



St. Peter Catholic Church Children's Catechumenate Handbook

(Christian Initiation of Children)

St. Peter Catholic Church
Covington, Louisiana 70433

St. Peter Parish CHILDREN'S CATECHUMENATE

Parent Handbook

WELCOME

It is a privilege for St. Peter Parish to have your children as part of our Community.

Our Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2223) states:

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues...

Children's Catechumenate Handbook

The Children's Catechumenate Team is here to assist you in your role as primary educator of your child. It is our intention that this handbook be a source for information about our Christian Initiation for Children process here at St. Peter Parish.

Attendance

Parents are asked to make a serious commitment to see that their children attend each scheduled class. Since attendance is one of the indicators of readiness for receiving a sacrament, a Children's Catechumenate Team member will contact the parent if a child misses three gatherings throughout the Christian Initiation year.

Curriculum

St. Peter Parish is presently using a workbook published by Loyola Press called Knowing Our Catholic Faith. After researching various catechetical series, this series was chosen because it contains an overview on every grade level of the basic truths of our Catholic faith.

Discipline

If a child becomes disruptive during class, and then refuses to heed the teacher's charitable advice to correct this behavior, the child will be asked to meet with Ruth Prats, the Pastoral Associate at St. Peter Parish. On the second occasion of such disruptive behavior and refusal of corrective advice, the parent and child will be asked to meet with Ruth Prats. If the disruptive behavior occurs for the third time, a parent will be asked to remain in the child's class during instruction to help the child display Christian virtues, good manners and mutual respect.

Fees

The fee to help cover the expenses of the Children's Catechumenate is the same as for our fee for our children in PSR (Parish School of Religion).

1 child	\$35.00
2 children	\$50.00
3 children	\$65.00
4 or more	\$75.00

Please let Ruth Prats know if you are having financial difficulties and the parish will be happy to assist you. If you are writing a check, we ask you to make it out to St. Peter Parish with a notation in the memo area that is it for the Children's Catechumenate. We assure you that we will be good stewards in using this money wisely.

Length of Process

The Archdiocese of New Orleans requires two years of instruction for sacramental preparation of children over 7 years old. Exceptions are only granted when the pastor of St. Peter Parish gives approval. This pastoral approval is given only under extreme circumstances.

Parent Meetings

Gatherings are offered each week for the parents of children in the Christian Initiation for Children process. Parents are highly encouraged to attend. These gatherings afford the parents the opportunity to continue their education and formation in the Catholic faith. It takes a lifetime to learn about our Catholic faith. Throughout your child's Initiation process, there are several parent meetings that are required for all parents. For these meetings, it is mandatory that at least one parent attends.

Interviews

The initial interview for parents of children entering the Children's Catechumenate process will be with Ruth Prats or Lorraine Sliman. All parents of second year students will have an assigned time for a meeting with Lorraine before the celebration of sacraments. If you have any concerns or questions about your child's progress and would like to schedule a meeting, please call our parish office.

Parent Involvement

We maintain an "open door" policy. If you would like to attend one of your child's gatherings, we ask that you notify the teacher or Ruth Prats prior to arriving. You are always welcome.

Rites in the Christian Initiation of Children

Throughout your child's Initiation process, you will be informed about upcoming liturgical rites that will be celebrated. Practices are mandatory for the parent and child when the child will be participating in a Rite of Christian Initiation. Please read all information sent home to you concerning your child's progress. Information about the liturgical rites will be included.

Attendance at Mass

All children in the Children's Catechumenate process are required to attend Mass each Sunday following the date of the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and the Rite of Welcoming. The parent that is Catholic or preparing to become Catholic is also required to attend Mass each Sunday with their child. This aspect of the process is very important and is taken seriously. If you are finding it difficult to attend Mass each week, please pray for the discipline needed.

Readiness

Because you are the primary educator of your child, the following factors will be considered when discerning a parent's readiness in their role as a Catholic parent:

- Attendance at Mass each Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation with your child
- Attendance at required parent meetings
- Attendance at required practices and rites with your child

Required Memorization

All children in the Catechumenate are required to memorize the following prayers:

- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be
- Apostles' Creed
- Act of Contrition
- Grace before Meals

In addition, all Catechumenate children are also required to memorize the following:

- How to pray the Rosary
- Ten Commandments

Parents are asked to give the assistance needed. If you need an extra copy of the above, please let us know.

Drop Off and Pick Up Times

Please be conscious that being on time is an act of charity for all. For safety reasons, the doors of the Ministry Center remain locked and must be opened from inside. With this in mind, it is important to have your child here on time if at all possible so a teacher does not have to be disrupted in their teaching to answer the door.

It is also important that you pick up your child on time. It is important to us that we end on time to respect your time and to respect the time given by the teachers. Our gatherings begin promptly at 5:30PM and end at 6:30 PM. Please check your calendar for the dates on which we do not gather.

Safety

Your child's safety is a priority for us. Please remember that it is required to pick up your child at the door of the classroom or in car line. If you will have someone else other than a parent picking up your child or if your child will be riding with a parent of another student, it is required that you send us a signed permission slip.

Bad Weather

Potential “bad weather” is always hard to call. If we feel that we need to cancel our session for the evening because of the existence or prediction of bad weather, we will try to notify you. Ruth Prats will also put a message on her answering machine as soon as the decision has been made. Please call that number to find out if your child’s session has been cancelled.

Parish Registration

Please note that filling out registration forms for your child to enter the Children’s Catechumenate does not automatically register your family in the parish. A child prepares and receives sacraments in their church parish so it is very important that you fill out a registration form for St. Peter Parish. If you are in need of a St. Peter registration form, please call our parish office and one will be sent to you. If you are not sure if you are registered in our parish, Ruth Prats will be happy to check for you.

Parent Active Participation Form

Every parent with a child in the Children’s Catechumenate process will be asked to sign an active participation form. One is included in this handbook for your convenience to review periodically. Due to the limited time that we meet with your child, it is necessary for you to assist us in reinforcing what is taught in the classes and to help with any memorization that is required.

The Children’s Catechumenate Team

The Children’s Catechumenate team pledges to be faithful in our commitment to teaching and forming your child in the Catholic faith. We thank you for sharing your children with us. It allows us the privilege of sharing and teaching our Catholic faith.

Partial Text from a homily by Pope Benedict XVI

(Given to Parents of First Communicants and others gathered on September 11, 2006)

Dear Parents! I ask you to help your children to grow in faith, I ask you to accompany them on their journey toward Holy Communion, on their journey toward Jesus and with Jesus. Please, go with your children to Church and take part in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration! You will see that this is not time lost; rather, it is the very thing that can keep your family truly united and centered. Sunday becomes more beautiful, the whole week becomes more beautiful, when you go to Sunday Mass together. And please, pray together at home too: at meals and before going to bed. Prayer does not only bring us nearer to God but also nearer to one another. It is a powerful source of peace and joy. Family life becomes more joyful and expansive whenever God is there and his closeness is experienced in prayer.

Dear Priests and all who assist in parishes! I urge you to do everything possible to make the parish a "spiritual community" for people -- a great family where we also experience the even greater family of the universal Church, and learn through the liturgy, catechesis and all the events of parish life to walk together on the way of true life.

Children's Catechumenate Parent's Active Participation Form

(To be completed by parent at time of registration each year)

We, as the St. Peter Parish Children's Catechumenate Team, are here to guide, teach and support you and your child as he/she prepares for sacrament(s). But it is essential that we keep in mind, that the parents are the primary educators of their children's faith formation. The role of parents in their children's spiritual formation is of such importance that it is impossible to provide an adequate substitute.

This spiritual preparation involves the following but is not limited to. As we pledge to be faithful in our commitment to teaching and forming your child in the Catholic faith, do you pledge to be faithful to each of the following?

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| 1. To teach your child his/her basic Catholic prayers | YES | NO |
| 2. To pray with your child each day | YES | NO |
| 3. To read Scripture/Bible Stories with your child | YES | NO |
| 4. To read the Lives of the Saints with your child | YES | NO |
| 5. To teach your child his/her Ten Commandments | YES | NO |
| 6. To attend and participate in the Catechumenate sessions for parents | YES | NO |
| 7. To bring your child to his/her Catechumenate sessions faithfully | YES | NO |
| 8. To attend the prayer service to end weekly gatherings | YES | NO |
| 9. To attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation | YES | NO |
| 10. To attend all Christian Initiation liturgical rites | YES | NO |
| 11. To attend Christian Initiation practices for rites when required | YES | NO |
| 12. To attend all parent interviews | YES | NO |

Parent Signature _____ Date _____