



Catechist Handbook

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American Martyrs Faith Enrichment
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“Remember what Christ taught and let His words enrich your lives.”

(Colossians 3:16)

Dear Catechist,

Welcome to Religious Education at American Martyrs Parish! In an increasingly secular world your commitment to religious education ministry is a powerful witness of Catholic Christian faith in action. For many of our young people, you will be the only exposure they have encountering Jesus in the Bible, at Mass or in another person of faith. American Martyrs SRE is about faith development and the sharing of that faith with the students and families of our parish community. We look forward to the coming year as an experience of faith and as a partnership between our young people, catechists, parents, and SRE staff.

As in any human process the success of a faith formation process depends on dedication and cooperation of all the people involved. The basic policies and procedures in this Catechist Handbook are established to promote a welcoming safe atmosphere for our young people and catechists. We encourage you to review these policies and procedures for the SRE program at American Martyrs.

Your questions and comments are very important to us. We are in partnership in this important task. Please know we are here to assist you in your ministry in a any way we can.

May God bless you in abundance in your ministry and my your commitment to our young people be a rewarding and faith-filled experience for you and all those who are touched by your ministry.

In Christ's love

Patti Williams
Director of Religious Education

Faith Formation Ministry

Initial Faith Formation

On one level our mission in Faith Formation is simple, to lead people to Christ. In the initial faith formation of our children, our mission is to lead young people to Christ and into full participation in Christian life. We accomplish this task by helping our young people to encounter Christ as they prepare and complete their sacramental initiation into the Christian community. Our hope for our young people is that when they celebrate their First Communion and Confirmation these sacraments of initiation are truly outward signs of an inward reality of grace of God already active in their lives.

The Catechist

Teachers or spiritual guides in the Faith Formation process are called Catechists. In the words of the great religious educator Maria Harris, "A Catechist is one who echoes the Word of God. Catechists are gifts of the Church...and their ministry is the work of the entire community."

Each Catechist contributes time and service toward achieving their primary goal and objective in the Faith Formation process which is to "teach as Jesus taught." Catechists teach the curriculum while sharing their faith and love for the Lord. This goes far beyond teaching the simple facts of our religion to being an authentic adult Christian role model from whom faith can be "caught".

Catechists should be collaborators with their co-catechists or Catechist assistant if they have one. They are expected to work closely together to develop lesson plans and faith sharing experiences that might include welcoming activities, storytelling, prayer, games, etc. These activities must always be planned with age appropriateness and the theme of the lesson in mind.

Six Tasks of Catechesis

Guided by the principles found in the documents of the Church concerning the ministry of catechesis, the catechetical program of this parish will include the following “Tasks of Catechesis”

- Promotes knowledge of faith
The story of God’s self-revelation found in Sacred Scripture and the Sacred Tradition of the Church will be communicated within the context of the faith story of each student and the signs of the times.
- Promotes knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the sacraments
Since Christ is present in the sacraments, learners will come to know Christ and be drawn into communion with him through liturgical celebrations, sacraments and prayer.
- Promotes moral formation in Christ
“Catechists must transmit both the content of Christ’s moral teachings as well as their implications for moral living”. (p. 61)
- Teaches how to pray with Christ
Prayer as the ordinary environment for catechesis leads the learner to conversion and communion with Christ and as Jesus’ life, an offering to the Father.
- Prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church
Efforts will be made to form Christian community among the learners through interaction and faith sharing, “encouraging an apprenticeship in Christian living” (p. 61).
- Promotes a missionary spirit
Disciples of Christ are assisted to be present in society as believing Christians called to service and actions of social justice, which is integral in the message of Jesus and the teachings of the Church.

(NDC, 2005, Chapter2 #20, pps.59-62)

Role of the catechist

A catechist is called to...

- Be a witness of the Good News of Christ and the Catholic faith and be a model of the attitudes and actions of a disciple of Christ.
- Be willing to share his/her faith story, when appropriate, with the students.
- Be a practicing Catholic who accepts the teachings of the Church and follows its laws.
- Be a person of prayer, attending weekly Eucharistic Liturgy.
- Share the love of Christ with the students through openness, listening, respect and forgiveness.
- Continue to grow in his/her own understanding of Christ's call and Church teachings.
- Continually evaluate his/her performance as a catechist and try to improve.
- Communicate the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Pray and celebrate liturgy with the students.
- Challenge the students to live lives of justice and love based on Scripture and the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Foster community among the students in the classroom.
- Follow the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.

Catechists are responsible for:

- Participating in Catechist formation sessions before the year begins, as well as inservice sessions during the year.
- Preparing weekly lessons in consideration of the yearly overview provided and session time allotted.
- Arriving at least 15 minutes before the session begins.
- Dismissing students on time following the dismissal plan.
- Maintaining discipline during class sessions and liturgical celebrations
- Keeping track of each young person's progress, noting absences and make-up lessons.
- Informing parents of class topics, special projects, and any instances of inappropriate behavior concerning their child.
- Being responsible for the care of the classroom furnishings, supplies, and A/V materials
- Informing the SRE office if a substitute is required, in advance if possible.
- Providing any substitute with any special lesson plan and all necessary materials to implement the planned lesson
-

Benefits provided to the catechist by the Parish

- Orientation and training
- Baby-sitting for catechist's children as necessary
- Reimbursement for approved expenses
- Fees for approved workshops and in-services
- No office fee charges for catechist's children in the religious education program.

Catechist Ethics

- Catechists will model a Christian lifestyle in and out of the classroom.
- Catechists will follow the teachings and laws of the Church.
- Catechists will display a positive attitude toward the students and their families.

Catechist Assistant

Catechist Assistants are invaluable to our Catechists. They are "Catechists in training!"

A Catechist Assistant is an important part of the class. Please plan on attending every class from September to May, as many children form a special bond with their assistant. Please join all activities with the children so that you can model for them...sing, play, make crafts and enjoy praising the Lord. This is especially important with the smallest members of our parish family

While they don't have full responsibility for the entire class, the Catechist Assistant may lead one part of each week's lesson after consultation with the Catechist. These activities must always be planned with the theme of the lesson in mind as well as the age of the young people.

Responsibilities of the Catechist Assistant

- Participating in Catechist formation sessions before the year begins, as well as in-service sessions during the year.
- Assisting the Catechist in preparing and/or presenting the materials for the week's lesson.
- Being present at least 15 minutes before the session begins.
- Assisting the Catechist in creating an atmosphere for learning and helping maintain an orderly environment
- Helping greet the children and getting them settled for the session.
- Helping maintain order in the classroom, hallways, and when going to and from activities outside the classroom.
- Taking attendance, if necessary
- Assisting with clean-up, putting chairs up, or other tasks to return the classroom to order after a session.
- Participating in the activities
- Helping assist with projects
- Helping with small group discussions
- Accompanying children to the washroom
- Being the "runner" if supplies or additional materials are needed from the SRE office
- Helping to get smaller children ready for dismissal, i.e., collect materials and crafts for take-home, etc
- Assisting the Catechist at dismissal to be sure all the children are picked up.
- In an emergency, the Catechist Assistant may be called upon to take responsibility for teaching a session.

Catechist Formation

The goal of catechist formation is integration. On a personal level, catechist formation should integrate theology and spirituality with life experience. Ministerially, it should integrate life and faith with pedagogy (methods and skills of the catechist).

While catechists are most often ordinary parishioners wishing to share their gift of faith, a certain level of competence is necessary for those who serve and form others in catechetical ministry. In recognition of this, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has established a Catechist Certification process to insure that all catechists reach a Foundational level of competence within the first 4 years of entering catechetical ministry.

Online programs and programs within the parish will constitute options for formation, as well as those held in the Archdiocese.

<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/ore/cf/Pages/default.aspx>

Further information can be reviewed at the website [Catechist Formation](#)

Protecting Our Children Policy: Archdiocese of Los Angeles

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is committed to protecting the children and youth who are entrusted to its care and to ensuring that those in ministry with our young people are in right relationship with the children/youth receiving services. Here at American Martyrs Church's religious education programs, we realize sharing in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility. The *privilege* is the joy of sharing in the mission of Jesus Himself. The *responsibility* is acting in a way that conforms to the attitude and actions of Christ.

In this spirit, the diocese has issued a ministerial

[Guidelines for Adults interacting with minors](#), which can be accessed at

<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/policies.aspx>

is included in the diocesan *Protecting our Children*, which also includes mandates for creating safe environments. To read the policy, go to

<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/protecting/Pages/default.aspx>. For more

information, you may contact Mrs. Joan Vienna, Coordinator

Office of Safeguard the Children

Archdiocese of Los Angeles

jvienna@la-archdiocese.org

2136377227

At American Martyrs Catholic Community policies are followed for all our staff and volunteers who have contact with our parish children and youth. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Patti Williams at our office 310-546-4734

American Martyrs Pastor, Religious education staff and all volunteers who work with children are required to have clearances completed from the Department of Justice. They must complete all appropriate forms as identified by the diocesan *Protecting Our Children*

<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/protecting/Pages/default.aspx>

They are also bound by the California Revised Code and Diocesan Policy of Protection of Children to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. All staff, paid and volunteer, must complete an in-service training on protection of children, identification of child abuse and appropriate reporting procedures, through the Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions offered by the parish and throughout the archdiocese.

Catechist Evaluation

The religious education leader is responsible for the supervision of each catechist. During the year each catechist will be observed by the religious education leader and given feedback on their progress in an interview session. The Catechist Observation Form will be used to report the results of the evaluation to the catechist. The purpose of these evaluation sessions is to continually improve the parish program by supporting those who teach in it.

Suspension

The parish reserves the right to suspend and/or not renew the volunteer ministry position of any catechist who is not successfully performing their duties or who is not fulfilling the responsibilities in this handbook. Any catechist who is accused of a serious crime or who is discovered to have committed a serious crime will be put on immediate leave until the matter has been investigated and it is determined by the pastor that there is no danger to the children or youth of the parish. Conduct inside or outside of the program that is detrimental to the reputation of the program/parish or the safety of others may be grounds for suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the pastor.

Curriculum

The catechetical curriculum must communicate clearly and completely, according to the age level of the person being catechized, the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. The source for these teachings and traditions is Scripture and *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These resources have been made accessible and age appropriate by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

American Martyrs uses the Sadlier We Believe with Project Disciple (2014) for Grades 1-6 and Our Catholic Faith for Grades 7 & 8. These textbooks and other materials used in the classroom are in conformity with the teachings found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. They have been chosen because they offer catechists the resources necessary to conduct classes, which include all the elements of the ministry of catechesis and a spiral curriculum process.

Each catechist will be given a copy of the *Bible*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the appropriate pages for their use in lesson planning. The textbooks must be used by the catechist as the primary resource for planning and teaching. Catechists are not to substitute other materials or disregard the text as a resource unless permission has been given by the religious education leader.

Copyright Laws

Catechists are expected to be aware of and adhere to copyright laws regarding both print (word or music) and media materials (music, video, digital images, etc.). These laws regulate the copying and distribution of information created by someone other than the catechist.

Planning

Because of the importance of planning and organization in order to teach effectively, each catechist is expected to spend sufficient time prior to class planning his/her lesson. A lesson plan is to be written for each class. The religious education leader will periodically check lesson plans.

Planning is important not only for the individual class session, but also for the entire year. A calendar for planning the catechetical year is provided in the back of the catechist book. This calendar is to be submitted to the religious education leader by the start of class.

Substitute Catechists

Catechists who have to miss a class session are to call the religious education leader as far in advance as possible so that a substitute may be contacted. It is the responsibility of the catechist to have a lesson plan available for the substitute to use.

Prayer/Liturgy

Catechists are expected to provide the young people in their class with opportunities to experience a variety of prayer forms and learn the traditional prayers of the Catholic Church. In this process catechists can rely on the child's experience of prayer within their family. The list of prayers to be taught can be found in the *Parent Handbook* by grade. These prayers are to be learned with the cooperation and help of the family, especially in the elementary years. Catechists should provide parents with a list of these prayers and inform them of their responsibility to pray with their children as the children learn the prayers in class.

In order to provide students with a well-formed catechetical experience, they are offered an opportunity to participate as a group in three Eucharistic liturgies during the course of the year. Catechists may be asked to assist in the process of planning the liturgy. Students will be involved in the planning as well. Along

with three Eucharistic liturgies, the students will participate in 2 seasonal prayer services throughout the course of the year.

It is essential for all catechists to take the opportunity to deepen the young people's experience of liturgy. Discussing the Sunday readings, the seasons of the Church year, holy days and saints' feast days, rituals, liturgical practices and symbols can help youth understand and celebrate their Catholic heritage.

Attendance

Each catechist must record attendance at the beginning of each class using the role list received. The catechist is then asked to complete the attendance form each week for the office files. The religious education leader or an office volunteer will come around to each room and collect this form. Forms may be picked up weekly in the catechist mailboxes in the school hall.

Non-Custodial Parent Rights

Catechists will be advised by the religious education leader of the non-custodial parental rights of each child from a divorced family when this information is available. It is the catechist's responsibility to have duplicates of any parental correspondence sent to the non-custodial parent as well as the custodial parent if this has been requested. Catechists must recognize that occasionally children will miss religious education because of custody issues. It is never in the best interest of the child to force competition between time with a parent and time in a religious education program. Compassionate understanding is needed even when these situations cause absences.

Homework

Catechists are asked to assign homework. This will enable the parent(s) to keep informed about the material being covered, and involve them in their child's formal religious education. Parent(s) are asked to assist their children with all home assignments.

Student Progress Reports

In order to give the students formal feedback on their behavior in class and their participation and cooperation in the catechetical process, each catechist is to send the student and parent(s) a progress report two times a year, in late November and early April. A copy of the progress report is in the back of this book. These reports will be sent via the SRE website by the DRE or individual teacher.

The comments the catechist writes on the progress report must be specific, behavior-oriented and verifiable. In other words, they must describe student behavior the catechist has witnessed.

The purpose of this progress report is to inform the parent (s) or guardian(s) of their son's / daughter's participation, performance, weak and strong areas in the class and other information pertinent to our Religious Education Program. They are to review this report with their child, discuss the topics covered and return the signed progress report to the Catechist on the following week.

AS WE KNOW, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND INFORMATION ABOUT FAITH. FAITH, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, CANNOT BE EVALUATED, ONLY PARTICIPATION AND EFFORT IN THE CLASSROOM.

SRE Procedures

Before you Begin your session

Lesson Planning

Plan your lesson, including discussion questions, A/V resources, project or craft resources and you opening and closing prayers.

First...

- Review the weekend lectionary readings for the coming weekend.
- Review the Sadlier website for background ideas and activities around this weeks readings at:
<http://www.sadlierreligion.com/webelieve/weeksliturgy.cfm?>
- or click here:
- [This Weeks Liturgy](#)

Second....

- Review the Sadlier Catechist Guide for chapter assigned
- Review any other Scripture readings associated with the lesson plan.
- Review the Sadlier website <http://www.sadlierreligion.com/webelieve/>
- or click here:
- [SadlierWEBELIEVE](#)

Then....

- Organize and obtain any additional resources you intend to use.
- Think about what additional prayers might fit your lesson.
- Spend some time in prayer for your students and their families before you pull your resources together for your final lesson plan.

Ordering Material/Resources from the SRE Office

You may use any of the materials or resources available from the SRE office. You may request in writing or email or phone in your request and it will be in your mailbox or classroom when you arrive.

Note: Because we do not have multiple copies of most video resources we will often require you to pick up and return videos immediately before and after your class and return preview videos prior to the next class.

About Using Audio and Visual Resources

Media used in short or segmental pieces can be extremely useful for starting a conversation within a group about a particular topic. We wish to encourage your intentional use of media to help reach your group of media savvy disciples.

Please plan ahead to use our resources. Several catechists may wish to use the same video in a given week. This is especially true for seasonal titles for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

Exercise extreme caution before using any secular material with your group.

Not only is there the subjective problem that what might be acceptable for your children is NOT acceptable for someone else's child, but there is always the issue of them containing moral and theological positions that are not Catholic or Christian. Some general guidelines include:

- Never use any audio or video that you have not previewed in total before using even a short clip.
- Always pay close attention to the language used. As adults, we often become insensitive to vulgar language and fail to notice it in media.
- What is the message of the media you want to use? How does it relate to this lesson's topic?
- Does your chosen media portray Gospel values? What lifestyle choices are valued by the media? How are people portrayed in the media?

Finally, if you have any questions about the media resource, contact the SRE office.

Beginning your Class at American Martyrs

Arrive 15 minutes early - This will allow you time to pick-up materials, arrange your classroom, attend to personal needs, etc. It helps class decorum when you are on time and not rushed.

Check in at the school hall and pick up your attendance sheet. Your Attendance sheet and any requested resources/materials will be available in your mailbox. You will be instructed if any items will need to be shared with another class.

Discussion Environment

Arrive early enough to go to your designated room prior to meeting your disciples for your class. Be sure that any requested resources have arrived, that the room is ready, and tables and chairs arranged for your class. (Please be sure to return any furniture moved to its original position after class. Remember, school desks are assigned to students and need to be put back exactly in place.)

Prayer Environment

Prayer is an integral part of the formation experience and the young person's faith. You should have a designated space in your room to gather and share in prayer together. Prayer environment materials can be kept in your bin. We will be happy to provide you with any additional materials that reflect liturgical seasons of the Church year.

Class Times/Student Arrival

Tuesday/Wednesday Sessions will begin promptly at 3:45pm and end 4:45pm.

Junior High Sessions will begin promptly at 7:15pm and end 8:30pm

Sunday Sessions will begin promptly at 10:45am and end at 11:45am.

Young people arriving for class on Tuesday/Wednesday afternoons enter through the pedestrian gate on 15th Street, and proceed to the assembly area. Catechists, after setting up their rooms, normally meet their students in the area in a designated spot. There is a brief assembly each week.

Sunday classes will meet in the classroom, as well as Junior High.

Attendance Policy

Please note the attendance policy for students as stated in the Family Handbook:

Christian principles learned in the classroom and the homes make sense only if they are practiced regularly. Attendance at Mass is an integral part of the religious education program. It is expected that students enrolled in SRE be fully aware of their Sunday Mass and Holy Day Obligation and fulfill that obligation faithfully by attending Mass with their family. Sunday worship is a spiritual practice which enriches the faith life of our community.

Classes begin promptly at 3:45pm or 7:15pm for Junior High) and students are expected to be on time. We gather as a community at 3:45pm on the school playground asphalt for prayer and announcements.

Sunday Classes begin in the classroom at 10:45am (after 9:30 Mass) In the rare occasion early dismissal is necessary for a good reason, send a note to the child's catechist and come by the office to pick up your child. Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Regular attendance is an important factor in deepening a child's understanding of our triune God through the study of Scripture, prayer, Church teaching and community.

In the event of an absence, the parents should inform the school via email or phone call to SRE office. Parents will be notified of the absence through phone call or email. It is the responsibility of the parents to check on any lessons or materials which have been missed.

If a student misses several classes during the year, there may be a need to attend makeup classes or homeschool over the summer in order to advance to the next grade the following year. This will be the catechist's and coordinator's decision.

A child who exceeds 5 absences during the course of the year may be considered unready to progress to the next level of religious instruction. It is the parent's responsibility to complete the requirements of their children.

Tardiness

Please note the tardiness policy as stated in the Family Handbook:

Tardiness is a great concern. Classes begin and end with prayer.

Tardiness interrupts the lesson and disrupts the class. Please make every attempt to arrive for class on time.

Children who arrive late must be sent to the SRE office to correct attendance, and receive an admission slip.

If a child enters the classroom after the attendance sheet has been picked up, they must report to the SRE office.

Taking Attendance

Attendance sheets will be in your mailbox each week, or in your classroom for Sunday sessions. Please remove the nametags of each student present, and hand in the sheet to the assistant or at dismissal table with the remaining names of absent students.

If a student not on your list arrives in your classroom, he or she must report to the SRE office. It is very important that children in your room have a name tag, as this indicates our records have assigned them to you.

Dress Code

Catechists, volunteers, and students are asked to dress appropriately.

Unacceptable clothing includes hats, cutoffs, torn jeans, short/cropped tops, short shorts, and clothing that would be unacceptable in a regular school setting. Clothing that has language or pictures that are offensive, inappropriate are not acceptable.

Roller shoes, shoes with wheels, or other clothing that represents a potential safety hazard to the student are not allowed to be worn in any parish building.

Classroom Visitation

From time-to-time, staff personnel may visit your classroom. Please be gracious during their impromptu interruptions, as they should not disturb your return to your regular lesson plan.

You might wish to invite staff personnel to visit your group. Arrangements must be made for special visits by priests or other ministry persons via email or phone. Advance planning is required as ministry personnel have a very active schedules. Please make any request for them at least 1 week in advance and with whatever flexibility possible to accommodate schedules.

Campus Visitor Policy

Non-staff visitors to our campus (parents, friends, family members) need to prearrange visits with the Catechist and SRE office. The SRE office is to be notified PRIOR to the visitation day.

All visitors are required to stop at the SRE office to sign our “visitor book” and to be escorted to the classroom.

Students are not allowed to bring “friends” to class, as it can be disruptive and we do not have emergency information for them. They are welcome to bring friends to Mass on the weekend.

Parents are welcome to attend class at anytime. They are not to disturb the class while in session. If this occurs please notify the SRE office.

Church Visits/ Space Requests

Catechists may wish to use the church space or spirituality center for tours, prayer time, or other activities. You might also wish to have additional parish space for presentations or other special activities.

All the space at American Martyrs needs to be reserved often months in advance for a particular day and time. Catechists must make arrangements for these spaces and times in advance, and we are here to help you if needed.

Food/Snacks Not Allowed

In light of the rising frequency of food allergies in young people - some of them life threatening - we have instituted a policy of not food or drinks during SRE classes. While we ask parents for information regarding their child’s allergies, quite frankly we do not always get full disclosure. We are only in session for an hour. This seems a small sacrifice to provide a safer environment for our children.

Classroom Parties

Class time is limited; parties are discouraged. Food and drinks are not to be consumed in the classroom. However, sometimes a small celebration is important. When having any type of classroom celebration, please notify the SRE office.

Blood-Borne Pathogens

You and your family can be infected by serious, life threatening diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, or Hepatitis-B, if you are not cautious when handling body fluid incidents (including blood, vomit, and bodily wastes) that may occur during your class. Below are some suggested procedures for your safety. These are precautions to keep a barrier between you and the germs that can be carried in the blood or other fluids. Exercise your common sense when handling such incidents.

- In situations that occur with blood or other bodily fluids, the student should be given a Kleenex or a handi-wipe and remain in their seat or moved to the back of the classroom.
- Students should not be sent out of the room until the emergency situation is contained.
- Use the phone to notify the SRE office
- A staff person will be sent to assist you.
- Staff personnel will “clean and sanitize” affected areas, and properly dispose of soiled materials.

General Recommendations

These procedures should be used at all times for ALL people. Don't assume there is no danger of infectious disease because you know the person or their family.

- Always wear disposable latex/rubber gloves. These gloves are in your bin and in the “cleanup kit” that will be provided for your use in the case that body fluids need to be contained.
- You should wear gloves whenever you expect to come in contact with blood or body fluids; when administering first aid, such as cleaning cuts, scratches or bloody noses, or when assisting with toileting.
- For small, clean cuts or scratches, if the person is able to do so, have him apply their own bandage, so that you can refrain from coming into contact with their blood.

Procedures for Safe Disposal of Body Fluids or Blood

- Always put on disposable latex/rubber gloves. Minimally, you should have a set of gloves, several adhesive bandages and some self-sealing plastic bags readily available in your room or your bin.
- Do not allow other participants in your class who are not wearing gloves to be helpful.
- Use paper towel to absorb spills, then place the towels in a leak-proof plastic bag (use red hazard bag if available). For spills that cannot be cleaned with one paper towel, use Sorb-all or other provided absorbent following directions on the can.

- If possible, flood the spill area with a freshly prepared bleach solution or with a disinfectant. If not possible, spray with germicidal spray.
- Clean the area with paper towels, broom or vacuum.
- Place additional used paper towels in the leak-proof bag.
- Remove soiled disposable gloves by turning them inside out and placing one within the other, and place in leak-proof bag.
- Seal the bag and place in an appropriate infectious waste container, if available. If not, take immediately to an out of doors trash disposal, rather than an indoor waste container.
- Immediately wash hands with soap and running water. Hand washing is necessary even when you wear gloves.

In the Event of Exposure to an Infectious Agent

- Wash contaminated skin for at least 10 minutes, using antibacterial soap and copious amounts of water.
- If eyes are affected, flush the eyes for 15 minutes with water.
- Notify the SRE staff, and seek medical attention.
-

Always proceed in a calm and unhurried manner, and for pastoral reasons, take care not to embarrass or imply blame to person(s) involved in any such event.

Medication/Illness/Accidents

- American Martyrs SRE is forbidden to administer medication without prior authority to do so. Students who are under a doctor's care must have a medical permission form on file in the SRE office. The form can be obtained in the SRE office and must be completed by the doctor. The doctor and parent signature must be on the form before medication can be administered. All medications are to be brought to the SRE office in the prescription bottle with signed instructions for administering immediately upon the student's arrival. **NO STUDENT IS PERMITTED TO RETAIN MEDICATION OF ANY KIND ON HIS/HER PERSON.**
- All student illnesses or accidents should be kept confidential unless the parent gives permission via the SRE office.
- If an accident occurs during class, it should be reported to the SRE office immediately so that proper insurance forms are completed.

Crisis Plans

Crisis Plans have been put into place to address various emergencies. The staff will use code signals through the PA system to alert teachers without panicking students.

The crisis plan codes include:

Evacuate: Evacuate everyone according to the Fire Drill

Hold: Hold everyone. No one leaves. All is quiet.

Lock down: Hold everyone, lock room, and hang sign on door to show it is secure. Lights off.

Children move away from windows and doors. Catechists take attendance to ensure all children on premises are accounted for. There will be one spokesperson for SRE: the DRE, Pastor, or their designee. When the situation is ended, and ALL CLEAR signal will come over the PA system three times.

Evacuation Plans & Drills

In the event of situations requiring evacuation, everyone will be evacuated to the St Elizabeth Field. Authorities will be called immediately.

There are safety procedures posted in each room for fire or earthquake.

Catechists will instruct the students in these procedures the first week of class, and review instructions periodically through the course of the year.

In case of **fire** the catechist's main responsibility is the evacuation and safety of the children, not extinguishing the fire. In case of fire, the following steps are to be followed:

- If a fire is discovered, catechists should set off the fire alarm in the building.
- Each class is to follow their designated evacuation route and gather at their designated gathering point outside the building
- Catechists are to lead their class in a calm and orderly manner
- Catechists are to take role when they arrive at their gathering point.
- Students must remain at the gathering point until dismissed by the catechist either to return to the class or to their parent(s).

In the case of earthquake, the children take cover. Catechists will direct the class to go to the area designated for shelter during storms and take cover or, if that is not possible, to take cover away from windows, under the desks or tables. If possible, catechists will draw drapes or blinds on all windows.

Hazardous Compounds

Some hazardous compounds are in the building for various purposes, such as cleaning, and these are all carefully labeled. Protective clothing is provided for all staff that need them, and the Poison Control number is posted in classrooms. Precautions are taken to store all chemicals carefully, and authorities shall be immediately called if there is a danger to anyone caused by chemical onsite.

Cancellation of Scheduled SRE Classes

Classes should not be cancelled by a Catechist. If you are unable to teach, contact the SRE office and an substitute will conduct the class.

In case of dangerous road conditions, SRE classes will be cancelled.

In general:

If classes have been cancelled by Manhattan Beach School District or for American Martyrs School, SRE classes are also cancelled.

If “all evening activities” have been cancelled for MBUSD or American Martyrs School, SRE classes will be cancelled.

Information regarding weather related closings can be obtained from one of the following resources:

Internet: <http://familiesinfaith.weebly.com/>

Email: Catechists and parents will be notified via email by the SRE office

Conducting Your SRE Class

Curriculum Materials

Curriculum materials for all grades use Sadlier’s We Believe with Project Disciple, Catholic Identity Edition. The student workbook is meant to be read, written in, and brought home each week, to be shared with the family to promote continued formation. NOTE: The Sadlier Book is to be brought to and from class. In the event the child forgets his book, extra books will be in your bin.

Each student will be given a book on the first day of class. We provide pencils/pens in your bins for use in class each week, as well as scissors, glue stick, crayons, markers. If you wish to use journals with your students, let the SRE office know and we will provide them for you.

Bibles are provided for each class, the New American Bible Revised Standard Addition as well as a children’s bible for the younger grades. Sixth graders will receive personal bibles and should be brought to class each week, as well as Jr High if the catechist wishes to use them. Additional bibles are available in the SRE office if the students forget them.

Leaving the Classroom with your Group

On occasion, you may wish to leave the classroom with your students to walk outside, visit the church, spirituality center, or parish facilities. As long as you remain on the American Martyrs campus, no "authorization" is necessary.

If you leave the classroom with your students to walk outside, visit another class, etc, please notify the SRE office via phone or email when you leave and return to the classroom. Classes are to remain on parish ground unless otherwise arranged with the SRE office.

Field Trips or Events

You may decide that taking your group to a particular site, such as to perform a service project or see a justice issue up close, is a good idea. A permission slip must be obtained in advance of the field trip or event. Please check with the SRE office well in advance so that any necessary Transportation and Permission forms can be obtained and returned prior to your event.

Tests/Reviews

A short "review" from time to time for older students may assist in keeping their attention. Students aware of their accountability are more apt to learn.

WeBelieve and the Sadlier website (webeliveweb.com) provide reviews that are simple and to the point.

Our primary purpose is development of faith. While knowledge of facts is certainly important, students cannot be penalized for doing poorly on objective reviews.

A marking system such as: Excellent, Very Good, Satisfactory, Try Harder, or other appropriate affirming notations may be used.

Be Positive at all times! Affirm what the student does know, assist in what they do not understand.

Student Progress

Student progress reviews will be conducted during the year and are due to the SRE office the first week of January and the final class. Review forms and guidelines for the current year will be distributed about a month prior to when they are due.

Student reviews are only helpful to the extent that they are useful to the parent in fostering their child's continuing spiritual growth.

Objective measures such as knowledge, attendance, and observed behaviors are only indicators of the deeper reality of faith. None the less, these objective measures together with the honest observations of the catechist can provide a good grounding to the parent in their role as the primary religious educator of their child.

Your completed student review will be emailed to the parent by the SRE office staff. Please use them as a tool for helping the parents have a conversation with their child about faith and its experience in their lives.

Ending your SRE Class

Student Dismissal

All students are to be held in their rooms until the 4:45pm dismissal.

Students are to be walked out to the dismissal area under your supervision, leaving your classroom to help ensure the safety of your children to the area where their parents will pick up. Please get to know who is going to “pick-up” your students. If the person who is picking up is not familiar to you, ask who they are. At no time are the students to be released to an unseen adult (waiting in the car for them).

Any children remaining after the bulk of your class has dismissed safely should be brought to the dismissal table and left with an SRE staff member. Please let the staff know when you are returning to your classroom with all children dismissed.

Notify the SRE office immediately if there are any problems.

Early Dismissal

NEVER DISMISS YOUR CLASS EARLY - IF YOU NEED HELP CONTACT THE SRE OFFICE AND WE WILL SUPERVISE YOUR CLASS UNTIL DISMISSAL.

On rare occasions, a student must leave class early. Parents are asked to notify the SRE by phone, email, or written note or in person for these instances. Any and all dismissal requests you receive should be directed to the SRE office.

The procedure for early dismissal is as follows

When the parent arrives, they are to go directly to the SRE office to sign out their child.

The catechist will be notified via phone or in person when a student is to be dismissed.

Children in grades 1-3 should be brought to the office with a messenger.

Students in grades 4-6 may come directly to the office.

Do not dismiss any student until you have been notified.

Note: NO student is to leave class without proper dismissal or permission from the Front Desk.

Discipline Policy/Parent Contract

Behavior Ground Rules

Polite social decorum is expected to each young person. The Catechists should be clear, beginning with the first session, as to what is acceptable behavior for the young person's interaction with the group. Depending on the age of the young people in the group, the catechist might wish to enlist the input of the group members in forming the ground rules, or in the case of younger children simply tell them your rules for behavior.

Typical rules for interaction might include items similar to the following:

Only one person speaks at a time.

You can say anything you want as long as you say it respectfully.

No put downs of anyone allowed.

Anything that is shared by someone in the group stays within the group and is not shared with anyone outside the group (older grades).

Keep your hands to yourself

Typical "Housekeeping" Rules might include:

All desks are to remain closed. Teacher chair and desk is to be respected.

No feet on the tables, chairs, or walls

Everyone picks up all their mess before they leave

No Food or Drink in the classroom

Things sometime break, if you break something tell us right away.

Behavior Requiring disciplinary action due to lack of respect for others may include:

Speaking out of turn in a way not respectful to the catechist or group member
Verbally or non-verbally harassing or putting down a group member by any action or inaction

Any form of physical harassment - pushing, shoving, poking, or hitting.

Student behavior that is disrespectful of the catechist's environment or parish property.

Any other behavior rules inappropriate for the environment or that goes against "Housekeeping Rules".

Catechist Responses

You should never tolerate inappropriate behavior by your students. Most inappropriate behaviors are the result of boundary testing or the different levels of socialization skills taught in families. Most of the time a simple comment will resolve the situation. For those other or recurring situations the following discipline “steps” should be followed regarding inappropriate behavior.

First Step

The individual is issued a verbal warning by the catechist. It should be clear that failure to modify the behavior at this point will result in the SRE office for a conference.

Second Step

The individual is sent to SRE office accompanied by a student messenger, or assistant to meet with an SRE staff member regarding the student's behavior. A written covenant will be agreed to and signed by the individual prior to returning to the group.

Third Step

The individual is sent to the SRE office accompanied by a messenger or assistant. The individual is removed from group pending a conference with parents/guardians of the student. The catechist is removed from the process at this point.

Chronic Attitudes

If a chronic condition exists with behavior or attitude of a student, the Catechist should contact the parent or guardian within a reasonable timeframe. If a student is constantly preventing other students from entering into the spirit of the class, it is unfair to the student, the rest of the class, and the Catechist to ignore or live with this situation.

Note: before contacting the parent or guardian, be sure to inform the Elementary Coordinator of the situation, and any progress (or lack of) with the student and/or family.

Zero Tolerance for Violence

Any student who physically harasses another student or Catechist, or shows lack of respect for church property by way of intentional theft or vandalism, should be removed immediately from the classroom.

Any violent threat whether to a Catechist or student, made with harmful intent or “just kidding” will result in the removal of that student from the program and notification to the police department.

Sharing Space

Shared space syndrome (SSS) or use of campus space by school, SRE and other ministries should not become an issue. Proper care and respect for property and of all American Martyrs students, faculty, and ministries should be observed at all times.

The parish community of American Martyrs has access to and use of any and all accessible space and materials, upon request. Please remind your students, assistants, parents and others to respect the property of others.

Notify the SRE office immediately of anything damaged, dirty or “out of place” in the room you occupy. We will direct the information to the proper authority for that ministry.

Also please remind students they are not allowed to “borrow” from the desks that they are sitting at, and there is a “Hands off” policy regarding desks and any displays in the classroom. If you didn't bring it with you, don't touch it!

A good rule for Catechists to follow is to leave your class or meeting room in the same condition or better than the way you found it.

Drop off and Pick-up Procedures

American Martyrs is a residential neighborhood. All parents must use the church parking lot on 15th and Laurel for arrival and dismissal of their children.

For Safety sake:

There is no parking option other than the church parking lot during SRE class sessions. Please obey traffic laws and use crosswalks, and crossing guards.

Tuesday/Wednesday

Parents must walk their children onto the school campus to meet you at a spot you determine for assembly. After assembly, walk your students to your assigned classroom.

Pick up will require that you walk your students to the dismissal area by the John Paul II alcove. Please stay with your students until they have been picked up by their parents. When the majority of the students have been picked up, bring any remaining students to the SRE staff and they will be responsible for their pick-up.

Junior High

Students will be dropped off on the school campus and come to you in your classroom.

Sunday Program

Parents must park in the church parking lot and walk their child to your classroom. We encourage you to attend the 9:30am Mass, and therefore our start time will be 10:45pm. Please have the parents come into the classroom to pick them up.

A Prayer for Catechists

Dear God,

There are so many signs of your presence in our lives,
not just sacramental signs, like bread and wine, and oil for anointing.
But signs that point to and flow from the same reality.
You are present. You are among us. Your signs say so.
You are present in sunrises and sunsets,
in the roar of great oceans, and in the trickle of small streams.
Your presence is announced as much by towering trees
as by the tiniest blossoms.
Everything created announces you.
Above all, your presence is proclaimed by people,
people of every description
You dwell in us.
We are miracles of the life you have created.
We are complex and mysterious,
We are signs of all that you can do.
But signs mean nothing to those who don't see them,
or fail to read them, or who ignore them.
Help us not to be among those.
Dear God, you have called us, your Catechists,
to proclaim all the signs of your presence
including your sacramental ones.
Help us to see them clearly, to read them carefully,
and to speak to them with Love. Amen.

