St. Fidelis - St. Ann - St. Boniface

Catholic Faith Education

PARENT/STUDENT

HANDBOOK

2021-2022

Amended – July 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. MISSION
II. ROLE OF THE PASTOR
III. ROLE OF COORDINATOR
IV. ROLE OF YOUTH MINISTER
V. ROLE OF CATHOLIC FAITH EDUCATION COMMISSION
VI. ROLE OF CATECHISTS
VII. ADMISSIONS POLICY
- A. Non-discrimination statement
- B. Non-Catholic students
- C. Financial Policy
- D. Medical Info/Forms

VIII. CLASS SCHEDULES
- A. Grades 1 - 12
- B. Kindergarten
- C. Sacramental Preparation
  - a. First Reconciliation & Communion (2nd grade)
  - b. Confirmation (9th & 10th grade)
- D. Inclement weather - Class cancelation

IX. ACADEMIC POLICY
- A. Homework
- B. Progress Reports
- C. Student Absence
  - a. 9th & 10th grade
  - b. 1st –8th grade
- D. Communication
- E. Arrival, Departure, & Parking

X. DISCIPLINE POLICY
- A. Definition
- B. Reasons For
- C. Formula

XI. CHILD LURES PREVENTION PROGRAM
XII. FIELD TRIP/SPECIAL EVENTS POLICIES
XIII. PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT
XIV. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS & STUDENT DRIVERS
XV. RIGHT TO AMEND
XVI. TELEPHONE NUMBERS

I. MISSION

That each person's faith becomes "living, conscious and active through the light of instruction." (Sharing the Light of Faith)

II. ROLE OF PASTOR

__The Pastor is ultimately responsible for catechesis in the parish.
__Expectations: Priestly ministry to our faith community
__Functions/duties: To lead us in prayer and worship.....
To address/teach the children as his schedule permits.....
To witness to sacrament in our lives

III. COORDINATOR OF CATHOLIC FAITH EDUCATION

__Policy formation and communication of rules and policies
__Implementation/organization of education programs and providing necessary resources/supplies
__Recruiting/supervision of catechists and other personnel
__Provide necessary resources/texts

IV. ROLE OF YOUTH MINISTER

_Empowers young people to live as disciples of Jesus Chris in our world today
_Works to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person
_Seeks to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community

V. ROLE OF CATHOLIC FAITH EDUCATION COMMISSION

_The shaping of goals and objectives to meet the educational needs of the total parish community and to monitor/evaluate designed programs that implement these

VI. ROLE OF CATECHISTS

__To echo the message of Jesus to the community
__To practice the faith, be a visible participant in parish life, attend Mass regularly
__Supports teachings of the Catholic Catechism
__Plan lessons, work/communicate with youth and parents, incorporates prayer as a part of every lesson and follows the "Textbook Content Sequence & Goals" as it applies to his/her grade level
__To be prepared, present, and responsible for the students assigned them.

VII. ADMISSIONS POLICY

A. "The Catholic Faith Education Program of the Tri-Parishes does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, religion or national origin."
B. Non-Catholic students
__are WELCOME!
__may take part in all aspects of the program except reception of the sacraments
__may be excluded, with parent permission, from any activities/classes which they are not comfortable with
C. Financial Policy
__Tuition is $20.00 per student, per year
__Out of Parish (St. Fidelis, St. Ann, St. Boniface) tuition is $50.00 per family, per year, ordinarily payable by the family of the student

D. Medical Information/Forms

__Each student shall have a medical form on file, with his/her pertinent information included. Purpose: Some children have special medical needs and/or problems that the coordinator and catechist should know in case of emergency

__It is the parent's responsibility to communicate any known allergies or medical conditions, diagnoses to the Coordinator.

_ It is the Coordinator's responsibility to communicate all known food allergies, medical diagnoses, and mental health diagnoses to the child's catechist and/or volunteers.

__ All medical and mental health information is to remain confidential and is to only be used and shared with catechists and volunteers directly involved with the students education or activity. The Coordinator, catechists, and volunteers are expected to NEVER share confidential information with others outside of the areas of Religious Education and Youth Ministry. If a parent feels that their rights to confidentiality have been violated, parents are urged to contact the Pastor and/or Coordinator to file a complaint.

VIII. CLASS SCHEDULES

A. GRADES 1 through 12: Classes begin on the first Wednesday after Labor Day in September. Classes will be held at the Parish Activity Center (PAC) from 6:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. on Wednesday evening's. Notice of special presentations/prayer services will be sent home with the students, published in the Sunday bulletin, published on children's Seesaw accounts, and posted on the Basilica of St. Fidelis Religious Education Facebook page, so that families may attend if desired.

B. Kindergarten: A special gathering will occur for our kindergarten students, three times a semester at a predetermined time and location. These dates and the location will be provided at the beginning of the school year, at the time of registration. Families have the option of taking home a workbook, provided by the Office of Religious Education free of charge. This workbook will cover the basic, foundational truths of our Catholic faith and give parents instruction if they wish to provide in-home catechesis. At no point will kindergarten students be asked to submit homework.

C. SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

A. (Second grade) Eucharist and Reconciliation are celebrated in the second grade. First Reconciliation is usually in December and First Communion is normally the first or second Sunday after Easter. The dates for Reconciliation and Eucharist will be announced at the time of student registrations and also in the bulletin. Parent meetings with information and theological overviews regarding the Sacraments are scheduled prior to the celebration of each Sacrament.

B. (Ninth and tenth grade) Confirmation preparation is in the freshman and sophomore years. Confirmation is celebrated in the sophomore year. In order to join the Confirmation program, students are required to attend religion classes regularly or complete homeschooling in grades 1st through 8th. Twenty service hours are required to be completed by the time the student is confirmed (typically Confirmation occurs in February), with no less than ten hours being completed during the freshman year. Students are required to attend two Confirmation retreats, one during their freshman year and another during their sophomore year. All dates for parent, student and catechist meetings, retreats, Rites of Entrance and Covenant Rites will be given to students at the time of registration or as soon as possible following registration.

D. INCLEMENT WEATHER - CLASS CANCELATION POLICY

__ If classes are canceled in the Victoria School District (USD 432) due to severe or inclement weather then Religious Education classes are automatically canceled. If after school hours inclement and severe weather begins to develop within Ellis County, especially in the surrounding areas of Victoria: Walker, Vincent, Catherine, Emmeram, Gorham, Hays and even as far west as Ellis, the Religious Education Coordinator will cancel classes to ensure the safety of those catechists, parents and students driving to and from the Parish Activity Center.

__Parents are also encouraged to use their best judgment and withhold their child from attending religion class in the event of inclement weather.

__ The cancelation may be communicated to catechists and families via one (or more) of the following ways:

- Via Seesaw
- Phone calls to catechists and volunteers
- Basilica of St. Fidelis Religious Education Facebook page
- Announcement at VES and VHS

IX. ACADEMIC POLICY

A. Homework may be given by catechists. Parents are asked to support the catechists by talking with their children about the content of the homework and seeing that homework is returned to catechists by requested date. A make-up assignment may be issued by the Coordinator, in collaboration with your child's catechist. Please see section C. of the Academic Policy: "Students Absences and Tardiness".

B. Progress Reports

__Catechists may give progress reports, either written or by phone to be used in a positive way as much as possible

C. Student Absences and Tardiness

a. Students in 9th and 10th grade (sacramental preparation courses for Confirmation) are allowed two excused absences per a semester. Following each absence, the student is asked to complete and sign a short form which simply gives the date of the absence along with the reason. The purpose of this form is to ensure the student, catechist, and coordinator are communicating clearly and that the student is aware and accountable for their absentees. Following the two excused absences, the student will then be sent home with make-up assignments. The assignments are to be completed then turned in promptly to the student's catechist.

b. For grades 1-8: If a student has four or more excused or unexcused absences within a semester, or more than six within the school year, then he/she may be issued a make-up assignment. This make-up assignment should be completed promptly then submitted to the Office of Religious Education on the due date specified. Make-up work will be issued by the Coordinator of Religious Education once the Coordinator has had an opportunity to collaborate with the child's catechist.

__Parents are asked to call or notify the Catholic Faith Education Office when a student in any grade will be absent or late to class. Notification to the Coordinator can be done made by calling the PAC's Office: 735-9244, Coordinator's cell: 785-639-5067 or by emailing fidelisyouth@ruraltel.net.

D. Communication

- Parent – Catechist – Coordinator Communication
  __If a parent wishes to visit with a catechist, we suggest a phone call to the Religious Education Office to set up an appointment. The Coordinator should be aware of any catechist and parent appointments/meetings regarding the faith formation or involvement of a student in religious education, youth ministry, or any children's ministry that the Office of Religious Education coordinates/oversees: Jubilee Choir, Altar Servers Ministry, Jr. CYO, CYO, etc.
  __Parents wishing to visit with the Coordinator, may call to make an appointment. The telephone numbers are listed under XVI in the Table of Contents.
  __In some instances a joint meeting (catechist, parents, coordinator, and/or pastor) may be necessary to work out difficulties to mutual satisfaction.
- Catechist – Student – Parent Communication
  __ The Office of Religious Education utilizes the app, Seesaw, to increase effective and transparent communication with families and youth regarding information pertaining to Religious Education, Jr. CYO, CYO, Jubilee Choir, altar servers ministry, and more.
  __ Catechists, parish staff, and volunteers are asked to never send private messages via text, e-mail, or social media sites to youth. Any communication with the youth should include at least one parent/guardian.
  __ Catechists, parish staff, and volunteers should communicate with youth in a public location – never behind a closed door. Communication should be transparent, reasonable, and prudent.

E. Arrival/Departure Time

__ All grades, 1st - 12th, should begin arriving no earlier than 6:20 P.M.

__ **NO parking** is allowed on the streets immediately surrounding the Parish Activity Center. Elm St., 10th St., Dolorosa and 11th St. should all remain free of parked vehicles to ensure the safety of our children and to allow parents access when picking-up and dropping-off their children.

__ **Students, catechists, and volunteers are asked to only park in the Church parking lot.** **A crosswalk guard will be assigned in front of the PAC to ensure individuals may walk safely across 10th St. from the Church parking lot.

__ **Drop-off locations & entrances:**

- *North entrance of PAC: Gravel parking lot (north of the PAC)* becomes a one way for the traffic flow. Drivers enter on 11th Street and exit on to Elm St. **No parking is permitted in the north parking lot.**
- *South entrance of PAC (front door)*

The Victoria City Fire Dept. has asked that the side streets of the PAC not be used for parking during the Wednesday night classes. In the event of a fire, it would be difficult to maneuver a truck through the streets when both sides are used for parking. **This request will be honored and enforced by the Catholic Faith Education Office**.

Safety Tips:
*Drivers should not stop in the middle of the street to load or unload children in to a vehicle. The safest route is to first pull the vehicle all the way over to the curb, place the vehicle in park, then allow the child to load or unload the vehicle.
*If possible, children should exit the vehicle from the passenger side (side of the vehicle farthest from the road/traffic.)
*Always utilize crosswalks and cross where there is a crosswalk guard present.

X. DISCIPLINE POLICY

A. Discipline can be defined as control within the student. This is aided by guidelines agreed upon by the class and the catechist and by the parish discipline policy.

B. Reasons for a discipline policy:

__to minimize disruptive behavior by setting clear boundaries and communicating these boundaries with the students

__to support catechists

__to maintain a learning atmosphere

Rarely, if ever, does the occasion arise where a student or youth needs to be removed immediately from an activity or Religious Education class due to violent or threatening behaviors. Even so, it is still worth mentioning that the following behaviors will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Immediate action and removal from a youth activity, Religious Education class, Mass or special activity under the direction of the Office of Religious Education would be warranted.

*Physical violence towards other youth, volunteer, or teacher with the intent to harm or inflict pain.

*Threatening behavior towards others (verbal, written, or physical) including peers, volunteers, teachers, or others.

*Sexual harassment and/or sexual assault (verbal, written, or physical) towards others including peers, volunteers, teachers, or others.

*Providing to minors or peers, and/or consuming alcohol, drugs, or the misuse/abuse of prescription medication during class or Youth Ministry activity.

*Indecent exposure.

*Intentional destruction of property: walls, desks, workbooks, televisions, etc.

*Intentional destruction of an individual's property/belongings during Religious Education or Youth Ministry activity. Personal property includes but is not limited to: clothing, sleeping area, vehicle, purse, personal Items, etc.

*Distribution of vulgar/pornographic pictures or material.

*Repetitive cursing and intentionally cursing as to provoke a volunteer or peer.

*Intentionally ignoring instructions provided by a catechist, volunteer, or parish staff member which does or could result in personal injury or injury of other youth.

C. Formula:

__ Physical and emotional punishment will not be considered or allowable.

__ The consequences for a student causing disruptive behavior repeatedly, with no apparent change in her/his behavior being noted by the catechist, are as follows:

[For minor offenses and behavioral issues:]

1st time - Catechist completes "Cause for Disciplinary Action" form, student signs form and form is submitted to the Coordinator. Student and catechist visit after class.

2nd time - Catechist completes "Cause for Disciplinary Action" form, student sent to Coordinator's office, note sent to parent's (written by student, explaining why he/she is in the office), the Coordinator makes a follow-up phone call with the parent(s). Students must also complete any assignment given by the catechist that he/she may have missed while in Coordinator's office.

3rd time - Catechist completes "Cause for Disciplinary Action" form, student sent to office, Coordinator makes immediate phone call to parent(s). Student is given alternate assignment as make-up work and a parent, student, coordinator meeting Is scheduled. Student may not return

to Religion classes until parents and student have met with Coordinator to review discipline issues, possible remedies, and consequences. *(Based on the severity of the student's actions and disruptiveness during class he/she may be removed from the religion program after the 3rd offense, for a time determined by Pastor and Coordinator.)*

4th time - Catechist completes "Cause for Disciplinary Action" form, student sent to Coordinator's office, and parents are called to pick-up student. Student is dismissed from class for amount of time determined by Pastor and Coordinator. During student's temporary absence he/she will be asked to complete and submit all assignments prior to returning.

XI. CHILD LURES PREVENTION PROGRAM

In June 2002, the United States Conference of Bishops created the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. This charter mandated that certain measures be taken to assure greater protection of young people in the church. Some of these measures include criminal background checks for all adults who regularly minister to children in a parish. Furthermore, all those who work with children are required to participate in online training on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

__ Effective September of 2017, the Diocese of Salina has requested that children in all grades receive information and a short course on child lures. Each grade level receives information specific to their age. Your child's catechist will review this information with their class at some point during the school year. Specific topics and information are suggested by the Office of Religious Education to the catechist. For a list of specific lures and information covered in your child's grade level please contact your Coordinator of Religious Education. As of 2021, a signed consent form (signed by parent/guardian) is required at the beginning of each enrollment year for your child to participate and does give parents the option to opt out, if desired.

XII. FIELD TRIP/SPECIAL EVENTS POLICIES

"Field trip" is used when referring to any activity that removes a student from the grounds of the Parish Activity Center or St. Fidelis Church and requires the transport of St. Fidelis volunteers, staff, or catechists. (For ex: Walking to the Capuchin Center for Spiritual Life, tin gym/auditorium, or Victoria Elementary School [park & facilities] all qualify as "field trips".)

__ The catechist must receive permission from the Coordinator.

___Field trips must have a stated purpose and all families must be notified of these outings/field trips prior to.

__ Each student must have a medical form on file in the Religious Education Office (at the beginning of the school year, all families complete a medical form for each child enrolled in the Religious Education program. These records are maintained by the Coordinator.)

___ Each student must have a Parent/Guardian permission slip on file for each trip. Parents have the right to refuse to allow their child to participate in a field trip.

__ Depending on the "field trip" location as well as the grade level involved, it may be asked that additional adult supervision be provided to ensure the safety of the children. The Coordinator and catechist will discuss the number of adult supervisors needed based on the Diocese of Salina's policy.

___ If the field trip is one which an adult driver is needed (over 25 years old), then the Coordinator will need to ensure that the necessary paperwork and training instructions are provided (including online videos and background check).

__Field trips are privileges and students can be denied participation if they fail to meet expectations.

XIII. PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

It is encouraged that all parents/guardians involve themselves within their means with the Catholic Faith Education programs:

__crowd supervision/control outside of PAC before and after evening classes
__help with special activities
__help supervise during liturgies
__assist with cross walk duties

XIV. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

__good attendance (less than four excused absences within one semester)
__proper behavior and attitude / follow Discipline Policy
__full participation and cooperation
__cell phones should be turned off upon entering the classroom. A catechist may ask that the students hand their cell phone over at the beginning of class.

XV. RIGHT TO AMEND

The Catholic Faith Education Commission and Coordinator reserve the right to amend the handbook.

XVIII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor:	Coordinator of Religious Education:
Father James Moster Parish Office - 735-2777 E-mail: james.moster@capuchins.org	Jeanette Brungardt Office Phone Number: 785-735-9244 Cell Phone Number: 785-639-5067 E-mail: fidelisyouth@ruraltel.net