

**st. francís of assísí  
catholic church**



**2009-2010  
k-8 catechísm  
family handbOOK**

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# special family prayer

## *Blessing of a Family*

*We bless your name, O Lord,  
for sending your own incarnate Son  
to become part of a family,  
so that, as he lived his life,  
he would experience its worries and its joys.*

*We ask you, Lord,  
to protect and watch over our family,  
so that in the strength of your grace  
we may enjoy your blessings,  
and, as the Church alive in the home,  
bear witness in this world to your glory.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

# ***“Bringing families closer to Christ and his Church.”***

## **philosophy/vision statement**

*At the heart of the task of catechesis is the person of Jesus. (GDC #98) The missionary mandate of Jesus calls us to proclaim, witness, teach, celebrate sacraments and love our neighbor (GDC #46).*

*Parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith. It is through the witness of Christian life given by parents within the context of the family that children are formed to respond to the call of their Baptism. The care that is taken to model and explain the Christian and religious meaning of events together with parental support of formal catechesis provided by the parish’s catechetical program form children in faith. “Family catechesis precedes ... accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis.” (GDC #226)*

*The catechists, priests, and parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church are dedicated to helping children grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in their love for and knowledge of the Catholic faith.*

I. General Program Information

<b>Pastor/Administrator</b>	<b>Fr. Marc Howes</b>
<b>Pastoral Vicar</b>	<b>Fr. Clarence Savial</b>
<b>Faith Formation Coordinator:</b>	<b>J. Craig King, SFO</b> <b>king@sfahdnv.org</b>
<b>Faith Formation Assistant:</b>	<b>Kristi Mayers</b> <b>mayers@sfahdnv.org</b>
<b>Youth Ministry Coordinator:</b>	<b>Zachary Young</b> <b>ym@sfahdnv.org</b>
<b>Parish Office Telephone:</b>	<b>(702)914-2175</b>
<b>Office of Faith Formation:</b>	<b>(702)914-3529</b>
<b>Office of Faith Formation Fax:</b>	<b>(702)914-3563</b>

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**I. Registration procedure/policy**

- A. Registrations are accepted through August 14, 2009. From August 15 through September 9th we will fill open spaces on a person by person basis and a late fee of \$20 per student will be charged. No registrations can be accepted after September 9th.**
- B. To register for the program:**
  - 1. Complete the Registration form(s)**
  - 2. Provide a copy of child's Baptismal Certificate**
  - 3. Return it to the Parish Office with appropriate fee**

*Students are placed on a first come, first served basis. Class size is limited by classroom space and number of teachers.*

**II. Fees**

- \$85 For one child
- \$140 For 2 Children
- \$180 For 3 or More Children

**III. Class times and locations**

All classes are held on Sundays or Monday nights. A class schedule will be mailed to families in late-August.

**IV. Medical Information / Special Needs**

If the child must receive medication you must make special arrangements with Craig King in advance. The Faith Formation Office must be informed in writing of any special needs that a child may have.

## II. Sacramental Guidelines

### **A. Initiation Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist)**

For those children not baptized as infants who have attained the age of reason and are of Catechetical age, the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation will be prepared for at the same time. Preparation will take two consecutive catechetical years.

Children baptized in other ecclesial communities (other Christian “denominations”) will prepare to make a Profession of Faith and then receive Reconciliation and Eucharist.

### **B. First Reconciliation/First Eucharist**

#### **Eligibility**

- Child is at least seven years of age and in grade two or above.
- The child successfully completed the current and previous years (two consecutive years) of Catholic religious education in a parish or parochial school .
- Parents or guardians are registered members of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church.
- Child is registered in and attending regularly (see the attendance policy on the next page) their age-appropriate religious education sessions.

*Students who are not baptized at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church will need to submit a copy of their baptismal certificate before receiving First Reconciliation or First Communion.*

### **C. Confirmation**

High school age Confirmation preparation now falls under our youth ministry program. For Confirmation guidelines please see the Confirmation Handbook from our Youth Ministry Department.

## III. Program Policies

### **A. Attendance**

Children enrolled in the age-appropriate religious education sessions at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church and/or in a Sacramental Preparation process **must not exceed 4 absences during the year.**

### **B. Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is essential to the faith formation of a child. The United States Bishops reinforce that the parents are the primary educators in the faith of their children. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the following ways:

- **Attendance at Mass every Sunday is expected.**

- Spend some time with your child during the week sharing scripture of the upcoming Sunday.
- Take time after class to review their lesson and work with them.
- Pray the grade-level prayer(s) they are learning as a family on a regular basis.

Parents are always welcome to visit our sessions. We do ask that you check in with the Coordinator of Faith Formation. Repeated visits (more than 1) would mandate that the parent meet the requirements of the Diocese of Las Vegas for catechists in order to ensure a safe environment. This includes fingerprinting and attending a special class. Parents visiting a class are “observers” and should not have any interaction with the class.

### **C. Parent Meetings and Retreats**

Parents are required to attend the beginning of the year Parent Meeting held on our first class day. Additional meetings may be held for students preparing for baptism of first communion. Parents will be informed of meetings with adequate time to schedule attendance.

Middle school students will attend a retreat in the spring put on by the National Evangelization Team (NET). The middle school retreat is one afternoon/evening. These are considered mandatory parts of the catechetical programs. Please see the calendar for the date of the Middle School NET Retreat.

Students in grades 2 through 5 who are in their second year of preparation for First Holy Communion will attend a First Communion Retreat on the Saturday after Easter. This retreat is a mandatory part of their preparation for First Holy Communion. See the calendar for the specific date.

### **D. Information about Records**

Records of attendance are maintained for each child. These are kept in the Faith Formation Office. If a family moves or transfers to another parish, copies of the children’s records can be sent to the new parish when a written request is made. This request should include the complete address of the parish to which they will be sent.

Student information will be released to authorized persons. As students receive the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation – they are recorded in Church records. If the original parish where a child was Baptized is other than St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, the parish of baptism will be notified of reception of each new Sacrament.

### **E. Custodial Rights**

This parish catechetical program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, *it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the catechetical director with an official copy of the court order.*

And/or

We respectfully request that all divorced parents provide a copy of the custody section in the divorce decree which applies to the child(ren) being registered in St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church Religious Education Program. This information will help us to determine when, if ever, a child can be released to a non-custodial parent. *It is the parents' responsibility to provide this information.*

#### IV. Communication

##### **A. Contacting Teachers –**

Should a problem arise during the year with a student, the parent is encouraged to first speak to their child's teacher before or after class. Communication with the teacher should never be limited to problems only. It is equally important to maintain open communication concerning achievements and successes!

##### **B. Contacting Parish Staff –**

If you are unable to resolve a matter, both the parent and teacher must request a joint meeting with the Coordinator of Faith Formation. If the matter remains unresolved, the final step is to request an appointment with the teacher, Coordinator of Faith Formation and the Pastor. This should only take place when absolutely necessary.

##### **C. Making Appointments –**

To request an appointment call the Faith Formation Office at (702) 914-3529.

##### **Faith Formation Office Hours:**

Monday	8:30 AM to 6:30 PM
Tuesday	8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Wednesday	Noon to 8:30 PM
Thursday	Noon to 8:30 PM
Friday	8:30 AM to 4:15 PM
Saturday	Closed
Sundays	8:30 AM to 8:00 PM

Craig and Kristi's availability on Sundays and Monday nights is determined by the needs of the classes, students, and teachers. Evening appointments can easily be arranged.

These office hours do fluctuate based on things such as adult classes, teacher training sessions... Please call Craig or Kristi to make an appointment if you need to meet with them.

##### **D. Emergency Phone Numbers -**

Parents are requested to provide the office with emergency contacts and phone (and/or cell phone) numbers during the registration process. In addition, parents are asked to provide any necessary medical information regarding their child(ren). Parents are

responsible to keep the information updated when changes occur. If a student has a special need, the teacher will be informed at the beginning of the year.

## **E. Communication With Parents-**

**IMPORTANT: Parents are asked to...**

- **READ THE WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN and**
- **READ THE CATECHISM NEWSLETTER AND ALL HANDOUTS GIVEN OUT AT CLASS.**

## V. Behavioral Expectations

### **A. Guidelines**

God calls each of us into relationship with himself and with one another. To generate an understanding of this in our students, we must have mutual respect in our class sessions.

A student's behavior must not interfere with order in the classroom. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Disruptive words or actions
- Intentionally injuring another person with physical or verbal abuse
- Defacing or destroying church property or the property of oneself or another
- Bringing inappropriate items to class including but not limited to offensive or inappropriate clothing or accessories
- Inappropriate dress: including immodest clothing (no stomachs, cleavage, underwear... should be visible) and clothing with inappropriate pictures, writing, or themes.

### **B. Response to inappropriate behavior**

Children, who have been warned and whose parents have been notified, and continue not to adhere to these policies, may be asked to withdraw from the program. The appropriate measures explained below will be taken before such recourse is taken.

First Offense	Catechist will point out to the child the behavior that needs to be corrected
Second Offense	Catechist will send the child to the Coordinator of Faith Formation who <i>may</i> consult with a Parent. A meeting could be called for parents, catechist, and Director to find ways to remedy the situation

If an extreme situation occurs where a young person is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his/her possession, the following procedures could be undertaken:

1. Catechist and/or Coordinator of Faith Formation would express suspicion to the young person
2. The young person would be asked to cooperate
3. If he/she refuses, a parent may be asked to come to the site and assist in a search

4. If the parent refuses to cooperate the young person may be suspended from the program until the parent meets with the Teacher, Coordinator of Faith Formation and the Pastor.

### **C. Procedures for appealing actions or stating grievances**

If the parent is not satisfied with the action taken, they may request a meeting with the Pastor and the Coordinator of Faith Formation. Be assured that our commitment is love and patience for all. If a child is asked to leave the program, it will only be after all other efforts have been made.

## VI. Off-Site Activities

### **A. Events that may take place off property**

Middle School Retreat  
High School / Confirmation Retreats

### **B. Service Programs**

### **C. Permission Policy**

Any activity off the parish property will require Permission/Liability release forms (available from the Faith Formation Office) to be filled out by the parents. Students who fail to submit a proper form within the allotted time will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. This must all be approved by the Coordinator of Faith Formation.

Telephone calls will *not* be accepted in lieu of proper forms. Parents/Guardians have a right to refuse to allow their child to participate in a field trip. Parents/Guardians are expected to sign any and all consent forms required for the activity.

### **D. Liability information**

Field trips are privileges offered to students. No student has an absolute right to participate in a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet program behavioral requirements.

## VII. Arrival/Departure of Students

### **A. Policy for arrival and departure of students**

To ensure proper supervision for all students, Catechism participants are *not* to arrive earlier than 10 minutes before designated class time. ***Children should not enter their classroom if the catechist or other supervisor is not present.*** All students should be met by a parent within 5 minutes of the regular time for class to end.

**ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES K-5 MUST BE PICKED UP FROM THEIR CLASS BY A PARENTS OR OTHER DESIGNATED ADULT!!!**

## **B. Actions for non-compliance**

If parents repeatedly refuse to pick up their children or are late doing so they will be asked to withdraw from the program. If a child is left over 45 minutes after the end of class, and the Coordinator of Faith Formation has not been contacted by the parent, the Faith Formation Office will contact Nevada's Department of Family Services. While this may seem extreme, it is to ensure the safety of the children.

### VIII. Right to Amend

The Faith Formation Office reserves the right to unilaterally change the policies contained in the handbook at any time, to cancel any policy as needed, or to decline to apply a particular policy to a given situation, if, in its discretion, to do so would serve the interests of the Diocese of Las Vegas or St. Francis of Assisi Parish. Parents will be given prompt notification of changes.

### IX. Family Agreements

The Family Agreement is now located on the student's registration form and is signed as part of the registration process.