

Catholic
Diocese of Peoria

Catholic Faith Formation

Parent ✦ Student Handbook

Office of Evangelization and Faith Formation



Catholic Diocese of Peoria

“Dear young people, let yourselves be taken over by the light of Christ, and spread that light wherever you are. The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with Him in the building of the civilization of love.” St John Paul II

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Catholic Faith Formation Program strives to provide an environment where your children can experience God's love, and learn how to grow in the faith we share. This handbook is intended to provide the basic expectations which all of us can share as we strive to be good examples of God's love in the world.

Through the program offered, the Catechists and Teachers strive to challenge each student to reach full potential through spiritual, moral, and intellectual development, so they may become an intelligent and compassionate person who incorporates Catholic Christian values into everyday living.

All families are welcome to be part of our Parish Catholic Faith Formation Program which is also commonly called Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD).

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

Each family is to keep a copy of the Parent-Student Handbook and refer to it as needed.

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Catholic Faith Formation classes are only a small part of your child's Catholic education. A faith teacher is only as effective as the life and example of faith that the child experience in his/her home. The parent's attitude concerning the importance of this formation and the example they set at home, the respect they show towards authority, as well as an appreciation of the efforts and good judgment of their child's teacher is reflected in the attitude of the child. To demonstrate their responsibilities the parent shall:

1. Accompany their children to Mass on Sundays and Holy days. (*See the list of Holy Days of Obligation.*)
2. Teach their children how to act at Mass, i.e. when to genuflect, sit, stand, kneel, follow the Missalette, when and how to respond to the Mass parts, etc.
3. Help your children with their faith homework. The primary homework will be to memorize the prayers assigned by the teacher(s). As a parent, you should also practice saying these prayers with your child at home. Praying with your child before meals or at bedtime is an easy way to ensure the prayers are being practiced in everyday life and that faith is important in your child's life.
4. Notify the child's teacher and the Director of Religious Education of any special needs, including attention deficit disorder, autism, restroom issues, and any food allergies. From time to time, teachers may bring snacks or treats for the children, so it is very important we know about any allergies.
5. Ensure the children are dropped off and picked up on time.
6. Following each class, talk to their children about what was discussed in class. Did they bring any completed work home from class? Was there homework assigned? Discuss the lessons and what was learned in class.
7. Understand that communications with teachers is recommended and welcome.

8. Contact your Director of Religious Education in your parish by phone or email with any questions about the responsibilities or any other information contained in this handbook. (Contacting the child's teacher is also an acceptable means to communicate any concerns or questions about a specific class.)
9. Parents must **SIGN AND RETURN** the paper stating that you received and are aware of your responsibilities specified in this document to your Director of Religious Education or Parish Office.

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Students must be responsible for their actions. To do this, the students shall:

1. Treat others as you want to be treated. Jesus Himself said, "Whatever you do for these least brothers of mine, you do it also for me." (Matt. 25:40)
2. Respect the Parish/School property.
3. Be respectful of the property of students/ministries who use the same parish classroom at different times. Please don't open desks or handle other ministries' property; refrain from writing on desktops or tables used for your class.
4. Handle the Catholic Faith Formation text books with care so they can be used for many years to come. Please don't write in the text books. Treat the Activity Books with care. If the activity book has been taken home, it must be brought back to class the next week.
5. Come to class prepared; ensure any assignments are complete and ready to turn in; pay attention and participate in class and be ready to answer any questions.
6. There is to be no cell phone use in class **unless specifically instructed by the teacher.**
7. Seating may be assigned. Please remember where you sit so the teacher can begin class on time.

ABSENTEEISM

Students in the Catholic Faith Formation program are expected to be present unless illness prevents it. Each time a student misses a class an excuse must be signed and dated by the parents stating the reason for the absence. Parents should call the parish office or write to the Director of Religious Education prior of the absentee or as soon as possible in case of an emergency if your child will not attend class. Students may be allowed up to four (4) excused absences per school year.

Unfortunately, athletic and other extracurricular events are not excusable reasons for absence. It is our position that there is really nothing more important than the state of a person's soul and preparing the youngest members of our parish family to understand and live the faith should be, and is the highest priority.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Classes for grades 1-8 will begin at _____ and dismiss at _____. It is very important that the children arrive early so that classes begin on time.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

If there is a cancellation of classes because of the weather on the evening prior to classes, a text message/email will be sent out to parents.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

The administering of medicine to a child outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to religious education program personnel except under unusual circumstances. Only when absolutely necessary is the religious education program willing to accept responsibility for administering medications, and then under the following guidelines:

1. The religious education program will never administer/dispense medicines (including "over the counter drugs") to students without specific authorization by both a licensed physician and the parent of the students. An "Authorization for Medication" form must be completed and submitted by the parent. The name of the medication and dosage must be indicated on this form.
2. All medication must be brought to the office with a parent's authorization.
3. Only prescription medication can be brought to religious education program and must be stored in a religious education program office; no over-the-counter medication is allowed, unless a doctor's written authorization is submitted.
4. Prescription medication must be in the original bottle which must be labeled and must have the exact dosage.
5. The religious education program will not dispense medication, so students are responsible for their own medication.
6. All medications will remain in a secure location. (By exception, students who are asthmatic may carry a prescribed inhaler with them during the religious education program day.) A written log will be kept of dispensed medication.

SUPERVISION

The students are supervised by an adult from the time of their arrival until all students are picked up after religion class. No student may leave the parish/school grounds during religion class unless they have a note from parents and permission from the Director of Religious Education.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES

Catholic Faith Formation follows and abides by the all the Catholic Education Policies and Norms established by the Roman Catholic Church and the Catholic Diocese of Peoria in Illinois.

ENVELOPE SYSTEM

When sending money or messages for any reason please enclose them in a sealed envelope with the student's name on it, the amount of money enclosed and what it is for.

FORMATION IN HUMAN DIGNITY

Our children are God's great gift to us and we must do all we can to keep them safe and healthy. In previous years, we have implemented a program, provided by the Diocese of Peoria, called Formation in Human Dignity and most of our children have participated in this program. This program is aimed at helping parents and their children to become aware of their great dignity as children of God, to appreciate the gift of our life

and to be safe. ***It is not a sex education program.*** The Diocese of Peoria remains committed to the safety and protection of all God’s Children.

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

COMMUNICATIONS

If a problem or question concerning a child should arise, parents should contact the teacher, and/or the Director of Religious Education.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

The abuse or destruction of property by any student, whether it belongs to others, the school/parish or themselves, shall not be tolerated. If this occurs, the student will be responsible for repairing the damage; if a text or activity book is lost or destroyed the student will be responsible for the cost of replacing the book.

STUDENT DRUG ABUSE POLICY

Direct involvement or participation in the consumption, use/misuse, sale or gift of alcoholic beverages, marijuana, look alike/counterfeit drugs, prescription/nonprescription drugs other controlled substances, at any time on the school/parish property, is a violation of program policy and will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

1. Direct involvement or participation in consuming or use/misuse of any of the above mentioned substances could result in one of the following:
 1. Notification of parents/guardians and other proper authorities.
 2. Suspension up to four (4) classes.
 3. A hearing to determine expulsion.
2. Selling or distribution of any of the above mentioned substances will result in the following three (3) procedures:
 1. Notification of parents/guardians and other proper authorities.
 2. Immediate suspension for four (4) classes.
 3. A hearing to determine expulsion.

GANG POLICY

“Gang” as defined in this policy, shall mean individuals who associate with each other primarily for criminal, disruptive, and/or other activities prohibited by law and/or Church policies. The presence of gangs and gang activity interferes with the required appropriate discipline in the program. Gangs also foster anti-social behaviors, attitudes and practices which may endanger the health, safety, and welfare of our students. Therefore, students are prohibited from participating in any activity related to a gang or secret society while attending religion classes.

Unsanctioned activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Soliciting and/or recruiting others for membership.
2. Participating in and/or inciting physical violence.

3. Extorting or soliciting money and/or services; requesting any person to pay for protection, insurance, or payment of dues.
4. Coercing, harassing, and/or otherwise intimidating, threatening, or causing harm to any person or living creature.
5. Wearing, possessing, using, displaying in any manner, distributing, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other item commonly associated with membership in or affiliation with a gang or secret society.
6. Using any communication, verbal or nonverbal (gestures, handshakes etc.), suggesting or showing membership in, or affiliation with a gang or secret society.
7. Engaging in any activity or omission intended to promote or further the interests of any gang or gang activity or society including, but not limited to, distributing literature, drawing or displaying unauthorized symbols on any surface, or teaching others to “represent” or act like a member of a gang or secret society.
8. Any act or activity which violates any law or any policy of the Parish Catholic Faith Formation Program when such act or activity is taken to further the interests of a gang or secret society.

Disciplinary action could result in one or more of the following:

1. Warning
2. Notification of Parents/Guardians
3. Parent/Guardians Conferences
4. Suspension up to ten (10) classes
5. Police Referral
6. Expulsion warning and/or hearing to determine expulsion.

STUDENT HARASSMENT POLICY

We strive to provide for the needs of children and adults in a caring and supportive Christian environment. When this trust is broken the gospel calls us to search out the truth in order for justice to take place so dignity and respect may be restored. These behaviors include:

1. Unwelcome verbal, physical, or sexual advances.
2. Unwanted requests of the victim.
3. Unwanted verbal comments of a sexual nature.
4. Unwanted verbal, physical, or sexual conduct on the part of the person harassing.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING HARASSED

1. Student should tell the harasser what their feelings are and ask the harasser to stop. This can also be done in a written form such as a note. If this is too difficult to do alone, the student should seek help from a teacher, parent, friend, and/or director.
2. If the behavior is repeated or is a major offense, report it to a teacher or the Director of Religious Education. Reporting sexual or other harassment will not affect grades or assignments. Both the reporter and the accused have the right to confidentiality.
3. After an investigation that proves the report true, the harasser will be subject to the discipline code, which includes suspension, expulsion and/or police involvement. An adult will be subject to legal charges.

WEAPONS POLICY

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Possession, distribution, use, purchase, or sale of an explosive, firearms, or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon shall be prohibited in parish/school buildings, or on parish/school grounds.

Students found in possession, distribution, use, purchase, or sale of any explosive, firearms, or any object that can be reasonably considered a weapon could result in one or more of the following:

1. Notification of parents and other proper authorities
2. Immediate suspension pending a hearing to determine expulsion.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is strongly related to our Christian values. We understand that in all education, the principles for discipline are set at home. Because we are a Christian Catholic Community, we still continue to foster discipline and do not tolerate lack of respect toward God, self, persons in authority, and classmates in our Catholic Faith Formation Program; nor will we tolerate abuse of property or parish/school rules.

Every child is to be treated as an individual and accorded the dignity of a child of God. The teacher's own poise, refinement, and discernment give him/her the ability to create a social atmosphere conducive to proper student conduct, to handle disorders in terms of their causes, to know when and where it is the last resort.

In guiding the student's growth in Christian attitudes, values, and behavior, it is well to emphasize the positive rather than the negative.

The following procedures for handling unacceptable discipline are to be avoided.

1. All forms of corporal punishment.
2. Personal indignities such as striking, sarcasm, ridicule, name calling, nagging, and comparing.
3. Indiscriminate punishment of all students for the misconduct of some.

PERMANENT DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

This procedure for permanent dismissal of students from the Catholic Faith Formation Program has been designated in accordance with the principles of justice and mercy, church law, diocesan educational policy and administrative civil law where it applies, and local educational policy and administrative regulations.

The procedures consist of three main parts:

- A. Notifications of Dismissal.
- B. Meeting with the director with the student and parents/guardians.
- C. An opportunity for recourse with a disciplinary committee of the Education Commission.
 - A. Notification of Dismissal
 1. When the director believes there is a reason for the permanent dismissal of a student, that student, (depending on age) and the parents/guardians are informed, verbally, in person or by phone.
 2. Written notification should follow:

3. Reasons for considered dismissal;
 4. Copy of dismissal procedures including the right to recourse process;
 5. Possible dates and times for a hearing;
 6. Forms on which parents can indicate which date and time is convenient for them. This form is to be signed and returned to the Director of Religious Education's office as soon as possible, usually not longer than two (2) working days after it has been received.
- B. Meeting of student, parent/guardian with the director.
1. The purpose of this meeting is to give the student and his/her parents/guardians a chance to ask questions about the reason for dismissal, to present their accounts of the situation and/or respond to reason given for dismissal.
 2. The director presides at this meeting with student and parents/guardians to be present. Teacher or staff members, if involved may also be in attendance. In some instances the pastor will be present.
 3. The meeting should be kept as informal as possible. Tapes or verbatim records are not encouraged at this level. As soon as possible, usually no longer than twenty-four (24) hours, the student, parents/guardians are informed of the decision.
- C. If the decision is for permanent dismissal the parents/guardians should be given the opportunity to withdraw the student.

PRAYERS

By the time the child is enrolled in the first grade she/he should have learned from their home environment the importance of prayer in daily life.

In religion class, children are taught the necessity to pray well; opportunities are provided in each class to pray formal (memorized) prayers or to pray spontaneously.

A list of prayers which we encourage the children to memorize is listed below.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Grade 1: | Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory be, Angel of God |
| Grade 2: | Grace before Meals, Act of Contrition, Mass Responses, 10 Commandments |
| Grade 3: | Apostle's Creed, 7 Sacraments, Joyful and Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary |
| Grade 4: | Fatima Prayer, Hail Holy Queen, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary |
| Grade 5: | Memorare, Morning Offering, The Angelus |
| Grade 6: | Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love/Charity, Prayer for the Faithful Departed |
| Grade 7: | Prayer to Saint Joseph, Regina Cæli |
| Grade 8: | Prayer to Saint Michael, Come Holy Spirit |

PRAYERS BY GRADE

GRADE 1

<p>SIGN OF THE CROSS In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>OUR FATHER (THE LORD'S PRAYER) 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen</p>	<p>ANGEL OF GOD Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day, be at my side, to light, to guard to rule and guide. Amen.</p>

GRADE 2:

<p>GLORY BE 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.</p>	<p>ACT OF CONTRITION O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all, because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.</p>
<p>GRACE BEFORE MEALS Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from Thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.</p>	

GRADE 3:

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and earth;
And in Jesus, His only Son Our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into Hell; the third day
He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into Heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father
almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the
living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE ROSARY

The Mysteries of the Rosary:

The Joyful Mysteries:

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Nativity
4. The Presentation of the Lord
5. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple

The Luminous Mysteries

1. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan
2. The First Miracle at the Wedding Feast at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper

GRADE 4:

PRAYERS OF THE ROSARY

The Mysteries of the Rosary:

The Sorrowful Mysteries:

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death of our Lord

The Glorious Mysteries

1. The Resurrection of the Lord
2. The Ascension of the Lord
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
4. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Mary
5. The Crowning of Mary as the Queen of Heaven and Earth

The Fatima Prayer

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins.
Save us from the fires of hell,
lead all souls to heaven,
especially those in most need of thy mercy.

Hail Holy Queen

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve;
to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears;
turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile,
show unto us the Blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Amen.

GRADE 5:

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.

Amen.

MORNING OFFERING

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world for the salvation of souls, the reparation of sins, the reunion of all Christians, and in particular, for the intentions of the Holy Father this month.
Amen.

THE ANGELUS

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary:

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit

(Pray one Hail Mary)

Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

(Pray one Hail Mary)

And the Word was made Flesh:

And dwelt among us.

(Pray one Hail Mary)

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God:

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ, our Lord.

~ Amen.

GRADE 6:

ACT OF CHARITY (LOVE)

O Lord God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbor for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love.

In this love I intend to live and die.

Amen.

PRAYERS FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

In this faith I intend to live and die.

Amen.

ACT OF HOPE

O Lord God,
I hope by your grace for the pardon of all my sins and after life here to gain eternal happiness because you have promised it

Who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful.

In this hope I intend to live and die.

Amen.

GRADE 7:**PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH**

O St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interests and desires.

O St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine Son alleluia all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, so that, having engaged here below your heavenly power,

I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers.

O St. Joseph, I never weary of contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart.

Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

St. Joseph, patron of departing souls, pray for me.

REGINA CÆLI (QUEEN OF HEAVEN)

V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia
R. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia

V. Has risen, as He said, alleluia
R. Pray for us to God, alleluia

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia

Let us pray:
O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life.

Through the same Christ our Lord,
Amen

GRADE 8:**PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL**

St, Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle.

Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And You shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray: O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation.

Through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Holy Days of Obligation

- † January 1st – Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God
- † Easter Sunday
- † Ascension Thursday (40th day of Easter season – moved to Sunday in most dioceses in the United States)
- † August 15th – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- † November 1st – All Saints Day
- † December 8th – Immaculate Conception of Mary
- † December 25th – Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord

THE FIVE PRECEPTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

[For all Catholics to know]

The Church's Precepts are Laws of the Church which remind us Catholics of the absolute minimum and core responsibilities in order to remain "*in good standing with the Church,*" as "practicing Catholics." Hopefully, we carry these out whole-heartedly, embracing the gift of our Catholic Faith and seeing the reasonableness and applicability of them. Also, it is hoped that we will go *beyond* these minimums and embrace the "spirit" of each of them and all the things the Precepts imply, to help us live a fruitful Catholic Christian life. [See *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2030-2051)*]

Why is it that the Church can come up with laws for her members? Because she, as the Bride of Christ, established by Christ upon St. Peter and the other Apostles, has been designated and given the divine authority by Christ to sanctify, govern, and teach the whole world the Good News (Gospel) of Salvation. [See: Matt. Chapters 16 & 18]

THE FIVE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH ARE:

- I. Attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, and rest from servile work.
- II. Confess one's sins at least once a year.
- III. Receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least once during the Easter season.
- IV. Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
- V. Support the mission of the Church, materially and spiritually.

An Explanation of the Five Precepts of the Catholic Church

- I. (Attending Mass, etc.)
 - ◆ Going to mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is the most important event of our week. God wills that we worship Him together each Sabbath, especially since God has established us as a BODY of believers, within a COMMUNITY and said, "Keep holy the Sabbath." [Third Commandment]
 - ◆ The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." "The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day." [CCC 2180]
 - ◆ "Those who deliberately fail in this weekly obligation commit a grave sin." [CCC 2181]
 - ◆ However, when a serious reason arises (sickness, emergency, etc.) a Catholic may be excused from this obligation.
 - ◆ While at mass, the person should partake in the mass parts, listen well and be focused on God.
 - ◆ Unnecessary servile work is to be avoided. Also, unnecessary shopping should be avoided.

II. (Celebrating God's Mercy in the Sacrament of Confession)

- ◆ We should regularly celebrate the Sacrament of Penance (monthly is the recommendation of the Church, or whenever it is necessary), but at the very minimum, once yearly.
- ◆ We should have adequate preparation for this Sacrament, just as with the other Sacraments.

III. (Receiving Holy Communion)

- ◆ We should always be mindful, that at mass, we are receiving *Jesus*, and always give profound thanks to him, receiving Holy Communion at least one time per year; however, each time we attend mass, it's recommended that we receive, when we are in a state of grace.
- ◆ If a Catholic is in a state of mortal sin, he must not receive Holy Communion; He should first go to the Sacrament of Confession.

IV. (Observing Days of Fasting and Abstinence)

- ◆ Every Friday of Lent and Ash Wednesday, Catholics are morally obliged to abstain from eating meat. Also, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics are obliged to *fast* ~ that is, they must have only one main meatless meal, with up to two additional meatless meals taken whereby the amount of food may not exceed the amount of food of the main meal. Additionally, fasting means there is to be no eating between meals.
- ◆ All Catholics are morally required to make some type of penance each and every Friday of the year.

V. (Supporting the Mission of the Church)

- ◆ Ultimately, the "mission of the Church" is to carry on the eternal salvation that Jesus Christ won for us by dying on the Cross and rising from the Tomb. The word "Mass" is derived from the word "mission," and so at each and every mass we attend, we are called to a personal mission to continue the message of the salvation won for us, and to encourage and support others to do the same.
- ◆ Catholics are also morally obliged to pray for the spiritual well-being of the Church, and are earnestly recommended to pray for the intentions of the Holy Father on a regular basis.
- ◆ Catholics are to support the Church financially through a tithe (10% of one's annual income) or a lesser amount, according to each one's ability to contribute. Praying and tithing/giving are both biblically-based actions.
- ◆ Additional aspects of this particular precept are:
 - Being registered in a Catholic parish
 - This precept implies that we live out the *other* Sacraments of the Church we have received.
 - Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist are the three "Sacraments of Initiation" and thus a person is a full member of the Catholic Church only after receiving all three of these

Sacraments.

- ♦ **N.B.:** In order to be a godparent or Confirmation sponsor, one must have received all three of the “Sacraments of Initiation” and be at least 16 years of age at the time the Sacrament is administered.
- ♦ This precept also implies that all Catholics have a serious obligation to first KNOW their Catholic Faith, since it is imperative to know it in order to share it, pass it on to their children, defend it, promote it, and live it out daily. Catholics are obliged to educate their children as well, and are most certainly the first educators of their children in the Catholic Faith. [See: Wedding vows as well as the promises made by parents at the time of their child’s Baptism.] Others in the Church are all *secondary* teachers. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) and the Bible are the two primary sources of information for educating oneself in Catholic doctrines.
- ♦ This precept also implies that Catholics must be married in and through the Catholic Church [See CCC 1601-1666]. FYI: Priests and others are often working with couples to prepare and convalidate their marriage in the Church, i.e. have their marriage “blessed;” sometimes this first requires a declaration of nullity (annulment) if there was a previous marriage.

In conclusion, it has always been and always will be the perspective of the Church that these precepts are not a goal, but rather, a simple reminder of the absolute minimum required for a Catholic’s day-to-day life.

Handbook Acknowledgement

The Parent/Student Handbook is intended as a guide for policies and general information which should assist you. These guidelines shall not be construed as a contract.

I acknowledge receipt of the Parent/Student Handbook. I have read the above statement and have read the policies in this manual. I understand the policies and procedures contained herein and shall give my best effort to comply with these policies and procedures.

Parent/Guardian

Date

2020-2021

Declaration to Practice the Catholic Faith

For Catholic Parents & Catholic Students

Of _____

Catholic Faith Formation Program

PRINT Parent/Guardian name(s) here:

As a member of the Catholic Faith, mindful of the serious moral obligation I have as a member of the Catholic Church and as a parishioner of _____, and in order to honor and obey the *Third Commandment* of God and his holy Church, I hereby promise to do my very best to attend Holy Mass every Sunday and on all Holy Days of Obligation. I understand to willfully forego attending Holy Mass is, as it has always been, a grave and mortal sin. Furthermore, I promise to do my very best to assure that my child(ren), for whom I am morally responsible as a parent/guardian, attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, as well.

[Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #2181]

I understand that the pastor, Fr. _____, rightfully and reasonably expects me and my children to attend, whenever possible, Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation Masses at my parish as a family.

I understand that to fail in these serious moral obligations, I could forego my child(ren)'s privilege of attending the Catholic Faith Formation Program.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

As a student at _____, I understand that Jesus wants me and expects me to do my best to attend mass ever Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. I also understand to promise my parents/guardians have agreed to above.

Signature of First Student: _____

Signature of Second Student: _____

Signature of Third Student: _____

Signature of Fourth Student: _____

2020-2021

Declaración de Práctica de la Fe Católica

**Para Padres Católicos y Estudiantes Católicos
del Programa de Formación Católica en la Fe**

de _____

Imprimir el nombre del Padre/Madre/Guardián:

Como miembro de la Fe Católica, consciente de la seria obligación moral que tenemos como miembros de la Iglesia Católica y como parroquianos de _____, y para poder honrar y obedecer el Tercer Mandamiento de Dios y de su Iglesia, Yo prometo hacer todo lo posible para participar en la Santa Misa todos los Domingos y Fiestas de Guardar. Yo comprendo que no cumplir con esta obligación de atender a Misa de Domingo, es como siempre lo ha sido, un grave pecado mortal. Más aun, Yo prometo hacer todo lo posible para asegurarme que mis hijos, de los cuales soy responsable moralmente como padre/madre/guardián, atiendan a Misa de Domingo y Fiestas de Guardar.

[Cf. *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* #2181]

Yo comprendo que nuestro Párroco, Fr. _____, espera justamente y con razón que yo y mis hijos atendamos, la Misa de Domingo y las Fiestas de Guardar en la parroquia y como familia.

Yo comprendo que faltar a esta seria obligación moral, pone en peligro el privilegio que mis hijos tienen de asistir al programa de Formación Católica en la Fe.

Firma del Padre / Guardián _____

Firma del Padre / Guardián _____

Como estudiante en _____, yo comprendo que Jesús desea y espera que haga lo más que pueda para atender a Misa todos los Domingos y Fiestas de Guardar, yo también comprendo que mis Padres/Guardián están de acuerdo con lo anterior.

Firma del Primer Estudiante _____

Firma del Segundo Estudiante _____

Firma del Tercer Estudiante _____

Firma del Cuarto Estudiante _____