

**St. Margaret Mary Parish  
Catechist Handbook  
2016/2017**

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**\*\*\* Videotaping and Still Photographs:**

We may not videotape or take photos of children when their parents have specifically denied permission. **Posting of photos and/or videos to social media is prohibited.**

## **I. Mission Statement of St. Margaret Mary Parish**

*As a worshipping Roman Catholic parish family, we are guided by a collegial partnership of laity, Pastor, and ministerial staff. Together we seek to foster spiritual growth through the active practice of Christianity. By the sharing of our God-given talents and resources with all God's people, we strive for peace and justice as the "Parish with Heart".*

### **Mission Statement of the Christian Education Commission**

*To provide Catholic Christian-based education that is dedicated to meeting the ideals of Gospel teachings and the continuing challenges of Vatican II.*

Given these two mission statements, the one flowing from the other, it is the goal of the Religious Education Program to provide for the children of St. Margaret Mary instructions which will fulfill this mission.

To do so, it is imperative that the program:

- Recognize the parents as the primary educators of their children in the faith, and work collegially with them to assist them in this undertaking.
- Provide instruction based on the Gospels and the directives set forth in Vatican II and the National Catholic Directory.
- Include experiences of prayer and worship, basic Catholic catechesis, and moral guidelines appropriate to their age and ability.
- Give the children opportunities to learn about and work for justice in their families and communities.

To accomplish this goal, St. Margaret Mary Parish has invested their time, talent and resources. This effort includes hundreds of volunteer Catechists, Liturgy of the Word Facilitators, Babysitters, Office Workers, a substantial Parish subsidy, and a professional ministerial staff. However, the parents who nurture their children through word and example are the most important part of the program.

We have all been given the responsibility to spread the Gospel Message to all people. The Religious Education Program of St. Margaret Mary Church works diligently to carry out this mission in and through our families.

## II.

## CATECHIST REQUIREMENTS

The Diocese has adopted a Certification of Catechists Program which identifies three dimensions for catechist formation: *Being (the spiritual formation of the catechist)*; *Knowing (the study of the theological content of Catholic Faith)*; and *Doing (the ability to communicate the Gospel message with natural ease)*. Preparation for teaching includes participation in:

- **General Meeting (Saturday, August 27, 2016 from 9:00am to 12:00pm)**
- **Formation:**

Ongoing formation in Catholic faith is essential to the ministry of the parish catechist. **Joliet Diocesan policy requires a minimum of six hours of ongoing faith formation during a school year calendar.** These hours can be achieved by participating in the following events:

- a) General Orientation Meeting
- b) New Catechist Orientation
- c) Catechist In-Service Events
- d) Adult Faith Formation and Family programs offered by the parish

We encourage you to attend at least three programs in addition to the orientation meeting required for all catechists.

- **Certification:** The Joliet Diocese offers the Cardinal Newman Institute for Lay Formation – Foundations of the Faith programs. The Foundational Certification is granted after 32 hours of study. The courses will be offered here at St. Margaret Mary as well as other locations throughout the Diocese. Additional information will be provided to you regarding the dates and locations of the various sessions. You can also contact the RE office for further details.
- **Protecting God’s Children** workshop is required of all persons working with children in a parish or diocesan program. Dates of workshops are available in the R.E. Office or online at [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org)
- All new Catechists must have an “**Informational Form for Employees Involved with Children**” (background check) on file in the Religious Education Office before starting the 2016-2017 school year. Returning catechists are required to update this information every five years.
- Your “*Foundation Level Catechist Record*” will be updated each year. In the meantime, please make sure any Faith Formation Programs you have attended are turned in, in writing, on the “**Catechist Record of Formation**” form. This way your record can be updated and accurate.

### III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. **Attendance:** MARK ATTENDANCE X FOR PRESENT; A FOR ABSENT.

Please notify the office if a child comes in after your card has been collected. Cards will be picked up within 30 minutes of the class start.

If a child is absent for more than two weeks in a row, or very frequently, it is a good idea to contact the parent to see if there is a problem. If you do not wish to call the parent, please NOTIFY THE R.E. OFFICE IN PERSON OR VIA E-MAIL and we will make contact with the parent(s).

2. **Babysitting:**

Catechists who use our babysitting services during class are asked to...

- a. Put name tag with **your** room number on your child so you may be found easily if you are needed;
  - b. Pick up children **immediately** after class because the babysitters need to pick up their own children (you can return to your classroom to cleanup or whatever afterwards).
3. **Boards:** The writing board is for teaching purposes only. Children may not write on the boards except as part of a class. **ONLY** the markers provided for the boards may be used. **Please clean** boards after class (using cleaning supplies provided in each room) and **PUT MARKERS AWAY IN THE CABINET.**
  4. **Books:** **EVERY CHILD IS ALLOWED TO BRING HOME HIS/HER BOOK EVERY WEEK.** Lost books will need to be replaced at the expense of parents. Since we will be re-using the books, children should not write in them.
  5. **Calendar:** Please notice how many sessions you have, and coordinate Feasts, etc. with scheduled sessions. **Always let the children know when a holiday is coming the following week; for little ones a note would help.**
  6. **Catechist's Mailbox:** Each week pick up attendance sheet and mail from mailbox before class. MAIL BOXES ARE **ABOVE** YOUR NAME. **Please do not have children pick up your materials from the mailbox.**

7. **Church:** The Church is usually available for a prayer service or tour, but should be scheduled so that there is no problem. The children should be directed to be quiet and respectful in Church.
8. **Child Abuse:** Any catechist who suspects that a child is a victim of child abuse should notify the DRE. The professional staff will then follow through on any situations according to diocesan policy
9. **Classes:**

**1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

Monday: 3:15 - 4:15 P.M.  
Tuesday: 3:15 - 4:15; 4:30 - 5:30 P.M.  
Wednesday: 3:15 - 4:15; 4:30 - 5:30 P.M.  
Saturday: 9:00 - 10:00 A.M.

**Kindergarten:**

Sunday: 9:00 - 10:00 A.M. (or until the end of Mass)  
Monday: 3:15 - 4:15 P.M.  
Tuesday: 3:15 - 4:15; 4:30 - 5:30 P.M.  
Wednesday: 3:15 - 4:15; 4:30 - 5:30 P.M.

**Three year olds - Four year olds:**

Sunday: 9:00 - 10:00 A.M. (or until the end of Mass)

10. **Curriculum:** The children should be taught the materials provided in the basic text and Sacramental Program. Other materials can be used, but the general content should be covered.

Each lesson has an objective which the children are required to know.

**Please do not add any other content** without checking with the DRE.

11. **Discipline:** General rules:

- A. No child has the right to disturb the learning process of the other children in the group.

Here is the basic plan of action:

- Tell the child that his/her behavior is unacceptable BECAUSE it is preventing the rest of the group from learning.
- If this does not change the behavior, send child (with a companion) to the RE office.
- If this does not change the behavior, the DRE will contact the parents (or you may, if you choose).
- If all other means have been used and have failed, the child will complete the semester in HOME STUDY.

- B. Children have a right to know what to expect. Make a few rules and enforce them.

It is good to have the children create the rules for your class--make sure you have only a few and they fit what you think is necessary. Example:

- No one may speak when someone else is talking.
- No one may make fun of another.
- All materials should be returned to their proper places.
- **No eating or drinking in the classroom.** (*Except for a treat determined by the Catechist on special occasions.*)

- C. Catechists are human.

- Come to class well prepared – this is the best discipline strategy.
- Don't wait to act until you are fed up or about to lose your temper -- stop situations before they become major problems.
- NEVER, NEVER hit a child -- if you feel like doing so, get out of the classroom and send for the DRE.
- **Never keep the children after class.** Keeping a class late causes problems with traffic and parents. DO NOT DO IT!!! If your clock is wrong, let us know.
- Always be fair -- if you allow one child to bend the law, all the others should have the same privilege, SO BE CAREFUL OF MAKING TOO MANY LAWS!

- D. A few rules for all children:

- Children should always go to washrooms or other places in the building with a companion – never alone.
- Coats and hats should be removed and hung up during class--only exceptions are children with hair problems because of sickness or if the building is cold.
- No child writes on the board before or after class--they may write on it as part of a lesson.
- Fighting, pushing, being rude or using bad language is NEVER accepted.

**Disrespect to a Catechist is not acceptable.** Children should be sent (taken) to the RE office for any violation of this rule immediately.



## 12. *Emergencies:*

### **Fire Drill:**

When the fire alarm rings, Rooms 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 leave by the exit at the end of the hall nearest Room 17. Go down the stairs and outside -- and walk away from the building along the edge of the parking lot.

Rooms 7, 8, 9, 10 exit door that leads to the NORTH parking lot (outside the Administration Offices).

Rooms 2, 3, 4, 5 exit Parish Center door and stay on the sidewalk until directed otherwise.

The Catechist in Rooms 5, 10, 11 should send their children outside--then the catechist checks the washrooms and classrooms for stragglers.

**CHILDREN HAVE BEEN TAUGHT AT SCHOOL TO WALK IN LINE AND IN SILENCE. THE CATECHIST LEADS THE WAY AND THE AIDE FOLLOWS THE LAST STUDENT. TAKE THE CLASS ROSTER OF STUDENTS WITH YOU AND CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL OF YOUR STUDENTS ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.**

### **Tornado Drill:**

There is a loud hand bell to indicate tornado – OR IF YOU HEAR THE SIRENS, GO IMMEDIATELY TO:

- Room 17 goes down nearest stairs to hall outside Room 9 & 10.
- Rooms 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 - down the stairs near the Atrium and into the hallway opposite Rooms 7 & 8.
- Rooms 7, 8, 9, 10 - go into the hall outside your rooms.
- Rooms 2 & 3 - stay in room; go to back of room.
- Rooms 4, 5 & Parish Center - go behind Room 4 under the stairs.

### **Classroom Emergencies: NEVER LEAVE THE CHILDREN UNATTENDED**

- If a child gets hurt, has a seizure, etc., send the children into the classroom across the hall or next to you. Send a child to the R.E. Office and stay with the child in trouble.
- If you become ill or hurt, do the same thing; send the children to the nearest classroom and get help.
- **NO** medication may be dispensed by the catechist or office personnel at any time.
- First Aid supplies will be available in the RE office. However, latex gloves will be available in each classroom cabinet.
- All student illnesses or accidents are to be kept confidential unless the parent gives permission to the RE professional staff.

13. **Emergency Closing**

In case of emergency closing due to weather conditions, check the website: EMERGENCYCLOSINGCENTER.COM. We will also notify all Catechists and families via e-mail thru Constant Contact, our mass e-mail provider.

14. **Entering/Exiting:**

Please follow these directions for the safety of all our children...

- Enter and exit the parking areas on Green Trails Drive - **NOT Naper Blvd.**
- All children are to enter the building at the Administration Door - Green Trails Lower Level
- All children are to be picked up after class in the Parish Center and exit the Administration door
- No one may park or wait in the Handicapped areas or the space near the sidewalk.

Catechists should first bring all children to the Parish Center for dismissal. After the 4:30 Session we wait with the children in the PC; we do not search the building to see if children are waiting in other places. Children may not use the elevator without an adult.

15. **Food: Food in classrooms is not encouraged. A special treat at Christmas or some other special event seems appropriate but not every week. After food has been eaten, please make a special effort to clean up. Please keep these treats simple, small and inexpensive. (Catechists: PLEASE check Allergy List before giving out treats!).**

16. **Field Trips:** Generally we do not encourage field trips for the younger children. No field trip may be planned without the permission of the DRE. The request should include the reason for the trip, the potential cost, the number of people involved, the transportation to be used, the day and the time. Whenever children are taken off the parish property or are to be involved in something other than regular class, a permission slip from the parents is required. Please ask at the office for the necessary form.

17. **Help:** If you are in need of help, your resources are:

- Director of Religious Education
- Fellow Catechists

18. **Homework Assignments: THE BOOKS MAY GO HOME EVERY WEEK.** Assignments can be to tell parents one thing they learned or to study a prayer . . . something to enhance the lesson. You could also ask the children to prepare something for the next session. The book is a resource, not a quota to be covered.

19. **Library:** The books in the store room, Catechist library on the RE counter and Parish Center Library are yours to use – feel free to use them but **please return all items** so that they are available for others to use.

20. **Name Tags** – Please wear your name tag in each class - this is required for safety and security.

21. **Office Hours:** The Religious Education Office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday thru Wednesday. Hours on Thursday and Friday are 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Sue Davey is in the office:

Monday: (9:00 A.M – 5:00 P.M)

Tuesday & Wednesday: (9:00 A.M. – 5:30 P.M)

Saturday & Sunday: (8:30 - 10:30 A.M.)

22. **Parent Communication:** It is important to let the parents know who you are. A phone call at the beginning of the year would be most helpful.

The parents need to see what their children are learning so each Catechist is asked to communicate with parents on a regular basis each week or upon completion of each Unit, i.e., letters home or e-mails.

If you are having a problem with a child, please call or write a note to the parents. Make sure DRE has also been notified of the communication.

23. **Requests:** For supplies, copies, and/or tapes, a request form must be filled out and placed in the box outside the R.E. office. Please make sure you indicate Date, Time, Room Number and Grade. We prefer to have these a week ahead of time but we will accept requests the day before. We cannot guarantee that requests received on the day of class will be processed. **There is no one here on Thursday afternoon or anytime on Friday to fill your requests.** Please make sure requests are here by Thursday morning. You may e-mail your requests to Debbie Brutlag - [debbie@smmp.com](mailto:debbie@smmp.com) .

The following is a sample of the request form:

CATECHIST REQUEST FORM			
NAME:	_____	DATE NEEDED:	_____
GRADE:	_____	DAY:	_____
		TIME:	_____
		LESSON #:	_____
VIDEO/DVD TITLE(S)	_____		
ACTIVITY PAGES:	_____	# NEEDED:	_____
MUSIC CD TITLE(S):	_____		
BOOK TITLE(S):	_____		
OTHER CRAFT SUPPLIES OR REFERENCES NEEDED:	_____		
_____			
Forgot to turn in this form? Email Debbie Brutlag ( <a href="mailto:debbie@smmp.com">debbie@smmp.com</a> ) or call 630-369-0833 (M-W, 9am-5pm; Th, 9am-12pm.)			

24. **Resource Materials:** Each level has an extra activity in the Teacher's Manual and supplemental materials. Please request the materials you need duplicated at least a day ahead of time (preferably a week).

**Please do not automatically use every sheet provided as a resource -- use only what you see as being a useful addition to your lesson. With only an hour, the children should not be filling in page after page of fill-in-the-blank materials.**

25. **Room Care:** Before you leave, please make sure the children have cleaned up any mess. Chairs straightened, boards erased, papers and crayons off the floor (and back in the proper storage container), tables wiped off if necessary and board markers put in cabinet. Dried markers and empty glue sticks should be thrown away.

**Please leave nothing on top of the cabinets unless it is for display or a project in progress.**

Please do not stack up the chairs; the walls are terribly marked up by the children trying to do this.

When using glue, a paper should be placed under the project.

26. **Substitutes:** If you need a substitute, please:

**Notify the Office:** If you can arrange for someone to take your place, do so; if not, we will. All substitutes must have completed the Protecting God's Children workshop and submitted a background check. We will give the substitute the lesson plan that is scheduled unless you indicate something different.

**In the event we are unable to arrange for a substitute, CLASS WILL NOT BE CANCELED – alternative arrangements will be made. NO CATECHIST MAY CANCEL CLASS.**

27. **Supplies:** Each room is equipped with stapler, staples, scissors, crayons, glue, markers for the board, erasers and cleaner for the board, paper towels and cleaner for tables/messes.

**These are to be shared by all who use the classroom so please put them back in their place ON THE TOP SHELF OF THE CABINET!**

Most other supplies will be located in the R.E. Office and should be returned to the office at the end of class.

If you use up something, please put in a request immediately so that it can be refilled before the next session starts.

If you need something out of the ordinary, please request it the week before so there is time to get it.

28. **Videos:** Videos must have a clear **connection to the theme of your lesson**. These should be used as part of your lesson, **not** as entertainment or to fill time. You may wish to coordinate with other catechists within your grade level to join in viewing any video.

All outside videos should be pre-approved by the DRE at least one week before the scheduled class.

Music tapes as well as adult theology and catechetical tapes are for you; please sign them out.

29. **Washrooms:** Make it clear to your class that restroom visits should be attended to **BEFORE** class begins. Visits should be a rare occurrence. Emergencies do arise. These should be treated on an individual basis and should not involve the whole class. Because of safety, children should always go to the washroom **with someone else**.

#### IV. PRAYER

- A. There must be a time for prayer at every session. Formal prayers (Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.) may be used or informal prayer such as scripture reading and intercessions or child's made up prayer.

Although atmosphere is wonderful -- the children's safety dictates no lit candles may be used.

- B. *Traditional Prayers:* Each level learns a new prayer. The following are the words to our ordinary formal prayers:

1. **Sign of the Cross**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

2. **Our Father**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

3. **Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit  
of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now  
and at the hour of our death. Amen.

4. **Glory Be to the Father**

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen.

5. **Grace Before Meals**

Bless us, O Lord,  
and these Your gifts  
which we are about to receive  
from Your bounty,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. **Grace After Meals**

We give You thanks, almighty God,  
for these and all Your gifts  
which we have received through  
Christ our Lord. Amen.

7. **Act of Contrition**

My God,  
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ  
suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.

## 8. **Prayer of St. Francis**

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not  
so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born  
to eternal life.

## 9. **Nicene Creed (revised 2011)**

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit  
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**V. 2016-2017 Catechist Handbook Signature Page**

*I have read and am familiar with the philosophy, policies and procedures contained in the Catechist Handbook and accept them.*

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please print this page, sign, date  
and return to the R.E. Office.