

PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS MORE

St. Thomas More Church – Our Lady of Mercy Church



**Catechists Handbook
2011 – 2012**

Table of Contents

Catechist's Prayer	0
Religious Education Office Staff	1
Communications - Website	2
Requirements to become a Catechist	2
*Virtus Training	2
*Catechist Agreement	3
*Code of Conduct	3
*Catechist Certification	3
First Day of Class	3
Portfolio	3
Protocol for leaving the class while in session	4
Catechist Guides and Workbook	5
Parish Student Workbooks	5
*Diocesan Guidelines for each grade level	6
*Catechetical Strategies	6
Class Projects	6
Copying	6
Special Projects	6
Bulletin Boards	6
*Guided Meditations for Children	6
*Lenten Activity Books (2)	6
*Stations of the Cross	6
*Praying the Rosary	7
*Large Print Bibles (Black)	7
*A Light for my Path (daily readings source)	7
*Children's Bibles (Red)	7
*Liturgical Calendar	7
*Ways to Process Scripture Stories	7
*DVD and Video Library	7
*Additional Sources - Imprimatur	7
*Mass Cards	7
*Why I Must Attend Mass	7
*Changes in the Mass	7
Class Masses	7
Class Confessions	8
Prayer Boxes	8
Protecting God's Children	8
Excessive Absences	8
Late Drops Offs – Early Pick Ups	8
Disciplinary Problems	9
Emergencies – No Cancellation of Classes	9
Parties - Food, Candy & Snacks	9
Classroom & Property Damage	9
Holy Childhood Association (Missions)	10
Registration Rules	11
Unusual Situations	11
Religious Education Calendar	
*Denotes a handout and/or an explanation	

CATECHIST'S PRAYER

**God of life and love,
we lift our hearts to you
in praise and thanksgiving.**

**We bless you for the goodness and beauty of creation,
for the rhythm of sunrises and sunsets,
for the patterns of color
and texture of growing things
that sustain our hope in the abundance
of what is to come.**

**We bless you for the landscape of our lives,
for our successes and failures,
for the friends and enemies
who weave a mosaic through our horizon.**

We praise you for all your works.

We ask for grateful hearts and a spirit of generosity.

**Free us from being stingy
with our words of praise and affirmation
and our acts of forgiveness.**

**Open us to the abundance of life and love you set
before us.**

Amen.

PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS MORE

Catechist Handbook

St. Thomas More, Manalapan Facility - 732-446-6661 Dial 4

Office Hours – Monday thru Wednesday - 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Thursday and Friday – 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Religious Education Schedule – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM

5:45 PM to 6:45 PM

Our Lady of Mercy, Englishtown Facility – 732-786-1835

Office Hours – Monday thru Wednesday – 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Religious Education Schedule – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

4:30 PM to 5:30 PM

5:45 PM to 6:45 PM

(Our Lady of Mercy facility is closed for the summer from mid May to mid September)

WEB: www.moremercy.org (Please check every day)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE STAFF

Linda Andrew, Director of Religious Education

Elizabeth Halstead, Secretary, St. Thomas More facility

Carolyn Petersel, Secretary, St. Thomas More facility

Cristi McCarty, Secretary, Our Lady of Mercy facility

1st – 2nd – 3rd – 4th – 5th – 6th – 7th – 8th Grade Catechist Meetings:

Monday, June 6 – 7:00 PM

Tuesday, June 7 – 7:00 PM

Wednesday, June 8 – 7:00 PM

COMMUNICATIONS

WEB SITE

Check the St. Thomas More/Our Lady of Mercy website often for the religious education school year calendar and updates for all grade levels and especially sacramental year information www.moremercy.org

Please be aware that we plan on cutting back on paper work. Most of our communication will now be done through our **WEBSITE**. You should check this daily and maneuver to both the religious education general tab as well as the grade level you teach tab. I hope this will help you have more time to read my memos and respond to my information and requests

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A CATECHIST

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- *Submit a catechist volunteer registration form
- *Submit a family registration form for your children if applicable
- *Go for fingerprinting and have a background check through the Morpho Trak Company. There is a fee involved. After you have been fingerprinted submit the original Morpho Trak form with the original receipt to the Religious Education Office and you will be reimburse within three weeks
- Take the Virtus training (child abuse awareness class) at one of the diocesan parishes or here at St. Thomas More on:
October 22, 2011 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 P – Adult Ed. Rm.
OR
October 29, 2011 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 P – Adult Ed. Rm.
(arrive on time in order to get credit for the class)
(8:30 AM continental breakfast will be served)
- *Virtus Training Information – The sign up sheet is on the catechist bulletin board

- If available, please help with **religious education registration** next year when asked (the form will be in the registration packet on the website)
- *Sign the Diocese of Trenton Volunteer “Code of Conduct” Form
- *Sign the STM Catechist Agreement Form

CATECHIST CERTIFICATION LEVEL I

Classes are given throughout the year

See the bulletin board concerning this information

There are three levels to attain for certification

Six classes of Level I are given here at St. Thomas More in the Adult Ed. Rm. from November through April – see the following dates:

(most classes are given on Monday evenings at 7:15 PM

January’s class is on a Tuesday evening at 7:15 PM)

Part 1 – Spirituality of the Catechetical Ministry – November 7

Part 2 – The Learning Environment – December 5

Part 3 – Methods and Resources – January 3 (Tuesday)

Part 4 – Introduction to Scripture – February 6

Part 5 – Introduction to Liturgy – March 5

Part 6 – Introduction to Sacraments – April 16

Catechist Certification Level II and III – Classes are given at parishes through out the diocese in Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean County. You can also take Catechist Certification Classes on-line. See the catechist bulletin board for detailed information on all of the above Certification Levels.

FIRST DAY OF CLASS

***Portfolio** - If you have a 4:30 PM class, you will have red portfolio.

If you have a 5:45 PM class, you will have a dark blue portfolio.

This portfolio should never leave the building.

You will have the following information in your portfolio:

2011/2012 Religious Ed. School Year Calendar

Class List (2) One stays in the portfolio. One you should place in your black portfolio to keep with you at all times

Class Attendance List (1)

Throughout the year I will place pertinent information in your red or blue portfolio to inform you of any lessons or activities that you should be aware of. Please feel free to communicate with me through the portfolio and I will respond as quickly as possible

The following Black Board Information is to be written in the students workbooks:

Your name and telephone number

Mr. – Mrs. – Miss Andrew (students are not to call you by your first name or a nick name

Student's name and telephone number

STM or OLM – Day - Time of Class

The purpose of this information in the student's workbook is for parents to report their child's absence. Parents **should not** call the religious education office.

Catechists are requested to come to class 15 minutes early to review your portfolio which will have new information in it each week. Please respond if requested to. Thank you.

PROTOCOL FOR LEAVING THE CLASS WHILE IN SESSION

Call the Hall Secretary to come to your room while you come down to the office if necessary.

CATECHIST GUIDE – WORKBOOK **RCL Faith First Series Legacy Edition**

To assist you we have provided the following sources for grades 1st thru the 6th grades:

- *Catechist Guide
- *Parish Student Workbook
- *Called to Prayer (for each grade)
- *Activity Book (for each chapter)
- *Assessment Tools (Chapter and Unit Tests)
- * DVD's and Videos

PARISH STUDENT WORKBOOKS **RCL Faith First Series Legacy Edition**

1st Grade – One Book

2nd Grade – Two Books – Sept. thru Dec. – “First Reconciliation”
Jan. thru May - “First Eucharist”

3rd Grade – One Book

4th Grade – One Book

5th Grade – One Book

6th Grade - One Book (instruct the 6th graders to keep this book for future reference)

7th Grade – One or Two Books (to be decided)

8th Grade - One or Two Books (to be decided)

- Confirmation Project
- Attend Stations of the Cross
- Attend a Class Mass
- Attend Mass weekly and fill out Mass Cards
- Final Test (with 113 questions)
- Confession and Rehearsal for Confirmation (9th grade)
- Confirmation Retreat (9th grade)
- Will be tested on the following prayers: Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Hail Mary, Our Father, Act of Contrition, The Nicene Creed, How to pray the Rosary

For additional sources to compliment the Catechist Guides and Workbooks, please go to the RCL's website: FaithFirst.com

***DIOCESAN GUIDELINES FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL**

CLASS PROJECTS

Each class will have a project. Some projects will be a one session activity while others may take several sessions if not the entire year.

1st Grade – Guardian Angel Prayer Service and the Rosary

2nd Grade – First Reconciliation/First Eucharist and the Rosary

3rd Grade – A Tour of the Church and The Rosary (in the spring)

4th Grade – Study the Mass and the Rosary

5th Grade – Corporal/Spiritual Words of Mercy,
Precepts of the Church and the Rosary

6th Grade – Beatitudes and the Rosary

7th Grade – The Nicene Creed and the Rosary

8th Grade – Confirmation Project

COPYING – Should be requested one week in advance – no later than the day before – **not on the day of class.**

SPECIAL PROJECTS – Should you want to do a project with your class, please write me up a proposal of what you plan to do and if it includes another class of students and or a guest speaker. For instance I need to know the date you are planning the activity, how many people you plan on having attend, set-up plan, clean-up plan, time needed for the activity, and the cost you will incur.

***BULLETIN BOARDS**– Check often for updated information on upcoming activities.

***GUIDED MEDITATIONS FOR CHILDREN (3)**– How to teach children to pray using scripture.

*** LENTEN ACTIVITY BOOKS (2)**

***CRAFTING FAITH – 101 Crafts to help kids grow in their faith.**

***STATIONS OF THE CROSS (2)** - Prayer Books to use during Lent

***PRAYING THE ROSARY** – Rosaries and instruction pamphlets will be provided for each classroom. **Rosaries are not to be taken home.** They are for the use of all children throughout the religious education school year.

***BLACK LARGE PRINT BIBLES** – One for each classroom

*Inside the front cover: “A Light for my Path” – daily readings

*A sheet containing information on the previous Sunday’s readings.

Use this activity as an opening or closing prayer for every class

***RED BIBLES** (enough for four classes to use each class time)

***LITURGICAL CALENDAR - Holy Days of Obligation** – It is your responsibility to teach the students with the help of the Liturgical Calendar as your guide. Begin using this source the first Sunday of Advent.

***WAYS TO PROCESS SCRIPTURE STORIES**

***DVD & VIDEO LIBRARY**

ADDITIONAL SOURCES – PLEASE DO NOT DO RESEARCH ON NON-CATHOLIC WEBSITES

If you find a source you would like to use other than what we provide such as books, websites, DVD’s, you must show it to me and or inform me of your intent. One hint of advice, only use sources that have an **Imprimatur.**

***MASS CARDS** - Mass Card Memo to Catechists, Parents and Students

***“WHY I MUST ATTEND MASS”**

***CHANGES IN THE MASS**

CLASS MASSES – A Sign up memo will be distributed the first day of classes. See the STM and OLM office staff to sign up your class for weekend Masses. This will be done on a first come first served basis

CLASS CONFESSIONS – The following information will be provided: One third of our classes have the opportunity to attend confessions during the Lenten season of February and March. You will have the opportunity to sign up your class on a first come first served basis every other year. You will be given the following sources to prepare your class for this activity - Updates: Examination of Conscience, How to Make a Good Confession, Act of Contrition

PRAYER BOXES – St. Thomas More and Our Lady of Mercy Facilities

PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN – Teaching Touching Safety

I will show a DVD: First session 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grade students

Second session 4th, 5th and 6th Grade students

Third session 7th and 8th Grade students

Catechist will then have a short lesson on the DVD and age appropriate material will be provided to all grade levels by the diocese.

Scheduled as follows: Mon. thru Wed., Nov. 7-8-9 STM

Mon. thru Wed., Nov. 14-15-16 OLM

ABSENCES – Should be reported to you, the catechist.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES – After three absences, you are to call the student’s family and investigate the reason. If there are substantial circumstances such as illness, a doctor’s note will be required. Doctor’s appointments should be made on days other than days of religious education unless it is an emergency or an unusual situation. Please inform the office of any family situation that we should know about.

LATE DROP OFFS – EARLY PICKK UPS – This year this will be considered as an absence. It is very disruptive to the religious education office, the catechist, and students in that particular class, and annoying to the parents who are patiently waiting for their children in the halls to be dismissed.

DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS – Have you noticed the similarities between the words **discipline** and **disciple**? They both share the same root word, which means “to learn.” In other words, as a catechist, you are responsible for keeping discipline so that disciples can learn how to follow Jesus.

We have a zero tolerance policy. **RUDENESS, BULLYING, FOUL LANGUAGE, DISRESPECT FOR GOD, NOT WANTING TO BE HERE, TALKING OUT OF LINE (not waiting to be called on) OR PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.** If any of the fore mentioned is experienced, the catechist is to bring the student to the office, explain to me or the secretary the seriousness of the situation. If it can't be resolved, the parents will be called and further discussion will take place which will result in either one more chance in the classroom or the student will repeat the grade the following year. Do not wait until the middle or the end of the year to report the problem.

EMERGENCIES – CANCELLATION OF CLASS – Should be avoided if possible. Please adhere to the following procedures:

- Inform the STM religious education office as soon as possible of your situation
- **Let the office know what your lesson plan is for that week and of any activities, handouts, DVD's or videos that you planned on.**
- Have a few parents of your student's on-call each week should this situation occur.
- If these parents cannot help you, the office will call a list of substitute catechists that we have.
- As a very last resort, if the office cannot find a substitute, we will call you to cancel your class. It is your responsibility to call each student's family to cancel the class. On the first day of class you are given two class lists, one to keep in your portfolio here at school and one to keep in your black portfolio that you bring back and forth to school. This way you always have your class list on hand for an emergency situation.

PARTIES –NOT PERMITTED AT ANY TIME. We share the STM facility with Bridges Nursery School. In the past the classrooms were left very untidy.

FOOD, CANDY & SNACKS – Food or candy should be given out with much discretion because of food allergies. Also, between 4:30 and 6:45 PM is not the time to give out sweet or salty snacks of any kind before a meal. **ONLY PERMITTED DURING THE LAST WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS VACATION, THE LAST WEEK BEFORE EASTER VACATION AND THE LAST WEEK OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES.** Only to be given out after class. If we find a mess in the classrooms, hallways, restrooms or parking lot, we will also ban all treats for the holidays.

CLASSROOM DAMAGE

Bridges Nursery School Classrooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

St. Thomas More Religious Education Classrooms A, B and C

Our Lady of Mercy Classrooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

St. Thomas More Facility and Our Lady of Mercy Facility Restrooms

Do not move furniture. Do not let the students play with the toys or use any equipment in the classroom. Do not let the students sit on the tables. Any breakage or damage done in any classroom beginning with this religious education school year September 2011, will be the responsibility of the class that caused the damage. We have had several incidents this year where no one owned up. If a problem is caused by a first grade classroom, we will charge all the students in that class who attended that particular facility, day and session for the damage, clean up and if necessary replacement of the broken item(s).

HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION – Missions

Mite Boxes along with a Lenten prayer and letter will be handed out to all students during the first week of Lent. This is the only activity that you are allowed to collect money for. This money is requested by the Diocese of Trenton and sent to Rome who then in turn sends this money to the missionaries around the world to propagate our Catholic faith.

REGISTRATION – If a parent should call you because their child did not get into your class, please do not have them call me and say “it’s ok with the teacher to put one more in the class.” It is not your decision. This sets an atmosphere of hostility. We have to control the number of students in each classroom. Please work with me to maintain peace.

CHAIRS – St. Thomas More facility only: Grades 4, 5 and 6. Rooms 5, 6 and 7, after the 5:45 PM class sessions please fold the chairs and stand them near the door of the classroom to help the evening custodian.

UNUSUAL SITUATIONS – If you see something that requires attention occurring in another classroom, hallway or with another catechist, assistant catechist or hall secretary, please do not address the situation yourself. Please come to me to rectify the situation. Thank you for your cooperation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROCESS CALENDAR