



CATECHIST GUIDELINES

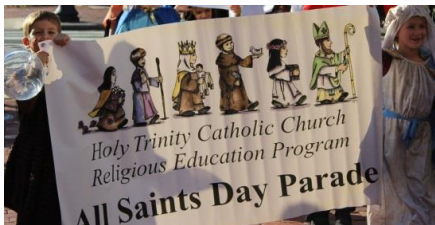
2019-2020

GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

RE Resource Office

The “home base” for the RE Staff on Sunday mornings is the RE Resource Office in the Upper School Cafeteria. One staff member tries to be stationed there whenever possible on Sunday mornings, for the needs of the parents and catechists. This is also the home to the RE Library, resources, extra supplies and materials, catechist mailboxes, etc. The RE Resource Office is open from 8 a.m. until all the catechists have left after class (generally 11:30-12:00). We hope catechists make good use of the resources and books available. If you have any questions about how to find a resource, the RE Staff is happy to assist you. If you would like to stop by during the week to look at resources, please contact the RE Staff (202-903-2808) to arrange a time.

Special Events



Please take note of special events that your class will be participating in, to make sure you and your class are prepared. These are listed in the Calendar and the Curriculum, and include Class Masses, Seasonal Programs, etc. Please read over these sections of the Catechist Manual for more details on these.

Creativity

We expect that you use the curriculum and archdiocesan guidelines to guide your lesson planning, but we also welcome your creativity. When accessing sources from the internet, be sure they are Catholic resources. If you have ideas or suggestions that will help engage your students, feel free to use them in the classroom. We would love to hear your ideas!



Class Lists

Class lists are distributed at the beginning of the year. The RE Staff will keep you updated about additions, changes, etc. If a child arrives that is not on your class list, **please do not add them to your list**. Rather, bring them to the Upper School Cafeteria so the RE Staff can assure that they are in the correct class.

Room Parents

Each class is assigned 1-2 Room Parents. The Room Parents’ role is to assist the catechist with communications, special projects/events, etc. The room parent is to invite and encourage other parents to participate when needed. See the Contact section of the Catechist Manual for specific duties and contact information.

Textbooks

Catechists are expected to use the textbook at most classes. **Send them home with the children on the last day of class.** Please encourage their use – including writing in them.

Bibles

Students in grades 3 – 8 have Bibles to use in class. The 6th graders are given *Fireside Bibles* that they are to keep at the end of the year; **be sure to send them home with the 6th graders on the last day of class.**

Parent Meetings

If you have children in the RE Program, please keep in mind when Parent Meetings take place. If you do not have a spouse/partner that is able to attend the meeting in your place, please let Judith know so that she can fill you in and get you the appropriate materials. This is especially important for sacramental meetings.

Catechist Enrichment

The RE Staff offers Catechist Workshops at least three times throughout the year (start of the year, Advent, and Lent). We expect that **all catechists attend** these, if possible. These are a great opportunity to grow as a catechist and learn from the staff and fellow catechists. We also have an end of the Catechist Appreciation Dinner. These social events are our way of thanking you for your hard work, and a way to get to know the staff and fellow catechists. If there are any other ways in which we can help your personal enrichment or help you become a better catechist, we welcome the opportunity to do so.



BEFORE CLASS

Communication with RE Staff

We will email you the “Catechist’s Call” each week. It is critical that **you read this email in full**, as this is our main source of keeping you up to date. Please also be sure to keep the staff informed of any issues with children or your classroom. If concerns arise, please let us know so we can assist with a resolution.

Photocopying

The RE Staff is happy to photocopy anything you need for the week. Please send detailed requests to the K-6 Coordinator by **Thursday**, if possible. Late requests will be honored when possible. Requests after 8 a.m. Sunday will not be taken, due to the busy RE Staff schedules and heavy copier traffic on Sunday mornings. The coordinator’s email is rek8@trinity.org. (In last-minute situations, it is better to email your request late Saturday than Sunday morning.)

Supplies

Supplies are distributed before the first day of class in plastic bins. These include textbooks, art supplies, Bibles, etc. The RE Staff is happy to get you additional supplies or special supplies for a specific project. Keep in mind that we may need to order these, so please contact us as soon as possible to request supplies. If you would like a letter for Michaels, AC Moore so you can purchase materials at a discount, let Judith know and we will get a letter to you.

Schedule Conflicts

Catechists are expected to be at every class. However, we also understand that scheduling conflicts will arise. Please notify the K-6 Coordinator as soon as you know about an absence, so we can arrange for a substitute. The RE Staff **must** be informed of any absences, even if it is covered by your co-catechists. **We must have two VIRTUS-trained adults in every classroom.** It is the catechist's responsibility to provide a lesson plan if both catechists will be absent. Please give this to the K-6 Coordinator no later than the Thursday before the missed class. The RE Staff can provide you with a lesson plan example, if needed. The coordinator's email is rek8@trinity.org.

Sickness/Emergencies

In the case of a last-minute emergency (anything arising after 5 p.m. Friday), please email both Judith at jbrusseau@trinity.org and the K-6 Coordinator at rek8@trinity.org immediately. If your emergency arises Sunday morning, also call 202-337-2840 x110 – this is the RE Resource Office in the Upper School Cafeteria, and is the only phone we check after 8 a.m. on Sundays.

Class Cancellations

Only the RE Staff is responsible for canceling classes. A catechist must never cancel class due to weather, catechist absence, etc. Inclement weather and emergency cancellation information will be posted on the Holy Trinity website, www.trinity.org. If possible, the Religious Education staff will send an email to informing you of a cancellation. For weekday events, Holy Trinity follows Arlington County Schools cancellations.

Arrival Time

At least one catechist should be in the classroom by 10 a.m. (10 minutes prior to start of class) to greet students.

Classroom Set Up

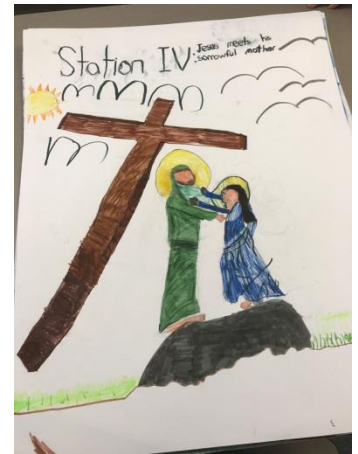
The RE Staff opens the RE Resource Office at 8 a.m. You are welcome to come any time after 8 a.m. to set up your classroom, get supplies, check out books, etc. If you unlock your classroom, remember to stay in your classroom. Please lock the room if you leave.

Mailboxes

Each classroom has a mailbox on a cart outside the RE Resource Office. The first catechist to arrive must check their mailbox. This is our primary way of getting day-of information to catechists, as well as anything the catechists have requested, resources for catechists, etc.

Key/Radio

Inside the RE Resource Office, there are keys and radios. **Classes in the Upper School must take a key to access their classroom. Classes in Walsh must take a radio** (Walsh classrooms do not have phones). Please only take the key/radio that is for your classroom. If your key/radio is missing, please inform the RE Staff. Be sure to return these at the end of each class, as the Walkie Talkies need to charge and the keys must be locked up. There is a sign in/out sheet that you must sign each week. This also helps us ensure that all the catechists have arrived, and that they have all left before locking up the closet.



DURING CLASS

Class Location

Religious Education classes are held in three locations on Sunday Mornings. Kindergarten, 1st and some 2nd grade classes are in the HTS Lower School. The remaining 2nd through 4th grades are in the HTS Upper School. 5th through 8th grades are in Georgetown's Walsh building. Please refer to the map for specific locations.

Class Start Time

Classes begin promptly at 10:10 a.m. Parents will be asked to have their children in the room so class can start promptly.

Attendance

Attendance sheets are given to you at the start of the year; **please leave them in your bin** with your supplies, so they don't get lost. Be sure to keep accurate records for our office files. **Take the attendance sheet with you in the case of an emergency or drill.** If a child is consistently absent, please notify the RE Staff. Each week, a volunteer will collect a list of absent students.

Communication During Class

The Upper School and Lower School classrooms all have phones. The RE Resource Office is x110. The Walsh classrooms each bring a Walkie Talkie with them from the RE Resource Office. Please note that all of the Walkie Talkies are on the same channel, so every classroom will hear you if you talk. Therefore, use short sentences, such as "Judith, please come to classroom #." We will respond if we hear your radio. It is unlikely that the RE Staff will call you during class, but please be attentive to answer if your phone/Walkie does ring as this is mainly for emergencies.



Discipline

If a student is misbehaving and you are unable to resolve the situation, please let Judith or the staff in the Resource Office know. If the issue needs resolved during class time, please call x110 or use the Walkie Talkie. If staff are available, they will come talk to the child outside the classroom. Additionally, distractions such as gum-chewing, eating/drinking, cell phone, etc. should be discouraged in the learning environment.

Electronics

We have an electronics policy and all the parents and students must sign it. Religious education class should be used to connect to God and our faith community, and cell phones and other devices have become a distraction.

Unless otherwise directed by the catechist, students are not allowed to use any electronic devices during class. Devices should be placed in silent mode and put away. If necessary, ask your students to place phones in the cell phone basket until after class. Students who attempt to hide a phone to use it during class will be asked to place their phone in the basket. Catechists may choose to move a student to an area where there are no desks/tables. If a student has a legitimate need to use the phone during class, he/she should talk to the program director in advance.

Violations of this policy:

1st violation: devices are taken from the student and returned at the end of class with a verbal warning.

2nd violation: devices are taken from the student and given to the program director, who will return it to the parent after a required meeting.

Food

Food is **not permitted** in the classrooms, due to cleanliness, limited class time and student allergies. We recommend that families attending the 9 a.m. class send their child directly to class rather than getting a donut first. This will help ensure a timely start to class and help keep the classrooms clean.

Media

We encourage you to make use of music, movie clips, etc. These can be great tools to engage students. We have collected a selection of items you can use and posted them on the catechist's area of the web site and on a thumb drive.

Team Teaching

At least two catechists are assigned to each class. You may work out your own team dynamic in terms of planning responsibilities, leadership, etc., but we hope that each person will share part of the teaching responsibility every week. Dividing the class into smaller work or discussion groups directed by individual catechists is often very effective, especially in younger grades. Please try to ensure that two adults are present in the classroom at all times.



Guests

You are encouraged to invite guest speakers to your class. However, please get approval from Judith before sending invitations to anyone other than Holy Trinity priests/staff.

Prayer Tables

The Upper and Lower School classrooms all have a white prayer table. The Walsh classrooms have a "Bible Bag." These all include a cross, flameless candle, a Bible and green/purple cloth. Please be sure to use these each week, as a way of setting a prayerful mood in the classroom. Change the green cloth to purple during Advent and Lent. It is so important that we begin and end each class in prayer.

Out-of-Classroom Events



Many seasonal events occur at various places (Church, Other Venue, etc.). Additionally, you may wish to take the kids to the Church, Chapel, etc. during class time. If you leave the classroom, you must put a note on the door saying where you are, in case we need to find you. **You may never take the children off of the Holy Trinity campus. The only exception to this is service projects (ex. SOME) that have RE Staff approval and necessary Permission Slips.**

Newsletters

We send an electronic newsletter to the parents once a month. Catechists also receive a copy. Please read the entire email.

Dismissal

Classes should be dismissed at 11:15 a.m. from the classroom. You may not dismiss class early. If you have an event outside of the classroom, you must bring the kids back to the classroom to dismiss from there. The younger grades must be picked up by a parent or approved adult. Older grades may leave on their own or as you arrange with the parents.

Late Pickup

The catechist must stay in the classroom until every child has left. If a child is not picked up by 11:30 a.m., please bring them to the RE staff in the Resource Office, so we can call their parents. Please put a note on the door directing the parent to the Upper School Cafeteria.

AFTER CLASS

Classroom Cleanliness

Keep in mind that we share our space with Holy Trinity School and Georgetown University. On Monday, classrooms should look as they did when teachers left on Friday. There is no janitorial staff in the classrooms on weekends, therefore, the school teachers will enter as you have left it. Please remind students to be respectful of the classroom, especially the desks. The contents in the desks should be left alone, white boards should be erased, chairs/tables should be pushed in and straight. If damage does occur, please notify the RE Staff immediately.

Storage

For the Upper School and Lower School, supply bins should be stored on the shelf of the white prayer table. For Walsh, supply bins should be stored in the provided lockers.

Communications with Parents

Parents want to know what their children are doing and learning. If you as the catechists let them know topics of discussion or questions they can reinforce the learning and continue the conversation. **Catechists are expected to keep up email communications with parents regularly (at least twice a month, if not weekly).** Please copy Judith jbrusseau@trinity.org and the K-6 Coordinator REK8@trinity.org on these emails. These should inform the parents of important dates, upcoming events, main content of the sessions being taught, and any other valuable information.

