

*Catholic Faith Formation Program
(CFF)*



Catechist Handbook

St. Paul Catholic Church

8720 Florin Road
Sacramento, CA 95828

St. Paul Catholic Church

VISION

St. Paul Catholic Church, nurtured by the love of Jesus Christ, inspired by the exemplary life of St. Paul, enlightened by the Holy Spirit and guided by the teachings and traditions of our Holy Mother Church, radiates and shares Jesus' mission of proclaiming the living Word of God.

MISSION

We, God's people of St. Paul Catholic Parish in Sacramento, California, a multicultural, inclusive and welcoming community, inspired by the love of Jesus Christ are called: to bring all people of God together in worship, to declare our belief in God's love based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate and grow in our relationship with God.

Catholic Faith Formation Program

MISSION

The Catholic Faith Formation of St. Paul Parish, inspired by the love of Jesus Christ, is committed to build a strong Foundation of Faith for the children, youth and adults in the parish. Likewise, the program offers prayer, devotion, sacramental and liturgical services to deepen and strengthen their experience.

GOALS:

- To bring about in the children a deeper knowledge and love for Jesus Christ and assist in the development and growth in their faith.
- To prepare the children to receive the sacrament of Initiation.
- To prepare the non-baptized children and youth to be received into the Catholic Church
- To foster and enhance a cooperative effort between the parents and Catechists in the children's faith formation.

*"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ".
(236) All evangelizing activity is understood as promoting*

communion with Jesus Christ (#80) General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)

CATECHIST'S PRAYER

O Jesus, Great and Beloved Teacher, thank You for inviting us to share Your teaching mission as a catechist. Thank You for calling us to proclaim God's presence and to announce the Good News of the Gospel to those we teach. Guided by Your Holy Spirit and the teachings of Your Holy Church, may we always be faith-filled and courageous catechist. May love and concern for those we teach always be our guiding motivation. May our hearts be on fire within us as we prepare our lessons and our class activities. May we view every lesson we teach as an opportunity to share God's incredible love. Thank You for calling. Thank You for Your love. Amen.

QUALITIES OF CATECHISTS

The National Catechetical Directory has established the ideal qualities for a catechist:

- **Response to Call** Catechists are called by God through the Church to the ministry of catechesis, not only to give time and talent for re-echoing the faith, but to be open to one's own deepening understanding, and living of the Catholic faith.

- **Witness to the Gospel** Catechists are called to believe and witness the gospel and its power to transform life. Catechists are persons with an ongoing commitment to God's Word in their mind, in their hearts, and in their lives.
- **Commitment to the Church** Catechists are called to be ministers of the Word and representatives of the Church. They are called to teach what the teaching authority of the Church proclaims, and when teaching any subject must always teach what the Church teaches, regardless of personal beliefs or opinions.
- **Shares in Community** Our God is a community of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Made in the image and likeness of God, we are called to be God's people a community of faith. Catechists are therefore called to foster and build a faith community in their classrooms and in all aspects of the parish.
- **Servant of the Community** Catechists are called to serve the Christian community in the spirit of Jesus and the prophets. This service means not only seeking to meet the needs of individuals within the parish, but also in the larger local and global community. This challenges the Catechist to be aware of Church teachings and actions in terms of peace and justice. Catechists need to be open to receiving the service and care of others in order to truly be of service to them.

- **Knowledge and Skills** Catechists are called to prepare for this important ministry by acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate gospel values and Church teachings effectively for different age groups.

JESUS THE TEACHER

Jesus' most common title was teacher. In the four gospels, Jesus is addressed or referred to as "Teacher" almost fifty times. Jesus communicated the Good News by teaching in the synagogues and by sharing his message wherever groups gathered around him.

How did Jesus teach? He told stories or parables. He used examples from the experiences of the people he was with and taught them by the way he lived. Jesus used these teaching methods in his day to communicate his message.

As a Catechist, you are following in the footsteps of Jesus, the master teacher. Use his methods to teach your students.

PREPARATION FOR THE CATECHIST

- The catechists must know their Lesson well to teach efficiently and effectively.
- The catechists must be persons of prayer, always recognizing the need for divine guidance and inspiration in their catechetical ministry.

- The catechists are expected to be present in all CFF classes.

The Attitude of the Catechist toward the Class

- Be confident, yet have a humble sense of your mission to speak the Good News.
- Be realistic about your abilities, responsibilities and limitations as catechists.
- Be enthusiastic, interested, cheerful and unafraid to show a sense of humor.
- Be open to learn and to grow in your faith from experiences in the classroom and from your students.
- Use pleasant speech and conversational tone.

The Attitude of the Catechist toward the Student

- Be sympathetic and understanding of each student. Make each one feel important and a part of the group.
- Learn to listen to what each student says, verbally and non-verbally, before, during and after class.
- Be fair and treat each student the same during and after classes; no favoritism.
- Keep the class interesting and dynamic.
- Be prepared and have alternate activities when classes are finished ahead of time.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans should keep the same basic form each week. Classes run smoothly with an established and consistent teaching methodology.

What should a lesson plan comprise?

1. An easily identifiable area listing the main objective/s
2. A separate area listing all the materials needed for a particular lesson
3. An easy-to-read outline for class
 - ✓ A welcome activity
 - ✓ Opening Prayer
 - ✓ **REVIEW:** A brief review of the past lesson and the Sunday Gospel helps the children reconnect with the previous lessons.
 - ✓ **TOPIC OF THE DAY:** This is usually the time to read from the book or give background information for the lesson.
 - ✓ **ACTIVITIES:** These are the multi-sensory activities that help emphasize the main objective/s.
 - ✓ Closing Prayer

It is also helpful to include in the lesson plan any important reminders needed such as meetings, practice or requirement/s for the following class.

A GOOD CATECHIST NEEDS THREE THINGS:

1. Open Heart
2. Willingness to Serve
3. Good Lesson Plan

CATECHIST REQUIREMENTS

Catechists should be Catholics who have been confirmed; are at least 21 years old; and are leading “a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken” (Canon 874). Those confirmed but not yet 21 years old, may aide catechists.)

Catechists should also be practicing Catholic adults, fully initiated, not under canonical penalty, asked and willing to serve, living to serve, living in conformity with Church teachings including laws on marriage.

Catechists are required to go through screening (application, background check, interview, etc.) and training process.

TRAINING FOR CATECHISTS

All Catechists and Assistant Catechists are required to complete the *Safe Environment* training program before they

enter a classroom. Safe Environment Renewal Training is required to be completed each year thereafter.

All Catechists must attend teacher In-services and Trainings offered by the Diocese of Sacramento. Attendance at education trainings by the Diocese is strongly encouraged.

FINGERPRINTING

Consistent with both California law and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People adopted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, employees that are hired /volunteer to positions that entail regular contact with minors, including supervisory or disciplinary contact, are required to obtain fingerprint (*criminal background check*) clearance through the California Department of Justice. Fingerprinting is also required for individuals who move from a job in one parish to a job in another parish, or from a position that does not involve contact with minors to one that does.

ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

Parents/guardians are the primary educators of the faith to their children. As primary educators, parents are expected to participate in the Faith Formation of their children. "The same obligation binds sponsors and those who take the place of parents." Canon 774, #2b

(Refer to Students and Parents Handbook pages 5-6 for more detailed information)

SACRAMENT PREPARATION COORDINATOR

Job Summary:

Coordinates, directs, implements and evaluates the parish Sacramental preparation of children; and provides leadership to develop the necessary resources in the parish community for the fruitful preparation of the children to receive their first Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Determines and satisfies the requirements for children who are not suited for the RCIA adapted for children, and need to be catechized for the fruitful celebration of their First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.
- ❖ Facilitates all sacramental formation activities of the faith formation program.
- ❖ Assists in the planning of liturgical activities, prayer services, and retreats scheduled for sacrament preparation course.
- ❖ Collaborates with the pastor, parochial vicar, the faith formation staff, CFF English Coordinator and pastoral ministers.
- ❖ Recruits and provides orientation and guidance to the catechists.

- ❖ Participates in staff meetings – emergency and/or unscheduled.
- ❖ Secures locations, volunteers, catechists, etc for celebrations, seminars and workshops.
- ❖ Provides a calendar of activities with room assignments for classes and/or meetings. Provides keys for the rooms.
- ❖ Updates weekly bulletin announcements in consultation with the DRE.

CFF ENGLISH COORDINATOR

Job Summary:

Facilitates the formulation of a parish vision of catechesis inspired by the new Instruction on Catechesis in consultation with the DRE, pastor and other parish leaders; integrates the important activities of catechesis to the whole parish catechetical program; provides liturgical education; supports moral formation and prayer life; researches appropriate models to address catechetical needs in the parish including adult faith formation; oversees curriculum development and implementation; assists others in the use of texts and resources.

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Maintains programs which meet the needs of the various segments of the parish community under the supervision of the Religious Education Director.

- ❖ Recruits and trains volunteer religious education instructors; maintain a roster of catechetical instructors.
- ❖ Ensures that CFF activities are included in the parish master schedule.
- ❖ Schedules and coordinates the use of the Church for CFF religious/sacramental services.
- ❖ Facilitates the required rooms, time schedules, materials, etc. of CFF program.
- ❖ Works within the budget allocated as approved by the DRE and Pastor for the operation of the CFF Program.
- ❖ Establishes office hours of Religious Education with the DRE's consent.

ROLE OF THE MAIN CATECHIST

The fundamental task of teaching is the responsibility of the Main Catechist. The Assistant Catechist collaborates and assists the main catechist to build a solid faith foundation for the children.

1. Teach the faith by encouraging and recognizing the needs of each child.
2. Set up classroom rules with the children during the first or second week of class. Enforce the rules throughout the year. If a child consistently has a behavioral problem, talk to the child as soon as possible. If talking does not remedy the situation, talk with the parents. If the behavioral problem continues, elevate the situation to the DRE.

3. Create an environment that inspires the children to develop their foundation of faith. AFFIRM, PRAISE and REWARD the children whenever possible, especially if they are making an effort to change for the better.
4. Prepare for class by reviewing the upcoming chapter. Suggestions:
 - a. Visit www.blestarewe.com for additional ideas
 - b. Use personal faith stories to connect the chapters with everyday life.
 - c. Use games, songs, spontaneous prayer, journaling, or action songs to enhance the chapter
5. Collaborate with the Assistant Catechist and be ready to assume his/her responsibilities in case he/she is absent.
6. Check the inbox in the CFF office for announcements or notes that may need to be made in class.
7. Keep in touch with parents. Keep them up-to-date with progress in class and as regards to the children's prayers. Keep them involved with their children's faith.
8. Basic information:
 - a. **Never leave children alone!**
 - b. Report accidents/illness/emergencies immediately to the DRE. First aid kit is in the CFF office.
 - c. Remain calm, direct children out of the classroom and take them to the CFF office in case a stranger wanders into the classroom.
 - d. As required by State Law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.
 - e. Make sure a parent or legal guardian (18 or older) sign the child out after class.

- f. Take the child to the CFF office to call their parent when parent is running late.
9. If the Main Catechist is unable to hold the class due to illness, or family emergency, he/she is expected to call the Assistant Catechist or Director of Religious Education to find a substitute.
10. Attend CFF functions, meetings, and get-togethers throughout the year. If one is interested in becoming a certified catechist, talk to the DRE.

ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT CATECHIST

The role of the Assistant Catechist is to collaborate and assist the Main Catechist to build a solid faith foundation for the children. The Assistant Catechist can be a team teacher or share in some of the responsibilities of the Main Catechist. The Assistant Catechist should be knowledgeable of the syllabus in case the Main Catechist cannot hold classes.

1. Arrive early to prepare the classroom, get the sign in/out sheet, check mailbox for announcements, etc.
2. Set out the sign in/out sheet for parents and take attendance. Review for consecutive absences. Notify Main Catechist as necessary.
3. Collect, review, and record homework and mass attendance card.
4. Participate in the prayers and activities lead by the Main Catechist.
5. Assist the Main Catechist in maintaining a safe environment in the classroom.

6. Distribute and collect supplies, papers, etc. Walk around to assist children with written activities, crafts and projects.
7. Help individual students with their prayers. Keep a chart on the prayers that have been memorized and recited by each child.
8. Accompany any child who needs to utilize the restroom.
9. Basic information:
 - a. **Never leave children alone!**
 - b. Report accidents/illness/emergencies immediately to the Main Catechist and or DRE. First aid kit is in the CFF office.
 - c. Remain calm, the Main Catechist will direct children out of the classroom and take them to the CFF office.
 - d. As required by State Law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.
 - e. Make sure a parent or legal guardian (18 or older) sign the child out after class.
 - f. Take the child to the CFF office to call their parent when the parent is running late.
 - g. If the Assistant Catechist is absent due to illness, or family emergency, he/she is expected to call the Main Catechist or Director of Religious Education to find a substitute.
10. Attend CFF functions, meetings, and get-togethers throughout the year.

ROLE OF THE OFFICE AIDE

The fundamental task of the Office Aide is to assist the DRE and Coordinator to run the CFF Program.

1. Help the Coordinator run the CFF office smoothly according to his/her directions.
2. Miscellaneous duties:
 - a. running errands before, during and after CFF sessions
 - b. makes photocopies
 - c. delivering supplies to classes
 - d. stuffing envelopes
 - e. preparing for meetings
 - f. make sure CFF rooms are clean and orderly
 - g. be available in CFF office to answer questions
3. Monitor attendance and mass attendance cards and inform DRE when a family needs to be informed regarding a child's attendance.

PRAYERS

The children should be taught the need to pray, how to pray, when we pray, and what to pray. The children need to memorize the prayers at home and as Catechists it is important to have the children's recite their prayers. Keep a chart by the children names on the bulletin board using stamps or stickers.

Each class will follow the prayers provided in the Prayers Before and After Class Handbook available in each classroom.

Prayer requirements are listed below by Grade Level.

PRAYERS

Kindergarten

To reinforce:

To be learned:

Sign of the Cross
Angel of God

First Grade Level

Previous Grade Plus:

The Lord's Prayer
Hail Mary
Glory Be
Grace before Meals
Grace after Meals

Second Grade Level

Previous Grade Plus:

Act of Contrition
Morning Prayer
Evening Prayer

Third Grade Level

Previous Grade Plus:

Apostles' Creed
A Prayer to Follow Jesus
The Rosary and Mysteries

Fourth Grade Level

Previous Grade Plus:

Act of Faith
The Ten Commandments

Fifth Grade Level

Previous Grade Plus:

Act of Hope
The Seven Sacraments
The Beatitudes

Sixth Grade Level

Previous Grade Plus:

Act of Love
The Seven Sorrows of Mary

Seventh Grade

Previous Grade Plus:

Holy Days of Obligation
The Stations of the Cross

Eight Grade

Previous Grade Plus:

Prayer to the Holy Spirit
Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
The Spiritual and Corporal Works
of Mercy

FAMILY MASS

The 9:00 am Mass every 1st Sunday is dedicated as Family Mass. Throughout the CFF year, classes are assigned to a Family Mass in which the children will assist with hospitality, children's choir, readings, presentation of the gifts, and collection. The CFF office will provide a schedule at the beginning of the year identifying which grade level will be responsible for the Family Mass each month. The Catechists are responsible for the following:

- Identify and encourage children to participate in the Family Mass.

- Remind participating parents and children to attend the rehearsal (if they cannot participate, another child will be assigned).
- Remind parents and children to attend the 9:00 am mass
- Catechists / Assistant Catechists are encouraged to attend the 9:00 am Mass.

CHILD SAFETY

Safety of the Children is very important! Please remind parents of the following:

- Walk their child to and from class.
- Sign their child in and out (must be 18 or older).
- Remind parents to stay with their children until a Catechist arrive to the classroom.

MASS ATTENDANCE

Children are expected to attend Mass on a weekly basis (Saturday or Sunday) and on Holy Days of Obligation and have their Mass Card signed/stamped. (See Students and Parents Handbook page 9 for more details).

- Have a discussion with the children about what happened during mass (age appropriate)
- Distribute the mass attendance card
- Complete the mass attendance log weekly and at the end of each month turn it into the CFF Office
- Notify the CFF Office when a child has missed 3 consecutive masses

CLASS ATTENDANCE

- Utilize the class attendance and mass attendance log for each child (attachment A)
- Fill the log out weekly and at the end of each month turn it into the CFF Office
- Notify the CFF Office when a child has missed 3 consecutive classes
- When a child is absent, remind the child and/or parent to go to the website, look at the syllabus and complete the missed assignment
- At the end of the year, a Certificate of Attendance will be presented to the children who have perfect or near perfect attendance (to be identified by CFF office). The goal is to achieve 100% perfect attendance.
Note: there is less than 30 class days a year.
- If a child is picked up prior to the end of class, please make sure that the child has been signed out.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Children are expected to participate in class the following ways:

- complete homework and be prepared for discussions.
- memorize prayers and be able to recite them.
- pay attention by listening attentively and participate actively.

- be willing to be a part of the conversation as regards to the lesson, mass, etc.

TEXTBOOKS

The Child should be reminded to bring their book to class each week. If a child forgets their book for 2 classes in a row and then request a new book, there may be a replacement cost.

HOMEWORK

Homework can be based on the week's lesson at the Catechist's discretion. The Catechist's may opt to utilize the take home family at the beginning of each chapter.

TESTS

Review tests can be given at the end of each unit or after every 4 chapters. The unit tests are included in a separate workbook.

FAITH LEARNING ASSESSMENT

The children's learning progress will be documented in the Faith Assessment Report which will be given to the parents in

the middle of the school year. The final Faith Assessment Report will be distributed at the end of the year to show proof of promotion to the next level.

SUPPLIES

Check with the CFF office for available supplies i.e. paper, pencils, crayons, etc. (Anything purchased on your own will be considered a donation to the program and will not be reimbursed.)

PHOTOCOPY JOBS

If copies of certain pages or documents are needed, please leave a note in the CFF office with the following: number of copies needed, date needed by, and grade level/Catechist

RESOURCES

CFF Office	Books, DVD's & Videos
blestarewe.com	Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)
Vatican.va	General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)
faithfirst.com	National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)
catholicmom.com	
DynamicCatholic.com	Be Bold. Be Catholic

If you have any other resource ideas to share, please notify the DRE and they will be added to the list of resources.

THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

This theory, created by Howard Gardner, gives different areas in which people communicate best and best understand the world around them. Most people are strong in more than one area. Knowing this theory can help us to implement various activities to complement learning styles.

Type of Intelligence

Use these Activities

VERBAL – shows strength with words, word usage, and reading.

Reading silently, reading out loud, journal, poetry, drama, listening to reflections, hearing stories, writing in student texts, prayer leader

LOGICAL/ MATHEMATICAL – **can see patterns, understand logical relationships, good with numbers, good reasoning**

Outlining, problem solving, puzzles, deciphering codes

MUSICAL – **is good at hearing different aspects of music such as tone, pitch, rhythm**

Signing songs, making up songs, listening to music

SPATIAL – **sees the relationships of objects and re-creates these things in another form**

Art of all kinds, imagery, active imagination, building

BODY/KINESTHETIC- **has good use of body skills; may be graceful or athletic**

Drama, games, body language, dancing, sports, role playing

INTERPERSONAL – is good with social skills and interaction

Group projects, collaboration, group leading, organizing

INTRAPERSONAL – understand the world and how other people and things relate to self through inner life

Journaling, quiet prayer, meditations and reflections, listening, videos, quiet reading

NATURALISTIC – exhibits appreciation and understanding of nature and relationships of things in nature

Observing nature, understanding the relationship of God and creation

**BASIC CATECHIST CERTIFICATION
APPLICATION
DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**

Record of Courses Completed for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

School _____ City _____

Parish _____ City _____

E-Mail Address (please print) _____

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT

Profession of Faith 8 hours

Date Instructor Hours

Revelation in Scripture and Tradition/Faith Response _____

Trinity and the Image of God _____

Christology and Redemption _____

Church/ Mary and the Saints _____

Celebration of the Christian Mystery 8 hours

Paschal Mystery _____

Sacramental Theology/ Liturgy _____

Sacraments of Initiation _____

Sacraments of Healing/Service of Communion _____

Life in Christ 8 hours

Dignity of Human person/redemption _____

Ten Commandments and Beatitudes _____

Catholic Social Teaching _____

Conscience Formation/Decision Making _____

Christian Prayer 8 hours

Call to Prayer/Lord's Prayer _____

Prayer/Worship _____

Prayer Styles/learning Prayer _____

Introduction to Scripture _____

Communal Life _____

The nature of Catechesis & Catechetical Development 8 hours

Faith and Human Development _____
Evangelization and nature of Catechesis _____
Catechetical Process/Family _____
& Culture as Context for Catechesis _____
Learning & Teaching Styles/resources, use of Media _____

Spiritual Development of the Catechist 10 hours

Combination of:
Prayer Experiences _____
Retreats _____
Spiritual Direction _____

BASIC CATECHIST CERTIFICATION:

Date: _____ Catechist Signature: _____

Date: _____ Approved By: _____
School Principal, DRE or CRE

PRINCIPAL or DRE: Please attach the Catechist Observation Form which you have completed for one session which has been reviewed for evaluation. (see page 31 of Certification booklet)

FOR EQUIVALENCY APPLICATION ONLY:

Date: _____ Approved By _____
School Principal, DRE or CRE

Examination administered by: _____

Date of Examination: _____ Score: _____

PRINCIPAL or DRE: Please attach the Catechist Observation Form which you have completed for one session which has been reviewed for evaluation. (see page 31 of Certification booklet)

CERTIFICATION GRANTED:

Date: _____ Approved by: _____
Director of Catechesis or Assistant Superintendent

Completion of this form is the responsibility of the catechist. The School principal or the Parish Director of religious Education should verify the accuracy of the records and send this completed form to the **Department of Evangelization and Catechesis**, 2110 Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95818. A certificate will be issued and sent to the Principal or the Director of religious Education to be given to the catechist.

