

St. John of the Cross
Catechist Handbook

OFFICE HOURS

Monday thru Thursday – 8:30am –4:00pm
Telephone: 758-1326. Fax: 758-1852.
E-Mail: stjohn@stjohnofthecrosschurch.org

USE OF THE BUILDING

It is regrettable that we have to teach in a setting that is not “our own”. However, until such a time as we have our own “Education Setting” we must live with what is available to us.

GUIDELINES

The administration at the schools expects us to follow the following rules and guidelines.

1. It is expected that all children be closely supervised at all times.
2. Catechists must be sure that the classrooms are left as we find them.
3. Desks are to be left as found. Chairs should be placed on top of the desks.
4. If the blackboard is used, please be sure that it is cleaned. Also, do not allow the children to doodle on the blackboards before or during class.
5. Lavatories are to be used at the teacher’s discretion.
6. Students are not to enter any other rooms during our sessions, and materials in the classrooms, **including in students’ desks**, ARE NOT to be disturbed in any way.

POLICY REGARDING SNACKS AND REFRESHMENTS

We discourage having snacks during class time. It can easily take time that needs to be spent on the lesson. Absolutely NO food is allowed in the classroom at MMS and LMES.

PROCEDURES FOR FACULTY

Catechists MUST arrive before school is dismissed at MMS, MES and LMES.

Catechists teaching at Memorial School on Tuesday afternoons will meet in the cafeteria at 2:35pm and 6:30pm in the evening.

Catechists teaching at Middlebury Elementary School will meet in the gym at 3:25pm. At 3:40pm, teachers will bring their class to the assigned classrooms.

Catechists teaching at LongMeadow Elementary School will meet their classes outside the student’ classroom AT 3:25PM. Catechists teaching at LMES must also arrive at least five minutes before classes begin.

COMMUNICATIONS

During the school year, there is a great deal of information that needs to get from our office to the catechists and parents. There are several ways we will broadcast the important “news”.

Every week we will have folders with your name on them containing handouts, memos, etc. Catechists will pick up their folders at a designated area before class begins. Many items are printed in the Sunday Bulletin under the section “Religious Education”. Please be sure to read it!

PROGRAM POLICIES

ATTENDANCE: Remember to fill out your Attendance Record and the Attendance/Request form for the office before classes begin. Also list those who are tardy. If you know the absence is for good reason, please note it as an **excused** absence on both your record and the office form. These Attendance/Request office forms will be in your folders and will be collected by the Hall Monitor at the beginning of each class.

Remind your students that in case of illness or special difficulties, parents must call the Religious Education Office so that the absence will be recorded as excused. If the absence is not excused, we will call the parents.

DISCIPLINE: Disruptive behavior not only detracts from a student’s opportunity to learn, but also deprives his/her classmates of this opportunity, as well as placing an unfair burden on the catechist.

If normal classroom discipline is not successful in resolving a problem, the catechist may remove the student from the class.

- A. He/she will accompany the Hall Monitor to the Media Center to work individually for a (time-out) short period or to wait until class is over. The Hall Monitor will wait with the student(s).
- B. If disruptive behavior persists, the parent(s) or guardian will be notified by me as soon as possible. The student may be excluded from the class and may not attend until the teacher is assured that the problem is being resolved.
- C. Students excluded from class should be required to make up all work missed.

During class time the Hall Monitor as well as I will be in the school and available to assist you. Do not hesitate to send out students who persist in being disruptive. Sending disruptive students out of the room is by no means an “imposition” or a weakness in your teaching abilities.

TEACHERS’ ASSISTANTS

We are fortunate in having parents act as Classroom Assistants. Please know that they will help you in any way.

SUPPLIES

We have on hand a variety of supplies that you may use in the classroom. They are located in the Religious Education Office. Scissors, crayons, construction paper, etc. are available. Please request these items on the Attendance/Request Form provided for you.

AUDIO VISUAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The Religious Education Office has many videos and other resources available for your use. If you should want to show a video, please use your request form or call the office. We will get permission and arrange for the equipment you need.

PRINTING

We in the office are here to help you in any way possible. A copying machine is available. Although we do last minute work, we would definitely appreciate sufficient notice.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE – Enclosed in your folder.

WHEN YOU NEED A SUBSTITUTE

If you are unable to teach your class, please call the Office in ample time. As you know, substitutes are very hard to find. **Complete and detailed lesson plans are expected when a substitute teaches for you. Plan more than you need just to be sure the children are adequately provided for.**

PROGRESS REPORTS

You will be asked to fill out progress reports twice. It takes time but it is important. It helps the students and parents have a clear idea of the progress being made. These will be distributed in January and again in April. COPIES WILL BE FILED IN THE STUDENT'S FILE IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

We follow the Region 15 school calendar. If Region 15 closes early or cancels after school activities, religious education classes are also cancelled. If we have your current e mail address on file, you will receive an e mail announcement. Any questions – please call the Religious Education Office at 758-1326.

INSTRUCTIONS IN CASE OF FIRE

Please become familiar with the exits to your classroom. Make sure the children know what to do in a fire emergency. Please discuss and rehearse with them what they should do and where they will exit.

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER

“G.I.F.T” is Whole Community Catechesis. It is an approach to religious education through which all generations gather together in order to learn, share, reflect, and celebrate. Adults as well as youth and children will be invited to participate in three faith formation events throughout the religious education year. These three event centered programs are part of the curriculum and replace a Tuesday/Wednesday class. Catechists/Aides will be asked to select a session that they could assist and will then be given detailed lesson plans for the event. The dates of the programs and the classes they replace are indicated on the calendar.

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN/SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Child abuse is of serious concern. Consistent with diocesan policy and local legal codes, parish catechetical staff have a moral and legal duty to comply with the law to ensure the welfare of a child. Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow diocesan policy on such matters. Per the U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the Archdiocese of Hartford has selected *Child Lures* as its safety training program for all children. It is training for the prevention of sexual exploitation, abduction, internet crime, drugs, and school violence. Sessions will be offered at MES and LMES.

We continue to implement the Archdiocese's Safe Environment program. Clergy, staff and volunteer adults who have regular contact with children must have a background check and attend training in the program *Protecting God's Children*.