

2022-2023 CATECHIST HANDBOOK

SETON PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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Seton Parish is committed to the safety and well-being of its children. In addition to the following guidelines, all volunteers are required to participate in the Diocesan *Protecting God's Children* awareness session, be fingerprinted, have a background check, and sign off on the Diocesan Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy included in this handbook.

Attendance

Sessions are held September through April. A school calendar will be emailed to families and available on the website, as well as sent home with students the first day of class. Good attendance is expected! One lesson builds upon the other. A student with sporadic attendance is at a loss when they do return, especially if they do not keep up with the work at home. Please notify the office if your child is going to be absent. Please see the teacher to get make up work.

Illness

In the event a student becomes ill during class, the catechist or aide will bring the child to the office and the parents will be called. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact listed on the registration form will be contacted.

Tardy

If a student arrives after the bell has rung, parents must sign-in the student at the hall monitor's desk. Any student arriving 30 minutes late will automatically be marked absent.

SPY Mass

Mass is held for all students and their families the second Sunday of each month at 6:00pm (see calendar for dates).

Early Dismissal

A written note (or, in the case of an emergency, a phone call to the Religious Education office) must be received by the office / hall monitor on the day of early dismissal. Parents are to come into the building to pick up their child and sign them out at the hall monitor's desk. Parents are not to go to the classroom to get their child for early dismissal. This will be handled by the hall monitor. Students that drive are not permitted to leave until the end of class unless parents send a note. Students or parents may not have a ride share service pick up the child.

Normal Dismissal

Due to the dangerous traffic situation occurring in the parking lot, parents of grades K – 6 students must come into the building to pick up their children. Please do not park along the curb by the portico. Children will not be permitted to walk to the Pickerington sports complex (PYAA) on their own. Students or parents may not have a ride share service pick up the child.

Weather Cancellations

All cancellations will be announced on the following TV and radio stations. Please note – we do not follow the Pickerington Schools schedule for weather cancellations.

WBNS –10 TV, WSYX – 6 TV, WCMH – 4 TV, FOX – 28 TV, ONN, WTVN (610 AM), WNCI (97.9FM), WCOL (92.3FM), WHOK (95.5FM), WFJX (105.7FM), WSNY (94.7FM), WBNS (1460AM), WBNS (97.1FM), WLWQ (96.3FM), WOBD (107.9FM), SMOOTH JAZZ (104.3/103.5), WLZT (93.3FM)

Curriculum

The curriculum used at Seton is approved by the Pastor and meets the Six Task of Catechesis as set forth in the *National Directory for Catechesis*, as well as the Four Pillars of the Catholic Church which are defined by the *Catechism of the Church*. Tests or assessments may be given periodically by the catechists throughout the year.

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations are not grade cards but progress reports. These are important because we feel you, the parents, want your children to receive the best possible religious education and want to be made aware of any impending problems. Evaluations for all grades will be sent home mid-year and year-end.

Textbooks

Workbooks and folders may be issued to students. The workbook, folder and assigned homework, if any, are to be brought to class each week. Important information from the Director or Catechist will be emailed and/or sent home with the student.

Student Photos

A picture of your child in grades Kindergarten -12 may be taken for classroom bulletin boards or to be used on the monitors in the Gathering Space and/or in the Religious Education hallway. Also, pictures of children in grades 7-12 may appear on the Seton website and the SPY Facebook page. Every effort will be made to ensure that these pictures remain within the confines of the parish. Consent for photos was included on your child's Religious Education registration form.

Fees

Fees charged are per student and include a portion of religious education salaries, utilities, curriculum resources (textbook, videos), guest speakers, craft supplies, classroom supplies, Bibles, pencils, folders etc. Note: A replacement fee will be charged for lost books.

Parental Involvement

There are many opportunities for parents to be actively involved with their child's religious education by serving in the classroom, office, as hall monitors, or in many other volunteer capacities. Parental concerns are to be directed to the Mary Jane Sobczyk and Barb Serrano. Parents are always welcome to sit in on religious education sessions. You must sign in at the hall monitor's desk and receive a visitor tag from the Religious Education office staff.

Field Trips/Retreats

Permission slips / medical forms signed by parents are required for any activity off the premises.

Security

All catechists, aides and staff are fingerprinted and have completed the *Protecting God's Children* program. Exterior doors to the Religious Education wing will be locked right after the bell rings. This is for security purposes and the safety of the children. They will be unlocked before dismissal. We have hall monitors on duty each session, as well as Religious Education staff. Safety procedures are posted in each classroom.

Sacramental Preparation

- First Penance will be celebrated by all 2nd graders providing they are ready.
 - At least one parent must attend the parent meeting.
 - Students will need to complete the home preparation workbook with their parents.
 - Parents will determine the readiness of the child by completing a readiness assessment form and returning it to the Religious Education office.
- First Communion is generally celebrated upon completion of Grade 2.
 - At least one parent must attend the parent meeting.
 - Students are expected to maintain good attendance especially in grades 1 and 2. We do realize children get sick and family emergencies arise. Please call our office and let us know. We will provide you with missed work.
 - Students will need to complete the home preparation workbook with their parents.
 - Students must attend the First Communion workshop and rehearsal.
- Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation is a two-year program. In grade 9, the first year of the program, students will attend *Alpha for Youth*. In grade 10, the focus will be on specific Sacramental preparation.

Confirmation is offered to grade 10 students providing the following requirements are met:

- Candidate completed *Alpha for Youth* (9th grade).
- Candidates must attend and successfully complete religious education classes in grades 7-10.
- Candidate must attend the Confirmation retreat.
- One parent and the student must attend the parent/student meeting.
- Candidates must complete a Confirmation interview/readiness assessment.

Fire Drills

Fire escape exits are posted in each classroom. At the beginning of the year, catechists will go over the escape routes with their students, as well as tornado procedures.

Restroom Facilities

Students should be encouraged to use the restroom facilities before coming to class. Students will be permitted to use the restroom facilities during class time. However, since class is only 1 1/4 hours, we need to keep this to a minimum.

Conduct

Please remind your children often of the importance of their conduct during religious education classes. We have a lot of material to cover in a short amount of time. Catechists and aides do not have the time to continually correct improper behavior. Catechists and aides are sacrificing their time to share the Catholic faith with the children; they deserve respect and the children's complete attention.

A student shall not use abusive, obscene, or offensive language or gestures toward another student or adult. No gum chewing or wearing of hats is permitted while in the building. No use of cell phones or text messaging is permitted during class.

Recurring infractions will result in being sent to the office. The student and the Director will discuss his/her behavior and reach a conclusion about appropriate behavior during class. The incident will be noted, and the student will be returned to class. If a student is sent from class a second time, the Director will call the parents and inform them of the situation and set up a meeting with them to discuss the student's behavior. The incident and the parent meeting will be noted, and the student may return to class. If a student is sent from class a third time, a meeting will take place with the parents, the Director, and the Pastor. The student will not be readmitted to class without a parent accompanying him/her until the teacher, the parents and the Director deem that the situation has been resolved.

Damage of Property

Parents will be held responsible for property damaged by their child.

Service Hours

Seton Parish is delighted to share in the efforts with local schools in providing opportunities for students to receive credit for service hours. For students to be eligible for hours to count from Seton Parish, they must participate in parish sponsored outreach and /or service programs (such as Cranks Creek, Portsmouth Food Trip, sorting or loading supplies for trips, IHN). Being a member of Seton Parish is not the same as being active in a youth group. Attending religious education class only does not meet the standards of being involved in 'youth group' activities. If you have questions, please contact Barbara Serrano at bserrano@setonparish.com.

Requirements for Chaperones, Adult and Young Adult Leaders

The role adults and young adult volunteers play as leadership volunteers with our youth ministry program is essential. To assist with understanding the importance of this role and for the adult team to be effective, caring, and supportive of the difficulties our youth face each day, we have set forth boundaries, guidelines and expectations of the adults and young adult team members. These guidelines are to assist with effectively understanding their role within the boundaries of our safe environment policies.

All adults interested in chaperoning activities sponsored by Seton Parish's Youth Ministry Office must be compliant with *Protecting God's Children* and safe environment policies and procedures. All adults and adult leaders must have a background check, attend a *Protecting God's Children* session, and complete and comply with required paperwork including, but not limited to, a volunteer application, code of conduct, and harassment policy. All volunteers must comply with all diocesan and parish policies. Seton Parish Youth activities, gatherings or events may not be held in private residences.

Young adults must be at least 21 years of age to be considered a full young adult team member. Young adults 18-21 years old have many opportunities to continue involvement with youth activities but are limited from acting as overnight chaperones or young adult team members. Just as we prepare students to enter full communion with the Church through Confirmation, we must ensure preparation of our young adults for the responsibilities of being a role model, mentor, and chaperone. During this transition, we invite young adults who are not going away to college to participate in many of the parish activities available within the church and on the diocesan level until they reach the age of 21 and are ready to accept full responsibility and care for our students' physical and spiritual growth. Young adults 18-21 years old are welcome to participate in the SPY Band, act as religious education facilitators, help with car washes, bake sales, praise and worship, and many other activities that do not involve overnight responsibilities.

Diocesan Policies

Below are the Diocese of Columbus Code of Conduct for Catechists and Harassment Policy that all of our volunteers sign prior to making their commitment to the children of Seton Parish.

Code of Conduct for Catechists

1. Ecclesial & Theological
 - a) Catechists work collaboratively with the pastor, catechetical leaders, parents and other associates in ministry.
 - b) Catechists faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
 - c) Catechists are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§231, Code of Canon Law).
 - d) Catechists respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their own personal form of spirituality normative.
2. Inclusion
 - a) Catechists recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
 - b) Catechists serve all people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
 - c) Catechists act to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.
3. Accountability
 - a) Catechists are accountable to the pastor, catechetical leader, or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
 - b) Catechists are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministry “...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently” (§231, Code of Canon Law).
 - c) Catechists exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.
4. Confidentiality
 - a) Catechists respect confidentiality yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
 - b) Catechists are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
 - c) Catechists are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
 - d) Catechists adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
5. Conduct
 - a) Catechists support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of children and adolescents.
 - b) Catechists are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
 - c) Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between catechists and a child or adolescent are unethical and are prohibited.
 - d) Catechists model healthy and positive behaviors with children, adolescents and other adults.
 - e) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with children or adolescents is unethical and is prohibited.
6. Parish

- a) Catechists are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policy with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

Harassment Policy

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.
2. It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spiritually enriching environment in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No participant, volunteer adult leader or parish staff member – male or female – should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.
3. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions;
 - Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
 - Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance;
 - The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects;
 - Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
 - Graffiti of a sexual nature;
 - Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
 - Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.

Sex harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature – it also includes harassment that is based on gender. Gender based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or behaviors which are based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between employees and volunteers must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement.

Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a student after an accomplishment, a youth minister consoling an adolescent with an injury or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, youth participant, or visitor to the parish activity.
5. Any person who believes that he/she is subject to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of religious education. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a program administrator or pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan director of religious education. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The Diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.