praising the Lord. This is particularly important with the smallest members of our parish family.

While they don't have full responsibility for the entire class, the Catechist Assistant may lead one part of each week's lesson after consultation with the Catechist. For example, Catechist Assistants may lead a welcoming activity, storytelling, craft, prayer, game, etc. These activities must always be planned with the theme of the lesson in mind as well as the age of the young people.

Responsibilities of the Catechist Assistant might include any or all of the following:

- Participating in Catechist formation sessions before the year begins, as well as in-service sessions during the year.
- Assisting the Catechist in preparing and/or presenting materials for the week's lesson.
- Being present at least 15 minutes before session begins.
- Assisting the Catechist in creating an atmosphere for learning and helping maintain an orderly environment.
- Helping greet the children and getting them settled for the session.

- Helping maintain order in the classroom, hallways, and when going to and from activities outside the classroom.
- Taking attendance, if necessary.
- Assisting with clean-up, putting chairs up, or other tasks to return the classroom to order after a session.
- Participating in the activities.
- Helping assist with projects (i.e. cutting, pasting, clean-up, etc.).
- Helping with small group discussions.
- Accompanying children to the washroom.
- Being the “runner” if supplies or additional materials are needed from the Formation Office.
- Helping to get smaller children ready for dismissal, i.e., collect materials and crafts for take-home, button/zip coats, etc.
- Assisting the Catechist at dismissal to be sure all the K through 3rd grade young persons are picked-up.
- In an emergency, the Catechist Assistant may be called upon to take responsibility for teaching a session.

Note: If you are unable to attend a session, please let your Catechist and the Formation Office know in advance. We depend on your presence. You will be missed!

Catechist Formation

The goal of catechist formation is integration. On a personal level, catechist formation should integrate theology and spirituality with life experience. Ministerially, it should integrate life and faith with pedagogy (i.e., methods and skills of the catechist).

While catechists are most often ordinary parishioners wishing to share their gift of faith, a certain level of competence is necessary for those who serve and form others in catechetical ministry. In recognition of this, the Diocese of Superior has established a Catechist Certification process to insure that all catechists reach a Foundational Level of competence within the first 3 years of entering into the catechetical ministry.

Even though the requirements might seem overly rigid, the catechist should know that formation hours are counted for many parish events that they normally participate in and that many of the catechist’s previous experience with retreats, bible studies, etc., will count toward their continuing formation.

Catechist Certification Levels:

Foundational Level – is required for all catechists in the Diocese of Superior within 3 years of the start of their ministry. Foundational level is achieved by completing the required 6 modules of the Echoes of Faith Plus program plus an appropriate Methods module and an approved retreat. A schedule of Echoes of Faith Plus modules are found on the reverse side of this sheet.

Elevated Level – is required for all catechetical leaders and catholic school religion teachers within 5 years of the start of their employment. Elevated Certification includes having Foundational Certification, filing a “Intent to Begin Elevated” form, completing the required courses from the University of Dayton’s Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), and completing an approved “Service Component.”

Continuing Formation

All individuals who have completed the appropriate certification are required to document additional formation hours. For Principals and Catechetical Leaders are required to document 45 clock hours or 3 semester credits every 5 years. Both Faith Formation and School Catechists are required to document 15 clock hours or 1 semester credit every 3 years. Events/programs that count toward continuing formation must be Catholic, designed for adults only, be educational in nature, and be of a minimum of one hour in duration.

Records of catechist formation hours are kept by the Diocese of Superior and St. Patrick Parish.

It is **STRONGLY URGED** that the catechist keep a personal record of all formation opportunities attended.

Parish Formation Records are forwarded annually to the Diocese in May, for those catechists and teachers that complete the appropriate certification or continuing education report forms.

The Diocese will review certification progress and apprise the catechist of their status in September of each year.

Safe Environment Training

Child sexual abuse is a worldwide public health issue. Child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, is reprehensible—especially when the wrongdoer is affiliated with the Church. The Safe Environment Training program has been developed by the Diocese of Superior to assist the Church in being a safe haven for children and a messenger for preventing child sexual abuse within the Church and society in general.

All parish volunteers who come in contact with the children of our parish are required to complete this training. This includes: teachers, catechists, all School, Youth Ministry, and Faith Formation volunteers, coaches, babysitters, field trip chaperones, etc.

Since it is our goal to make the entire parish a safe environment for children we wish to offer this training to all parishioners, parish board members, parish committee members, pastoral council members, lectors, choir members, eucharistic ministers, etc. All of us have a role to play in making St. Patrick a place where child sexual abuse not only can't happen but a place where children can find safety.

All volunteers in Faith Formation are required to have completed this training prior to beginning their service in formation ministries. An online basic training program can be completed by going to www.stpatrickofhudson.org and clicking on the "Formation" tab and then on the "Ministry Opportunities" tab. You will be required to create a login for your basic training. For those parishioners without internet access a hardcopy of the training program is available from the Faith Formation Office. The completed hardcopy is to be returned to the Faith Formation Office.

Additionally, all volunteers are required to read the "Parish Personnel Policies for Volunteers" and return *Appendix B & C, Acknowledgement of Receipt*. Also they are required to complete and return the *Code of Conduct* form. These forms are available online under "Ministry Opportunities" or in hardcopy from the Faith Formation Office.

Please note: The *Code of Conduct* form requires that the volunteer disclose their Social Security Number. This is required so that we can run a criminal background check on the volunteer. The individual's social security number will be retained in a secure offline file and only divulged to the security firm contracted by the diocese to perform the criminal background check. No credit or financial information is accessed or reported to the Diocese as a part of this process.

Faith Formation Procedures

Before You Begin Your Session

Lesson Planning

Plan your lesson, including discussion questions, audio or video resources, project or craft resources, and your opening and closing prayers.

First . . .

- Review the weekend lectionary readings for the coming weekend.
- Review the Sadlier website for background ideas and activities around this weeks readings at: http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm.

Second . . .

- Review the Sadlier Catechist Guide or other lesson plans provided.
- Review any other Scripture readings associated with the lesson plan.
- Review the Sadlier website at <http://www.sadlierreligion.com/webelieve/>.

Then . . .

- Organize and obtain any additional resources you intend to use.
- Think about what additional prayers might fit your lesson.
- Spend some time in prayer for your students and their families before you pull your resources together for your final lesson plan.

Ordering Material/Resources from the Formation Office

You may use any of the materials or resources available from the Formation Office. You have been supplied with a couple of “Catechist Request Forms” for the purpose of requisitioning supplies. Additional forms are available in the Formation Office.

Please submit requests for supplies, videos, music cassettes, copying, etc., at least 1 week prior to date needed. Requests may be dropped off at the Formation Office or placed in the “Catechist Requests” bin (pink copy to Catechist; white/yellow copy to Formation Office). You may also fax a request to us at: (715) 386-0462.

Note: Because we do not have multiple copies of most video resources we will often require you to pick up and return videos immediately before and after your session and to return previewed videos prior to the next Faith Formation session.

About Using Audio and Video Resources

Media, audio or visual, used in short or segmented pieces can be extremely useful for starting a conversation within a group about a particular topic. We wish to encourage your intentional use of media to help reach your group of media savvy disciples.

We have a *Video Resource Guide* available in the Faith Formation Office for St. Patrick Parish from which you can obtain videos or DVDs.

Please plan ahead to use these resources. Several catechists may wish to use the same video in a given week. This is especially true for seasonal titles for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter.

Exercise extreme caution before using any secular material with your group. Not only is there the subjective problem that what might be acceptable for your children is NOT acceptable for someone else's child, but there is always the issue of them containing moral and theological positions that are not Catholic or Christian. Some general guidelines for using secular audio or video material include:

- Never use any audio or video that you have not previewed in total before using even a short clip.
- Always pay close attention to the language used. As adults, we often become insensitive to vulgar language and fail to notice it in media.
- What is the message of the media you want to use? How does that relate to your session's topic?
- Does your chosen media portray Gospel values? What lifestyle choices are valued by the media? How are people portrayed in the media?

Finally, if you have any questions about using a particular media resource please contact the Formation Office.

Regarding Your Attendance and Substitute Catechists

Your commitment to Formation Ministry is greatly appreciated. We are aware that illnesses and emergencies arise which may prevent you from being with your class. In the event of your absence:

- Please notify the Formation Office ***as far in advance as possible.***
- Please let us know about any special lesson plan or activities that are planned for the session that you will miss.
- In the event of sudden illness please call us in the morning, Do not wait to see if you feel better by afternoon.

Beginning Your Day At St. Patrick

Arrive 15 Minutes Early – This will allow you time to pick-up materials, arrange your classroom, attend to personal needs, etc. It helps class decorum when you are on time and not rushed.

Sign-in at the Front Desk and pick up your bin – Your “Attendance Folder” and any requested resources / materials (videos, music cassettes, handouts, etc.) will be available in your bin. You will be instructed if any items such as a video will need to be shared with another class.

Discussion Environment

Arrive early enough to go to your designated room prior to meeting your disciples for your session. Be sure that any requested resources have arrived, that the room is picked up, and the tables and chairs are arranged for your session. (Please be sure to return any furniture moved to its original position after your session is over. Remember, school desks are assigned to students and need to get put back exactly in place.)

Prayer Environment

Prayer is an integral part of the formation experience and the young person's faith. You should have a designated space in your room to gather and share in prayer together. Prayer environment materials can be kept in your bin. We will be happy to provided you upon request with additional materials that reflect liturgical seasons of the Church year.

Note: Catechists may wish to “personalize” the prayer environment with a cross or other items. You are welcome to do so, but please remember to take your additional environment pieces home at the end of the year.

Thank You.

Session Times / Student Arrival

- Faith Formation Sessions will begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- Young people arriving for sessions on Wednesdays enter through the front door of St. Patrick Education Center/School Building on 4th Street, and proceed to the gym or directly to their classroom as directed by the hall monitors.
- Catechists, after setting up their rooms, normally meet their young disciples in the gym and escort them to their room.
- At various times throughout the year elementary formation sessions will hold a prayer service in the gym or a mass at the Church at a special time. On these days attendance will be taken in the gym or church as directed by the Faith Formation staff. It is helpful if the catechist can arrive a few minutes early to facilitate taking attendance on those days.

Note: For the first day of Faith Formation sessions, all children and catechists will begin in the gym. Classes will be formed and dismissed from there after an opening prayer service.

Attendance Policy

Please note the attendance policy for students as stated in the *Family Handbook*:

All students are expected to attend all scheduled formation sessions. In the case of illness or other serious reasons, parents are to notify the Faith Formation Office of any absences (in advance, if possible) by phone or written note.

Parents of any students who are recorded as “absent” during a session will be called at home during the session unless the Faith Formation Office has been previously notified.

The number of absences during sacramental preparation years (Grades 2 and 11) is an outward sign of the readiness of a young person to participate in the celebration of Sacraments. Excessive absenteeism may delay the first celebration of sacraments until a time that is more suitable in the child’s formation process.

Note: It is the responsibility of the Parents to check on any lessons or materials which have been missed.

Students who “miss” 4 or more classes will need to make arrangements with the Faith Formation Office to complete their requirements.

Tardiness

Out of respect for the Catechist and other class members, students are asked to arrive on time.

Children who arrive late to their scheduled class session must report to the Front Desk, not their classroom, and request an “Admittance Slip.” White copy will be sent with student to class; yellow copy remains in Formation Office.

If a child enters the classroom after the attendance sheet has been placed in the hallway or picked up, they must have an “Admittance Slip.” Please send him/her to the Front Desk to obtain one.

Marking Attendance

Attendance folders are found in your bins in the formation closet on the first floor of the school building. Classroom attendance should be noted each week in the attendance folder. Please mark attendance under the appropriate date column using:

X – for present

A – for absent

T – for tardy

Attendance folders should be placed outside the classroom door as soon as they are completed (no later than 5 minutes after the bell has rung). Office volunteers will retrieve folders and return them to the Formation Office.

If you have marked a child absent and he/she arrives after the attendance folder has been marked please send the child to the Front Desk to get an “Admittance Slip.” This will eliminate unnecessary phone calls to parents.

Notes of absence or early dismissal should be sent directly to the Formation Office.

Dress Code

Catechists, Volunteers, and Students are asked to dress appropriately. Unacceptable clothing includes hats, cutoffs, torn jeans, short/cropped tops, short shorts, and clothing that would not be acceptable in a regular school setting. Clothing that has language or pictures that are offensive, inappropriate and/or identify or promote tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and gang paraphernalia are not acceptable.

Roller shoes, shoes with wheels, or other clothing that presents a potential safety hazard to the student are not allowed to be worn in any parish building.

Classroom Visitation

From time-to-time, staff personnel may visit your classroom. Please be gracious during these impromptu interruptions, they should not disturb your return to your regular lesson plan.

You might also wish to invite Staff personnel to visit your group. Arrangements must be made through the Formation Office for special visits by our priests or any other ministry resource persons. Advance planning is required as ministry personnel have very active schedules. Please make any request for them at least 1 week in advance and with whatever flexibility possible to accommodate schedules.

Please make all requests first through the Formation Office via your “Catechist Request Form.”

Campus Visitor Policy

Non-staff visitors to our campus (parents, friends, family members) need to prearrange visits with the Catechist and the Formation Office. The Formation Office is to be notified PRIOR to visitation day.

All visitors are required to stop at the Front Desk to sign our “Visitor” book. Visitors will be escorted to the classroom.

Note: Parents, friends, or family members are not to disturb the class while in session. If this occurs, please notify the Formation Office immediately.

Church Visits / Space Requests

Catechists may wish to use the Church space or Chapel for tours, prayer time, or other activities. You might also wish to have additional parish space for presentations or other special activities.

All the space at St. Patrick Parish needs to be reserved often months in advance for a particular day and time. Catechists must make arrangements for these spaces and times through the Formation Office in advance.

Please use the “Catechist Request Form.”

Restrooms / Drinking Fountains

Some students count on a break during each class to visit the restroom or get a drink of water. Please make it clear to your class that the time you are together each week is limited and restroom visits should be attended to before class begins. “Emergencies” do arise and should be treated on an individual basis.

All students should be escorted when leaving the classroom; please ask a Hall Monitor or Catechist Assistant to assist at these times.

Students with a chronic problem, who must use the restroom regularly, should bring a parent’s note to the Formation Office.

Food / Snacks Not Allowed

In light of the rising frequency of food allergies in young people – some of them life threatening – we have instituted a policy of no food or drinks during formation sessions. While we ask parents for information regarding their child’s allergies, quite frankly we do not always get full disclosure. We are only in session for a little more than one hour. This seems a small thing to sacrifice to provide a safer environment for our children.

Classroom Parties

Class time is limited; parties are discouraged. Food and drinks are not to be consumed in the classroom. However, sometimes a “small” celebration is important. When having any type of “small” classroom celebration, please notify the Formation Office one week in advance of the celebration.

Emergencies in the Classroom

Your classroom must not be left unattended by the adult Catechist for any reason.

Should an emergency situation arise:

- Use the phone in the classroom to notify Formation Office Staff at Ext. 204
- A staff person or volunteer will be sent to assist you.

Blood-Borne Pathogens

You and your family can be infected by serious, life threatening diseases, such as HIV/ Aids, or Hepatitis-B, if you are not cautious when handling body fluid incidents (including, blood, vomit, and bodily wastes) that may occur during your catechetical sessions. Below are some suggested procedures for your safety. These are precautions to keep a barrier between you and the germs that can be carried in blood or other body fluids. The bottom line, of course, is that you should exercise common sense when handling such incidents.

- In situations that occur with blood (bloody nose, cuts) or other bodily fluids (such as vomit, etc.), the student should be given a Kleenex or handi-wipe and remain in their seat or moved to the back of the classroom.
 - Students should not be sent out of the room until the emergency situation is contained.
 - Use the phone in the classroom to notify the Formation Office at Ext. 204
 - A staff person or volunteer will be sent to assist you.
 - Staff personnel will “clean and sanitize” affected areas, and properly dispose of soiled materials.

In the event that such a situation should present itself the following general recommendations should be followed.

General Recommendations

- These procedures should be used at all times for ALL people. Don't assume there is no danger of infectious disease because you know the person or their family. The infected person may not even know they are infected!
- ALWAYS wear disposable latex/rubber gloves. These gloves are in your bin and in the "clean up kit" that will be provided for your use in the case that bodily fluids need to be contained.
- You should wear gloves whenever you expect to come in contact with blood or body fluids: when administering first aid, such as cleaning cuts, scratches or bloody noses, or when assisting with toileting.
- For small, clean cuts or scratches, if the person is able to do so, have him or her apply their own bandage, so that you can refrain from coming into contact with their blood.

Procedures For Safe Disposal Of Body Fluids Or Blood

- Always put on disposable latex/rubber gloves. Minimally, you should have a set of gloves, several adhesive bandages and some self-sealing plastic bags readily available in your room or your bin.
- Do not allow other participants in your session who are not wearing gloves to be "helpful."
- Use paper towel to absorb spills, then place the towels in a leak-proof plastic bag (use red medical hazard bag if available). For spills that cannot be cleaned up with one paper towel, use *Sorb-all* or other provided absorbent following the directions printed on the can.
- If possible, flood the spill area with a freshly prepared bleach solution or with a hospital grade EPA approved tuberculocidal disinfectant. If not possible, spray with a germicidal spray.
- Clean the area with paper towels, broom or vacuum.
- Place additional used paper towels in the leak-proof plastic bag.
- Remove soiled disposable gloves by turning them inside out and placing one within the other, and place in the leak-proof plastic bag.
- Seal the bag and place in an appropriate infections waste container, if available. If not, take immediately to an out-of-doors trash disposal, rather than an indoor waste container.
- Immediately wash hands with soap and running water. Hand washing is necessary even when you wear gloves.

In The Event Of Exposure To An Infectious Agent

- Wash contaminated skin for at least 10 minutes, using antibacterial soap and copious amounts of water.
- If eyes are affected, flush the eyes for 15 minutes with water.
- Notify the Coordinator of Elementary Formation and/or Faith Formation Coordinator/Director and seek medical evaluation.

Always proceed in a calm and unhurried manner, and for pastoral reasons, take care not to embarrass or imply blame to person(s) involved in any such incident.

Medication / Illness / Accidents

- St. Patrick Faith Formation program is forbidden to administer medication without prior authority to do so. Students who are under a doctor's care must have a medical permission form on file in the Faith Formation Office. The form can be obtained in the Faith Formation office and must be filled in by the doctor. The Doctor and parent signature must be on the form before medication is administered. All medications are to be brought to the Faith Formation Office in the prescription bottle with signed instructions for administration immediately upon the students arrival at Faith Formation. **NO STUDENT IS PERMITTED TO RETAIN MEDICATION OF ANY KIND ON HIS/HER PERSON.**
- All student illnesses or accidents should be kept confidential unless the parent gives permission via the Faith Formation Office.
- If an accident occurs during class, it should be reported to the Formation Office immediately so that proper Diocesan forms are filled out.

Crisis Plans

Crisis Plans have been put in place to address various emergencies. The staff will use code signals through its P.A. system to alert staff without panicking students.

The crisis plan codes include:

- Evacuate – Evacuate everyone according to fire drill.
- Hold – Hold everyone. No one leaves. All is quiet.
- Lock down – Hold everyone, lock room, and hang sign on door to show it is secure. Lights off.

Children move away from windows and doors. Catechists take attendance to insure all children on premises are accounted for. There will be one spokesperson for Faith Formation: the Coordinator/Director, Pastor, or their designee. When the situation is ended, an ALL CLEAR signal will come over the P.A. system three times.

In the case of such a crisis, every visitor inside the building **MUST** report to the Faith Formation Office. If they are in a hold or lock down situation, they must report by phone to the office where they are on the premises.

Evacuation Plans & Drills

In the event of situations requiring evacuation, everyone will be evacuated to the Oak Street Gym of Willow River School. Authorities will be called immediately.

Staff and young people will follow the same procedures as for fire drills. Children participate in fire and severe weather drills to learn to quickly evacuate the building. Young people must **WALK** at all times and observe silence and order during the drills.

Tornados

When there is a tornado warning, an announcement will be given over the P.A. System. Young people must follow their catechist's instructions and proceed to the designated area in silence. The basement under the Parish Education Center provides areas for the young people and staff to gather for cover during tornados.

Hazardous Compounds

Some hazardous compounds are in the building for various purposes, such as cleaning, and these are all carefully labeled. Protective clothing is provided for staff that need them, and the Poison Control number is posted in classrooms. Precautions are taken to store all chemicals carefully, and authorities shall be immediately called if there is a danger to anyone caused by a chemical on-site.

Snow Days / Cancellation of Scheduled Faith Formation Sessions

The fact is we live in the land of snow and ice at least half of the Formation year. In case of hazardous road conditions in the winter, Faith Formation classes will be cancelled.

In general:

- If classes have been canceled for the day for either Hudson Public Schools or for St. Patrick School, then Faith Formation Sessions are also cancelled.
- If "all evening activities" have been cancelled for the Hudson Public Schools, Faith Formation Sessions are also cancelled. This notice generally appears on the Hudson School district website by 3:00pm of the day of cancelation.

Information regarding weather related closings can be obtained from one of the following sources:

Internet: www.hudson.k12.wi.us

www.stpatrickofhudson.org under "Formation"

Twitter: follow us @STPHudson

For all parish closing and emergency announcements.

Email: Catechists—for whom we have a valid email address—will be notified ***via email*** by the Formation Office

Conducting Your Session

Curriculum Materials

Curriculum materials for Kindergarten through Grade 5 use Sadlier's, *We Believe*. The student workbook is meant to be read, written in, handouts taken home each week, and shared with the family to promote continued formation. *NOTE: The workbook is to be left in the designated space in each classroom after each session.*

Each student will be given a workbook. We provide pencils / pen in your bin for use in class each week. Please encourage students to use spiral notebooks for recording information they wish to keep.

You might also require older children (grades 4 or 5) to bring a Catholic Bible to class each week or to get one for use on certain weeks. A couple of guidelines for using Bibles as part of your curriculum:

- Because of the number of translations and editions available you should specify the Bible you will be using (we recommend the New American Bible).
- You should make sure that enough copies of the same edition are available for use during your session.
- The Formation Office has copies of the New American Bible available for occasional use in your sessions, please fill out a "Catechist Request Form" to reserve copies.

Please do not require your students to purchase any curriculum supplies that you do not plan to use as a regular part of your sessions together.

Do not purchase any classroom materials without prior approval of the Formation Office.

Leaving the Premises with your Group

On occasion, you may wish to leave the classroom with your students to walk outside, visit the park, etc. So long as no mode of vehicular transportation is involved and you do not leave the St. Patrick Campus no "authorization" is necessary.

On Premise Trips

If you leave the classroom with your students to walk outside, visit another class, etc. Please notify the Formation Office via the phone at Ext. 204 when you leave and return to the classroom. *Classes are to remain on Parish grounds unless otherwise arranged with the Formation Office.*

Field Trips or Events

You may decide that taking your group to a particular site, such as to perform a service project or see a justice issue up close, is a good idea. Whether you “take” the kids to the site or they agree to meet at the site, you will need to obtain a permission slip in advance of the field trip or event. Please check with the Formation Office well in advance so that any necessary Transportation and Permission forms can be obtained and returned prior to your event.

Tests / Reviews

A short “review” from time-to-time for older students may assist in keeping their attention. Students aware of their accountability are more apt to learn. *We Believe* and the Sadlier web site www.webelieveweb.com provide “tests” or “reviews” that are simple and to the point. In the event that the catechist wishes to write their own test/review we require a copy of these materials be provided to the Formation Office for our files.

Our primary purpose is development of faith. While knowledge of facts is certainly important, students cannot always be penalized for doing poorly on objective tests. Any number of factors may prevent this form of success.

A marking system such as: Excellent, Very Good, Satisfactory, Fair, Try Harder, or other appropriate, affirming notations may be used.

Be Positive At All Times! Affirm what the student does know; assist in what they do not understand.

Student Reviews

Student reviews will be conducted twice a year and are due to the Faith Formation Office on the first week of classes in January and by the last day of class at the end of the year. Review forms and guidelines for the current year will be distributed about a month prior to when they are due in the Formation Office.

Student reviews are only helpful to the extent that they are useful to the parent in fostering their child’s continuing spiritual growth.

Objective measures such as knowledge, attendance, and observed behaviors are only indicators of the deeper reality of faith. None the less, these objective measures together with the honest observations of the catechist can provide a good grounding to the parent in their role as the primary religious educator of their child.

Your completed student review will be mailed to the parent(s) at home. Please use them as a tool for helping the parent(s) have a conversation with their child about faith and its experience in their lives.

Ending Your Sessions

Student Dismissal

All students are to be held in their rooms until the bell rings announcing the end of the session.

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 are to be held in the classroom and picked-up by a parent / guardian, sibling, or other designated person as noted on “Faith Formation Escort / Dismissal Form.” A copy of this form will be provided for Catechist use. Please keep these forms for your use throughout the year. Please review the form and get to know “who” is picking-up your students. If the pick-up person is not familiar to you (or the child), then ask who they are.

At NO time should a child be released to anyone other than those noted on the “Escort / Dismissal Form.” Notify the Formation Office immediately if a problem arises.

Students in Grades 4 and 5 may be dismissed directly from the classroom after the bell sounds.

Early Dismissal

On rare occasions, a student must leave class early. Parents are asked to notify the Formation Office by phone, written note, or in person for these times. Any and all written dismissal requests you receive should be directed to the Formation Office immediately upon receipt (you may send them down with your attendance folder). The procedure for early dismissal is as follows:

- When the parent arrives, they are to go directly to the Front Desk to “sign-out” their young person and await their dismissal from class.
- The catechist will be notified via the phone or in person by Staff or a hall monitor when a student is to be dismissed from class.
 - Children in Kindergarten through grade 3 will have an escort sent to bring them to the Front Desk
 - Children in Grades 4-5 can be sent directly to the Front Desk AFTER notification from the Formation Office.
- Do not dismiss any student until you have been notified via the phone or in person from the Front Desk.

Note: NO student is to leave class without proper dismissal or permission from the Front Desk.

Discipline Policy / Parent Contact

Behavior Ground Rules

Polite social decorum is expected of each young person. The Catechists should be clear, beginning with the first session, as to what is acceptable behavior for the young person's interaction with the group. Depending on the age of the young people in the group, the catechist might wish to enlist the input of the group members in forming the ground rules, or in the case of younger children simply tell them your rules for behavior.

Typical rules for interaction might include items similar to the following:

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- You can say anything you want as long as you say it respectfully.
- No put downs of anyone are allowed.
- Anything that is shared by someone in the group stays within the group and is not shared with anyone outside the group (older grades).
- Keep your hands to yourself (younger grades).

Typical "Housekeeping Rules" might include:

- No feet on the tables, chairs, or walls.
- Everyone picks up all their mess before they leave
- No Food or Drink in the classroom.
- Things sometimes break, if you break something tell us right away.

Behavior requiring disciplinary action due to lack of respect for others may include:

- Speaking out of turn in a way not respectful to the catechist or a group member.
- Verbally or non-verbally harassing or putting down a group member by any action or inaction.
- An form of physical harassment — pushing, shoving, poking, or hitting.
- Student behavior that is disrespectful of the catechist's environment or parish property.
- Any other behavior inappropriate for the environment or that goes against "Housekeeping Rules."

Catechist Responses

You should never tolerate inappropriate behavior by your students. Most inappropriate behaviors are the result of boundary testing or the different levels of socialization skills taught in families. Most of the time a simple comment will solve the situation. For those other or recurring situations the following discipline “steps” should be followed regarding inappropriate behavior:

First Step:

The individual is issued a verbal warning by catechist. It should be clear that failure to modify the behavior at this point will result in student being sent to the Elementary Coordinator for a conference.

Second Step:

The individual is sent to Formation Office*, accompanied by a student messenger, hall monitor, or other Faith Formation volunteer, to meet with Elementary Coordinator regarding student's behavior. A written covenant will be agreed to and signed by the individual, the catechist and the Elementary Coordinator prior to the student returning to the group (Parents will be advised of the cause and outcome of this meeting).

Third Step:

The individual is sent to Formation Office*, accompanied by a student messenger, hall monitor, or other Faith Formation volunteer. The individual is removed from the group pending a conference with the parents/guardians of the student. The catechist is removed from the process at this point.

* = Catechists will be provided with “Student Dismissal” forms to be completed for each instance of behavior requiring a Formation Office visit. The “Student Dismissal Form” should be completed and sent to Formation Office with student and escort. Do not send a student down to the office without a “Student Dismissal Form” filled out!

Chronic Attitudes

If a chronic condition exists with behavior or attitude of a student, the Catechist should contact the parent or guardian within a reasonable time frame. If a student is constantly preventing other students from entering into the spirit of the class, it is unfair to the student, the rest of the class, and the Catechist to ignore or live with this situation.

Note: Before contacting the parent or guardian, be sure to inform the Elementary Coordinator of the situation, and any progress (or lack of) with the student and/or family.

Zero Tolerance for Violence

Any student who physically harasses another student or Catechist, or shows lack of respect for Church property by way of intentional theft or vandalism, should be removed immediately from the classroom.

Any violent threat whether to a Catechist or student, made with harmful intent or “just kidding” will result in the removal of that student from the program and notification to the police department.

Sharing Space

Shared Space Syndrome (SSS), the use of campus space by School, Faith Formation, and other ministries, should not become an issue. Proper care and respect for property of all St. Patrick students, faculty, and ministries should be observed at all times.

The parish community of St. Patrick has access to and the use of any and all accessible space and materials, upon request. Please remind your students, assistants, parents and visitors to respect the property of others.

Notify the Formation Office immediately of anything damaged, dirty, or “out of place” in the room you occupy. We will direct the information to the proper authority for that ministry.

Also please remind students that they are not allowed to “borrow” from the desks that they are sitting at, and there is a “Hands Off” policy regarding desks and any displays in the classroom. *If you didn't bring it with you don't touch it!*

Finally, a good rule for Catechists to follow is to *leave your class or meeting room in the same condition or better than the way you found it.*

A Prayer for Catechists

Dear God,

There are so many signs of your presence in our lives,
not just sacramental signs, like bread and wine, and
oil for anointing,
But signs that point to and flow from the same reality.
You are present. You are among us. Your signs say so.
You are present in sunrises and sunsets,
in the roar of great oceans, and in the trickle of small streams.
Your presence is announced as much by towering trees
as by the tiniest blossoms.
All of nature proclaims your presence.
Everything created announces you.
Above all, your presence is proclaimed by people,
people of every description.
You dwell in us.
We are miracles of the life you have created.
We are complex and mysterious.
We are signs of all that you can do.
But signs mean nothing to those who don't see them,
or fail to read them, or who ignore them.
Help us not to be among those.
Dear God, you have called us, your Catechists,
to proclaim all the signs of your presence,
including your sacramental ones.
Help us to see them clearly, to read them carefully,
and to speak them with Love.

Amen.

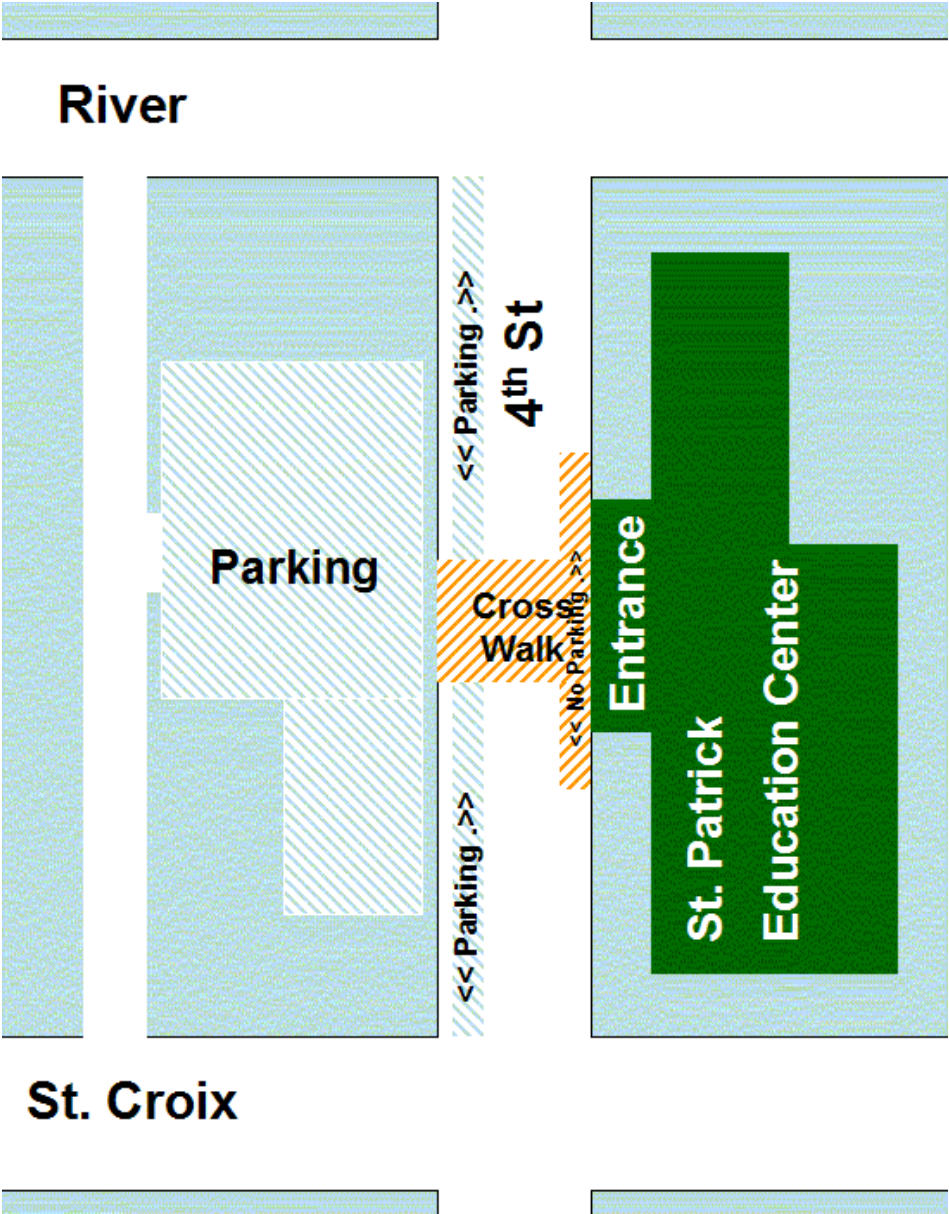
~ Gwen Costello

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures 2015 – 2016

Young people may be dropped off or picked up in the parking lot on the WEST Side of 4th Street- enter from the Alleyway between St. Croix and River streets.

Young people may also be dropped off or picked up from the curb side of vehicles along the WEST Side of 4th Street – outside of the crosswalk area.

Note: At Drop-off we are asking the children to remain on the sidewalk and have their an adult escort them to their cars if the car is parked in the parking lot.



For SAFETY SAKE:

- Obey the directions of the crossing guards.
- Please Do Not Park on the EAST Side of 4th Street in front of the building entrance from 4:45pm to 7:45pm.