

# LIGHT OF CHRIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Catechesis is a process rather than a program; it is a part of a life long conversion to the Gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(Curriculum Guidelines for Catechesis; Diocese of St. Petersburg, FL)*

## FAITH FORMATION 2014 - 2015 HANDBOOK



**FR. JACOB MONTELEONE, *Pastor***

---

### OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

---

**DEBBIE BARRY, *Coordinator of Faith Formation***

† Pre-School through Grade 5 and VBS

† Sacramental Preparation: Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage & RCIA.

*Contact Information: Phone: 727-442-7081 E-mail: [djb@locchurch.org](mailto:djb@locchurch.org)*



**CHRIS MCBRIDE, *Dir. Of Youth Minister***

*Gr. 6-8 & High School*

*Contact Information: Phone: 727-442-3418*

*E-mail: [cmm@locchurch.org](mailto:cmm@locchurch.org)*

---

*"With God's grace, catechesis develops initial faith, nourishes the Christian life, and continually unfolds the mystery of Christ until the believer becomes his disciple."*

(National Directory for Catechesis, no. 19; USCCB Publishing)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION STATEMENT .....	1
GENERAL PARENT & FAMILY INFORMATION .....	2
ACRE SURVEY INFO .....	2
MSGR. ALLMAN MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC .....	2
FAITH FORMATION CODE OF CONDUCT .....	3
STAFF & CATECHISTS .....	3
CLASS AVAILABILITY .....	4
SHARING YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS .....	4
SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE .....	4
COMMUNICATION .....	5
ATTENDANCE .....	5
SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES .....	5
BOOK, VIDEO, REFERENCE LIBRARY & FF WORK ROOM .....	5
CONSEQUENCE FOR STUDENT'S POOR BEHAVIOR CHOICES .....	5
SACRAMENT PREPARATION.....	6
CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS.....	6
FLORIDA BISHOPS HOME SCHOOL POLICY SUMMARY .....	6
DIOCESAN STATEMENT ON RECEPTION OF SACRAMENTS .....	7
HARASSMENT POLICY FOR NON-EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS .....	8
DIOCESAN CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ADULTS.....	9
DIOCESAN CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN .....	12
BACKGROUND CHECK/SAFE ENVIRONMENT WORKSHOP.....	13
RIGHT TO AMEND.....	14
PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH .....	15



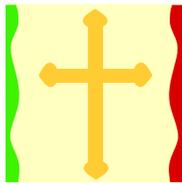
### MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of parish faith formation is to assist all people in learning and living the mystery of Jesus Christ through ongoing personal conversion.*

*To serve this mission, through the help of God's grace, we offer formal and informal instruction and formation whereby each individual may embrace a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and live as His follower for the transformation of society. Sincere cooperation between parish staff and families is necessary to bring about the formation of children and youth. Such formation includes:*

- *growth in understanding and acceptance of **Catholic doctrine**;*
- *awareness of, and active participation in, **Catholic liturgical and sacramental life**;*
- *embracing the fundamental principles of **Catholic morality**;*
- *exercising the life of **Catholic prayer**.*

## GENERAL PARENT & FAMILY INFORMATION



*Parents are the primary educators responsible for the spiritual growth of their children.* Parents are deeply involved in their child's Faith Formation at Light of Christ. Our goal is to assist you in this awesome responsibility!

### Here is important information for parents to know:

**A child's formation in the faith is a three-fold partnership between parents, the church and the parish community** (*National Directory for Catechesis, pg. 234-235*).

To encourage parents in their parental duty as the "*most influential agents of catechesis for their children*" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church nos. 2222-2226*) we offer multiple opportunities for ongoing faith formation during the year. It is also important to note that the catechesis given by parents with family "*precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis*" (*Catechesi Tradendae*); we encourage enrichment of your own faith by participating in the celebration of the sacraments often by:

- Attending Mass weekly
- Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation often
- Refreshing your own faith on an adult level. Christians never fully complete their spiritual journey to God – **it is an ongoing, life-long path to be traveled together.**

Faith Formation does not take the place of Mass nor does it fulfill the obligation of participating in the Mass. In Deuteronomy 4:9, Moses is telling the Israelites (*and us!*) to... "*Take care and be earnestly on your guard not to forget the things your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your memory as long as you live, but teach them to your children and to your children's children.*"

## ACRE SURVEY INFO

The Assessment of Catholic Faith Formation (ACRE) Survey is administered annually in the spring to students in grades 5 and 8. The survey is an assessment of our Faith Formation program as well as a gauge of the student's personal beliefs and practices. Studying the results enables us to build up the strengths of the program and address weaknesses as well.



## ANNUAL MSGR. ALLMAN MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC

This annual fundraiser is a fun way that money is raised to benefit the LOC children, youth and parish programs. Over the years, over \$150,000 has been raised! The money is used overall to build up or improve Faith Formation and other parish programs. Items that have been purchased with the funds are

Playground Equipment, Bibles, Youth Retreats, Van, Classroom TV's & DVD's, and "Smart Boards" (ECC), Active Parenting Classes materials, materials for "Strong Catholic Families/Strong Catholic Youth" programs. All families are encouraged to support this effort by donating money or goods, helping sell tickets, and working the day of the outing. Donations are welcome and can be made throughout the year. Contact Debbie Barry or Chris McBride for more information.

# LIGHT OF CHRIST FAITH FORMATION\* CODE OF CONDUCT

## **Respect ourselves, others and property**

- **Respect Ourselves**
- **Respect Catechist and other children and adults** – disrespect to any adult or other child is not tolerated.
- **Respect Property** – no marking on tables, chairs, walls, etc. Books and audiovisual equipment, supplies, etc. are to be handled with care.

*\*A complete copy of the Diocesan Code of Conduct for Children & Youth is available on pages 9-13 of this handbook.*

## STAFF & CATECHISTS



The term *catechist* is used in a broad sense to designate one who, directed by parish staff, participates in formal or informal Faith Formation ministry. All members of a community of believers are called to share in this ministry of witnessing to the faith.

Recognizing that **parents are the primary educators of their children**, the parish staff understands that the family, as the domestic church, is the place where faith is planted and nurtured. We are committed to assist you in the cultivation of the on-going development of faith already begun in your home. We encourage each individual, adult and child, to develop his or her personal gifts and to grow, as Jesus did, in wisdom and grace.

We wish to offer children opportunities to strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ by hearing and experiencing His words within the witnessing parish community.

To this end the parish staff strives to:

- Provide an environment where Gospel values are fostered.
- Provide opportunities for prayer, reflection and liturgical celebrations to stimulate each one's relationship with Christ.
- Provide intellectual challenges appropriate for each level.
- Invite and encourage parish catechists, as witnesses of the Good News, to participate in opportunities to update and deepen their faith.
- Offer sacramental programs that invite family and parish participation.
- Challenge our students to bring the teachings of Jesus into their lives and, by service to others, into their families and the larger community.

These goals are best met in parish community life. Together as a Christian faith team of parish staff and family, we, by reason of our Baptism, can profess and bring to fulfillment the values and promises of the Kingdom of God.

## **CLASS AVAILABILITY**

**Availability of classes is dependent on the generosity of adult volunteers who teach, assist and support classes of children.** There are many volunteer opportunities available. We encourage you to join our team of catechists, assistants and others devoted to providing a meaningful experience for your child.

*People today listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers,  
and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. (On Evangelization, #41)*

## **SHARING YOUR GIFTS & TALENTS**



We all have God-given gifts, talents, and skills and when we share those gifts with others; we express our gratitude to God for those gifts. Please consider using your gifts, talents, and skills by participating in our parish Faith Formation program. If desired, formal training is provided which enhances your own faith journey through the Diocesan Catechist Certification process.

This program of certification helps parish and Catholic school catechists & teachers, youth ministry volunteers, RCIA ministers and other adults pursuing religious formation to grow in understanding the four pillars of The Catechism of the Catholic Church.

### **What kind of help is needed?**

Facilitating or teaching sessions or assisting at learning activity centers, i.e. craft helpers, sacrament prep assistance, class parties, prayer worker, babysitting, phone or office help, set-up or clean-up and many more positions available and opportunities to help.

### **How do I begin?**

Contact Debbie Barry (442-7081 or [djb@locchurch.org](mailto:djb@locchurch.org)) to discuss the possibility of becoming a catechist or helper for Faith Formation.

### **What is required?**

Anyone in a position of supervision with children will require a Level 2 background check and attendance at a Safe Environment training class. The Office of Faith Formation provides background checks, fingerprinting, and training sessions.

## **SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Your child's safety is of primary concern. Our parking lots are extremely busy; therefore, once students arrive on the premises, they should not leave the building in which they are meeting. Parents should escort each child to his/her meeting place and meet the adults who are leading your child's class or event. For pick-up, enter the building to escort your child to your vehicle.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The parish faith formation staff will make every effort to communicate well with families. To do this effectively, E-mail is the preferred method of contact. Calendars are distributed at registration and additional copies are available upon request. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, contact Debbie Barry at (727-442-7081 or djb@locchurch.org)

## **ATTENDANCE**

We ask all parents to take seriously the work of parish faith formation. Regular attendance demonstrates your commitment to this aspect of your child's spiritual development; bringing him or her to class on time shows how you value the program. If an absence from class is foreseen, notify the Faith Formation office or class catechist.

## **SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES**

**If you judge weather conditions unsafe, do not come to the parish.** Determine if religion classes are cancelled by calling the office number on the front of this handbook.

## **BOOK, VIDEO, REFERENCE LIBRARY & THE FF WORK ROOM**

Preschool and Grades 3 & 4 will use Pflaum Gospel Weeklies this year. This lectionary based curriculum takes the weekly Sunday readings to teach part of the student lesson. These will be sent home each week. In addition, the children use a Catechism-based book called What the Church Believes and Teaches.

Grades 1, 2 & 5 will use *Call to Faith* from Our Sunday Visitor. *Call to Faith* provides a solid foundation of Scripture and Tradition, a rich diversity of prayer, and a developmental sequence of activities.

*Call to Faith* draws on the following sources of Catholic wisdom and experience:

Scripture, Doctrine, Lives of Saints and People of Faith, Church Feasts and Seasonal, Cultural Customs and, Catholic Social Teachings

The **Work Room** in the John/Francis Wing of the Parish Center contains a wide variety of excellent videos for adults as well as children. These may be borrowed at any time. Reference materials (encyclopedias and scriptural commentaries) may also be viewed on the premises. We also ask your help in keeping the Work Room neat and orderly.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF STUDENT'S POOR BEHAVIOR CHOICES**

Faith Formation classes are a time for sharing in God's Kingdom. This sharing is a privilege and must be treated as such. Teachers deserve full support and cooperation. This includes listening, following directions and participating in the activities of the class. Headphones, iPods, Nintendo or other entertainment devices not required for class are not permitted. Students who interfere with other students' rights and classroom goals by being disrespectful or persistently disruptive will have their parents called. If, after parent consultation to resolve the problem, the child's behavior does not improve, the student will be dismissed from class and provided with home-schooling materials.

## **SACRAMENT PREPARATION**

Christian living has to be learned, and a child's religious life needs constant nourishment. Preparation for sacraments is to be held over a two-year period. *The minimum expectation is at least 1 year of ongoing Faith Formation, Catholic School, Youth Ministry or Home School PRIOR to the year in which the Sacrament is expected. e.g. - to receive 1<sup>st</sup> Communion in 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade the child must attend 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Faith Formation & to receive Confirmation in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade the child must attend 7<sup>th</sup> Grade EDGE Program at the minimum.* Whether a student attends a parish Faith Formation program, Catholic school, or Home Schooling the sacraments are received in the parish to which the family belongs.

It is in your child's best interest to participate in faith formation at all grade levels. The goal is a permanent and maturing relationship with Jesus Christ. On-going and lifelong participation in the life of the parish strengthens and deepens that relationship. It is a lasting gift that will be with your child through their lifetime.

**First Reconciliation and First Communion records required from the family are:**

- ◆ A copy of the child's original Baptismal Certificate

**Confirmation records required from the family are:**

- ◆ A copy of the child's original Baptismal Certificate
- ◆ Sponsor's Name/Sponsor's Certificate

*(Parents will be notified of any other required records and/or student assignments.)*

## **CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Students attending area Catholic schools are required to receive preparation for all sacraments in their home parish. Students attend sacramental preparation classes as scheduled on the Faith Formation calendar.

## **CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF FLORIDA SACRAMENTAL POLICIES & GUIDELINES FOR THOSE WHO HOME SCHOOL\***

*Summary Statement of Florida Bishops Policies and Guidelines:*

- † The proper context for the celebration of the sacraments is the parish community. "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations belonging to the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity'" [CSL, #26].
- † Children/youth that are home schooled are to celebrate the sacraments in the parish and at the time determined by the pastor for all those in the parish-based program.

*\*A copy of the Catholic Bishops of Florida entire policy is available from the Faith Formation Office.*

# **DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG – SACRAMENTS GUIDELINES**

## **SUMMARY**

### ***BASIC PRINCIPLES***

- A. A sacrament involves a covenant relationship with Jesus and, therefore, presumes faith on the part of the individual, the Family, and the community.
- B. Readiness, not just a particular age or grade level, is the fundamental criterion for determining when an individual should participate in the celebration of a sacrament. Not all persons become ready for sacraments at the same time, nor do they grow in faith at the same rate.
- C. The celebration of sacraments is the action of the community where the Lord becomes present in a deeper way. The preparation should lead the individual to greater involvement with the community, and the community should be visibly involved in the individual's preparation.
- D. The family has an essential role in preparation for the celebration of a sacrament. A families' attitude, actions, values and experiences of prayer and worship constantly teach, both positively and negatively, about sacraments. Therefore, families need to be involved in the catechesis, preparation and celebration of sacraments.
- E. With respect to the sacraments of Initiation, the RCIA provides both principles and patterns for developing catechetical programs and liturgical celebrations.
- F. It is the canonical right and obligation of pastors to administer the sacraments to their parishioners. Thus, immediate preparation for the sacraments is done in and by the parish in which they are to be celebrated.

### ***CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST, PENANCE***

***Remote*** - There should be at least a year of systematic education prior to the year of immediate preparation for these sacraments. This guideline is met through participation in the Catholic school or education program.

***Immediate*** - Immediate preparation is a **freestanding** parish program, which involves the collaborative effort of the parish community and the families of those presented for sacraments.

***Readiness*** - It rests on the pastor, coordinator of Faith Formation, catechist, and, in the case of 'young people, parents/guardians and candidate, to discern readiness for the reception of the sacraments.

***Follow-up*** - The purpose of initiation into the sacraments is for a graced relationship with Christ. Participation in the liturgical/sacramental, catechetical and apostolic life of the parish matures and deepens that relationship.

**HARASSMENT POLICY FOR NON-EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS**  
**IN SCHOOLS/CENTERS, PARISH FAITH FORMATION AND PARISH YOUTH**  
**MINISTRY PROGRAMS OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG**

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires that each parish, Catholic school or early childhood center establish and adopt this policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of Christian professional and supportive educational programs, schools, early childhood centers and parish youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school or early childhood center will be responsible for off-campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish-, school-, or early childhood center-sponsored event.

**PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

This policy intends:

- that each individual be free from physical, psychological or verbal intimidation and harassment in the schools, early childhood centers, Faith Formation and youth ministry settings;
- that each individual involved in schools, early childhood centers, Faith Formation and youth ministry programs maintain and further develop attitudes and behaviors which express respect for others and are reflective of each person's God-given dignity;
- to encourage a heightened sensitivity toward behaviors that others may find offensive and intimidating, whether these behaviors refer to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status or disability.

This policy is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebration, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the Sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries.

**EXPLANATION OF HARASSMENT**

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior involving verbal, written or physical conduct or communication.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviors, which could include, but are not limited to:

- Physical, mental or verbal abuse
- Insults, jokes or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status(es)
- Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
- Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors
- Unwanted sexual comments (serious or humorous)

- Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
- Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness
- Unwanted forced involvement in any activity
- Coercion of religious styles or personal beliefs upon a participant
- Intimidation in front of or forced personal sharing in groups
- Inappropriate media or music use which would violate this policy

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible, but will be consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

## **REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES**

Individuals involved with the Parish Faith Formation programs must report their concerns to their Catechetical Leader, the Pastor, or the Diocesan Director of Faith Formation. If an individual is uncomfortable reporting to the above persons, the report should be made to the office of the Executive Director for the Diocesan Department of Catholic Formation and Education.

Individuals who engage in behavior which violates this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, dismissal, discharge, and any legal consequences for this behavior.

Retaliation against individuals who in good faith file a complaint of harassment or participate in an investigation is prohibited.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

Parish staff members and all volunteers are required to report any acknowledgment or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the abuse hotline, 1-800-96 ABUSE or local police.

- Under Florida Law everyone is a mandatory reporter with confinement and financial sanctions for willfully not reporting actual or suspected child abuse.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ADULTS**

The Catholic Church in west central Florida is blessed with a great diversity of persons created in the divine image. We respect, honor & celebrate the image of God revealed in human uniqueness, dignity & diversity, as described in scripture: “God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them” (*Genesis 1:27*). We believe that every child is a gift from God from the moment of conception. We believe that the children enrolled in our schools, parish Faith Formation programs and other youth programs must be treated with dignity, respect and care, as described in A Sacred Trust, The Safety of Our Children (*National Catholic Education Association, 2003*).

An adult involved in any role of a program is defined as a person who is post high school and 18 years of age, and who has been approved to work with young people by the pastor, principal, community organization leader or a designate (McCarthy, 2002). We serve all young people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, political beliefs or disabilities. All adults working with youth in any capacity must be approved through the proper background checks and screening as required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

This code is not intended to otherwise limit the expectations of staff, children, students, and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries. This code is used in conjunction with existing diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supersede them.

## **PROFESSIONAL ROLES**

1. Adults recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful to anyone of any group.
2. Adults work collaboratively with the pastor, supervisors and associates in community, ministry, or school programs. These adults distinguish their own private opinions from those of the Catholic faith or their profession in all publicity, public announcements or publications.
3. Adults have a responsibility in all relationships to witness the chastity appropriate to their vocation in life, whether celibate, married or single.
4. Adult leaders are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their roles and responsibilities working with youth. They are to be made aware of all diocesan policies for working with youth.
5. Adults are aware they have considerable personal power because of their position or ministry. Therefore, they will sustain respectful relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
6. Adults maintain appropriate professional boundaries, e.g., physical, sexual, relational and emotional. Appropriate use of time for working with, speaking with and engaging with children and youth is an important boundary. Adults are not to be available 24/7, but rather work within normal expected time frames.
7. Adults model healthy and positive behaviors with young children, adolescents and other adults.
8. Adults must never engage in sexual intimacies or overt sexual behaviors with children and/or youth. This includes consensual and nonconsensual contact, covert or overt seductive speech or any gesture that sexually abuses, exploits or harasses another person.
9. Touching should be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor and not on the need of the adult. An adult is to avoid physical contact when alone with a

minor. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.

10. Procuring, providing or using alcohol and/or any controlled substance for or with youth is inappropriate, unethical and illegal.
11. Adults should never possess or use alcohol or drugs while supervising and/or participating in a youth activity.
12. Adults always meet with young people in areas that are visible and accessible.
13. One-on-one meetings with a young person are best held in a public area. If that is not possible, then the door to the room is left open. A parent and/or another adult is to be notified about the meeting whenever feasible.
14. It is always a preferred practice to have two adults present in the area where youth are present.
15. Driving alone with a young person should be avoided.
16. Adults are not to be alone with minors in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, restroom, dressing facility, other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
17. Audiovisual, music and print resources used in programs must be screened prior to use to ensure their appropriateness for the participants. It is never appropriate to use an “R” rated movie without parental consent or without screening for sexual content, nudity, language, violence and themes or content which harm the dignity of the human person. Even “PG” movies should be reviewed carefully. Movies with ratings stronger than “R” are never appropriate. Music lyrics should also be reviewed to ensure their appropriateness. Parents should be informed of movies that will be used in conjunction with any program.
18. The computer and Internet are acceptable and common means of communication and entertainment. Adults must never engage with sexually explicit and/or pornographic materials or chat rooms with children and youth. They should not use any computer software, games or any form of Internet personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents.
19. Adults are trained to be aware of the signs of physical, sexual and psychological abuse and neglect.
20. Adults are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and will make appropriate referrals.
21. Adults agree to adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.
22. Adults are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, harassment, safety, transportation, parental permission and medical emergency policies.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN**

The first premise of this code is that children and youth function best when behaviors and expectations are clearly defined. It is accepted that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children in all aspects of their development. This experience aims at developing upright citizens and good Christians. As Jesus said to his disciples, “I give you a new commandment: love one another” (John 13:34-35).

In 1 Timothy 4:12, we read, “Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.” Timothy is urged to rely on the gifts he has received from God. This code urges our children and youth to rely on God’s gifts to them, especially charity, chastity, and purity. This calls the young to acknowledge and promote one’s personal dignity and the rights that go with it.

It becomes important for children and youth to know the difference between “right” and “not right” relationships. “Right” relationships foster personal, spiritual, and emotional growth, e.g., the ability to communicate, to forgive, to show affection, to be honest, vulnerable, dependable, etc. “Not right” relationships become harmful, hurtful and even abusive. Abuse occurs when someone does not respect another’s boundaries, uses power, tricks, threats or violence to cross or change another’s boundaries, or inflicts hurtful or unwanted behavior (physical, verbal, emotional or sexual) on another person.

This code is used in conjunction with existing local or diocesan policies, protocols or other codes and is not intended to supercede them.

When engaging in formal and informal activities, functions and programs, children and youth are expected to behave appropriately at all times, respecting the rights of others.

1. Christian behavior is expected at all times.
2. Respect is required for individuals, the community and the facilities being used.
3. Cooperation and self-control are necessary when participating in programs and activities.
4. Dress must be in accord with the activity and appropriate for a Christian environment.
5. Unacceptable behavior and lack of cooperation will not be tolerated, but will be addressed appropriately. Examples of unacceptable behavior are as follows, though not limited to:
  - disrespect for adults and peers
  - use of vulgar language or gesture, use of racial slurs
  - damaging of property
  - fighting or intent to injure others
  - constant disturbance of others at work or in an activity
  - cheating
  - stealing
6. Possession of weapons, possession, sale or use of alcohol or drugs is forbidden.

7. No child or youth has the right to treat another in any manner that will cause physical or emotional pain. Therefore, harassment of any kind is un-Christian and unacceptable.
8. Coercion or threats to do something physically hurtful or for the purpose of exposing someone or something about another is unacceptable behavior.
9. Chastity is a virtue to be held in high esteem and promoted in practice. Sexual abuse of any sort, coercing a person to engage in sexual acts against her or his will, physically touching the sexual parts of another's body or treating a person like a sexual object are unacceptable and abusive behaviors. Consensual sex between students or initiated by minors to adults must never occur.

References:

Diocese of Omaha, NE (2002). Sample Youth Code of Behavior.  
 Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002). Code of Conduct, Bishop Moore Catholic High School.  
 Code of Conduct, Annunciation Catholic Academy.  
 Diocese of Orlando, FL (2002).  
 McCarthy, Robert J. (2002). Protecting Young People, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers, Washington, D.C.  
 23rd General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco (1990). Educating Young People to the Faith. (Third Draft 03.06.03)

## **BACKGROUND CHECK/SAFE ENVIRONMENT WORKSHOPS**

To provide the safest possible environment for our children, all adults who take on positions of responsibility, and who at times will probably be alone with those they are serving, must fill out a **Volunteer Application Form** (for background screening purposes) and successfully complete a **FDLE/FBI Level 2 background check** every 5 years.

In addition, they must attend a **Safe Environment Workshop**, which takes approximately three hours to complete (and must be renewed every 5 years). **No adult may work in positions of responsibility for children without having completed these two requirements.** The Volunteer Application Form may be completed at any time, takes only a moment to fill out, and is processed in a few days. The Safe Environment Workshop, however, is presented at the parish or at other locations only a few times each year. For this reason, your intention to volunteer with children must be known as far in advance as possible. Therefore, if you intend to make yourself available for any of the following roles of responsibility for children, **at any future time**, please contact the Office of Faith Formation as soon as possible. The roles are: CATECHIST, ASSISTANT CATECHIST, PRAYER WORKER, EDGE & LIFETEEN YOUTH MINISTRY CORE TEAM MEMBERS, and VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER.

The parish will present annually a Parent/Student Safe Environment Education Program to provide children and their parents with information about, and skills for avoiding, potentially unsafe situations that could put children at risk for abuse of all types, but especially sexual abuse.



### **RIGHT TO AMEND**

This handbook is meant to provide the parent/guardian with helpful information on how parish staff and volunteers intend to go about the work of parish Faith Formation. It is not meant to cover every situation that may occur. Light of Christ Parish reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified, in writing, if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.

## *Precepts of the Catholic Church*

As a baptized member of the Catholic Community, we become people who strive to enter into and develop an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ Whom we profess as Lord and Savior. We believe in the promises of eternal life, which He gave to His followers and we desire to express our acceptance of those promises in both communal and individual ways.

As members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church we recognize the obligations entrusted to us at our baptism. In addition to the Ten Commandments as a basis for moral living, practicing Catholics also adhere to obligations or duties known as the Precepts of the Church. These are enumerated below:

- 1) To keep holy the day of the Lord's resurrection: to worship God by participating in Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation which in the United States of America are: January 1, May 17, 2015, August 15, November 1, December 8, December 25 (*as an active member of the Catholic Church we fulfill this obligation by participating in the celebration of holy Mass*); to avoid those activities that would hinder renewal of soul and body, e.g., needless work and business activities, unnecessary shopping, etc.
- 2) To lead a sacramental life: to receive Holy Communion frequently and the Sacrament of Penance regularly
  - Minimally, to receive the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year (annual confession is obligatory only if serious/mortal sin is involved)
  - Minimally, to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday
- 3) To study Catholic teaching in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, to be confirmed, and then to continue to study and advance the cause of Christ.
- 4) To observe the marriage laws of the Church: to give religious training (by example and word) to one's children; to use parish schools and Faith Formation programs.
- 5) To strengthen and support the Church: one's own parish community (*active parishioners donate their time, talents and treasures to their parishes*) and parish priests, the worldwide Church and the Holy Father.
- 6) To do penance, including abstaining from meat (*i.e., Ash Wednesday, all Fridays of Lent and Good Friday*) and fasting from food (*i.e., Ash Wednesday and Good Friday*) on the appointed days
- 7) To join in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church

The above Precepts of the Church help define our understanding of what it means to be a practicing Catholic in today's world. We understand this as an attainable challenge that reflects our desire to give praise and glory to our God in our thoughts, words and deeds.

***May God who has begun the good work in us bring it to fulfillment!***