



# **2020-2021 JESUS, FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT**

## **CALENDAR**

**Family Formation Sessions will take place virtually this year.**

**Children in Grades 5-8, High School Students preparing for Confirmation,  
and Parents of all-aged children will attend via Zoom  
10:30 am – Noon on the following dates**

**September 27**

**October 25**

**November 22**

**January 17**

**February 14**

**March 14**

**April 18**

**PLEASE NOTE: PK-4<sup>th</sup> Graders will not attend these sessions  
but instead will view at any time a pre-recorded session posted on the website.**

### **Catechist/Facilitator Training Dates**

**10:30 am via Zoom**

**August 23 – Basic Tech and Facilitator Training**

**September 20 for September**

**October 18 for October**

**November 15 for November**

**January 10 for January**

**February 7 for February**

**March 7 for March**

**April 11 for April**

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username: stfrancis; password: Jesus *(when necessary)*

Revised  
8/30/2020



Dear Catechist,

As a facilitator, do you think of yourself as a Catechist? Well, you are! You have embarked on an experience that will bring people closer to Christ. In these challenging times of social distancing, you have consented to take a part in this uncharted territory to make the mystery of Jesus and his Church come alive through virtual means. Not an easy task, but the one that is laid before us.

In the Book of Esther, we read the story of a beautiful Hebrew woman who must be brave enough to make a difference for her people. God placed her in a situation where she would be his instrument to save them. Her uncle appropriately encouraged her to go forward without fear: “Who knows if perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”

Thank you so much for accepting God’s call to walk this Catholic journey during “such a time as this”! As a Catechist, you will experience many grace-filled moments when you see God at work in the lives of his people as well as your own. Our goal is to help families not just understand the faith but develop a relationship with Christ and with each other. What an awesome opportunity!

This manual has been compiled to outline the policies that address many aspects of the program. Please familiarize yourself with these guidelines and feel free to make any suggestions that will increase our ability to reach the children and their families whom Our Lord has entrusted to us.

May God bless our efforts as we seek to do His holy will.

Sincerely,  
Penny Giunta  
Director of Family Faith Formation



St. Francis Xavier Parish  
Generations of Faith  
Religious Education

2020-21

## Catechist Handbook

It helps now and then, to step back and take the long view.  
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise  
that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete,  
which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

This is what we are about:  
We plant seeds that will one day grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
And an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,  
But that is the difference between the Master Builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own. AMEN

*Monsignor Oscar Romero*



*Catechesis is a lifelong process. As the gift of faith unfolds in our lives, we should gladly accept the responsibility to nurture that faith. We accomplish this by building a Church community that promotes knowledge, understanding and reflection. Catechesis is the point of convergence between faith and our lives. We cannot tell a story we have not heard, enter a mystery we have not encountered, nor renew a world we have not accepted as our own. In accepting the challenge to pass on the message of salvation, we should recognize ourselves as a pilgrim people. We are at the crossroads of a faith journey, looking forward that we might follow the Lord sincerely, and lead others on their way to salvation by word and example ... (from the Christian Education document of the Joliet Diocesan Synod, 1989)*

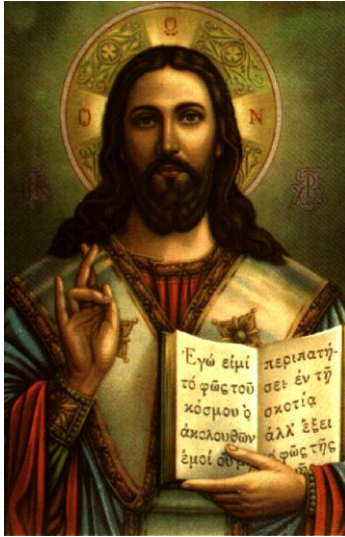
## General Procedures:

- A few days before the Zoom session, you will receive an email containing information about registering using Sign-Up Genius. Please register for the breakout group you'll be leading.
- If you find that you will not be able to attend the monthly Zoom session for which you signed up, call Penny's cell (815-278-6901) so we can arrange for a sub for you.
- The Zoom session will begin at 10:30 am with an opening presentation followed by the showing of a segment of the Ascension Press series T3 Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come. Please use the Zoom invite code and enter the meeting by 10:15.
- After the video, you'll be placed in a breakout room for about 20 minutes where you will be joined by a number of people.
  - If you are facilitating discussion with a group of parents whose oldest children are PK-4<sup>th</sup> graders, you will not have any children in your group. Hence, while you will lead the discussion, you should encourage parents to share their thoughts and experiences with each other.
  - If you are facilitating discussion with a group of parents whose oldest children are 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders or high school students preparing for Confirmation, you will lead the discussion with the goal of encouraging parents to talk directly to their own children. Occasionally, a review game will be recommended where parents and their children will form teams that compete against other families.
- Often a short video clip or power point presentation will be provided to you in advance of the Zoom session. Be sure to upload these resources and leave them on your computer screen. At the appropriate time, you should share your screen so your group will be able to see the resources. Afterwards, you should stop screen sharing to let your group see you again.
- When 20 minutes is almost up, you will receive a message that the breakout session will be ending in \_\_\_\_\_ seconds. So, you should quickly summarize and give final instructions.
- Everyone will return to the large group for closing reminders and a short prayer service.
- Training sessions via Zoom are scheduled monthly from 10:30 am-Noon. **It is very important that you try to attend.** These sessions will be held one week before Family Formation Zoom sessions and will give you an opportunity to try out the resources you'll use with the families. The meetings will also offer spiritual enrichment and social interaction with the other Catechists. It's possible that these training sessions will last less than 1½ hours.
- Catechists are required to have a Virtus account where their compliance documents are recorded. These documents consist of a certificate showing your completion of a Protecting God's Children seminar and a record of your background check. If you have not taken the PGC seminar, it is available online when you set up your account on virtus.org.
- The diocese requires that every Catechist completes a minimum of 6 hours of Continuing Education each year. This minimum requirement will be fulfilled by attending the training sessions. Additional opportunities may be offered by the parish for ongoing formation. **At the end of the year, each Catechist must submit a record of their Continuing Education, using the diocesan forms on this website.** The parish is required to submit these forms to the diocese.

\*The lesson plans supplied for the Zoom breakout sessions are meant to guide you in presenting specific concepts to your group. If you have other ideas, you are free to use them, as long as:

- They accomplish the objectives.
- They remain true to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

If you vary the lesson plan, please check with the DRE before using another resource.



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NOTE: Highlighted items on the following pages are included in the Appendix.

## **Arrival and Dismissal:**

Please arrive for the Zoom session by 10:15 am so you can be checked in and assigned a group for the breakout session. Please stay for the entire session to get the full benefit of the teaching that will be presented. This will add hours to your continuing ed as well.

## **Attendance:**

### **We're counting on YOU!**

If, for some reason you are unable to attend the Zoom session for which you registered, please call Penny's cell number (**815-278-6901**) as soon as possible so we can arrange for someone else to lead the breakout group.

## **Communications:**

If at any time you are having difficulty with a situation, whether it is a concept that's being taught, the virtual model itself, or the technology, please contact Penny as soon as possible so we can try to resolve the issue.

## **Competency:**

The diocese requires a minimum of 6 hours of continuing education each year for all Catechists, to prepare them to adequately pass on the faith.

Through the material taught at the training sessions, as well as the material taught in the Zoom session, each Catechist is able to fulfill this requirement. However, Catechists are encouraged to go beyond the minimum requirement. Our faith is so rich! Every endeavor to learn more will be a blessing to you and also to those you minister to as a Catechist.

Several excellent on-line programs are available. These are just two of them:

[www.mycatholicfaithdelivered.com](http://www.mycatholicfaithdelivered.com)

[www.newmanconnection.com](http://www.newmanconnection.com)

Parish Missions and other parish presentations will also add to Catechist competency and should be attended whenever possible, even virtually. As baptized Catholics, we are commissioned by Christ to spread the Good News to the ends of the earth – we want to have the best preparation possible to do this.

**It is imperative that Catechists attend ALL Catechist Training Sessions** to the best of their ability, so they are well prepared to facilitate.

After Catechists attend a training session or other continuing education event, they must complete a **"Catechist Record of Formation"** and add the information to the **"Parish Catechist Annual Formation Log"** (These are found in the Appendix on the website.) At the end of the year, these documents will need to be submitted to the office so a report can be made to the diocese.

## **Curriculum:**

The theme this year will be "Jesus: The Fulfillment of the Covenant". Each month, when parents, 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Graders and High School Confirmation students come for the Zoom session, they will view a portion of the Ascension Press video series entitled: "T3 Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come". PK-4<sup>th</sup> graders will see pre-recorded video presentations that include information about the same topics covered by their parents and older siblings. The monthly topics are:

September: A review of salvation history through the Bible Timeline which we studied last year; An introduction to Christ as the fulfillment of the covenant

October: Jesus – the Teacher; the Beatitudes and Commandments

November: Jesus – the miraculous Healer and wise Leader; miracles and parables

December: No session this month; families will focus on the Nativity in their home lessons

January: Jesus’ establishment of a new kingdom on earth – the Church

February: Christ teaches us about the path that leads to Heaven

March: The magnitude of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross

April: The Resurrection of Christ, the Great Commission to go out and spread the Good News; the Eucharist as the Real Presence of Christ who empowers us for the journey

The learning will continue when parents lead two home lessons. All homework will be done electronically and submitted to us online.

Catechists will receive a lesson plan for each month’s breakout session. The lesson plans will be discussed at the monthly training sessions, so you will have a chance at that time to ask questions or make suggestions.

When facilitating, if a question arises that you do not know how to answer, always admit that and promise to have us get back to them with an answer. Please be sure to write down the question and give it to Penny so she can either get back to the family individually or address it at the next Zoom session if it seems that the whole group would benefit from the answer.

### **Group Management:**

All families should remain muted for the main Zoom session. However, when the breakout sessions take place it might be best for them to stay unmuted but be reminded to raise their hand (either physically or electronically) if they would like to speak so the conversation does not get out of hand.

### **Family Guidelines:**

A pamphlet outlining the program procedures is provided online for each family to access. You can find that document under the “More” tab; “Parent Handbook and Calendar”.

### **Role of the Catechist:**

#### 1. Community Builder

Catechists help each family member feel like a valued member of the group.

They encourage them to respect the feelings and experiences of one another.

They create an open and prayerful environment by listening and encouraging all to participate in the group.

#### 2. Teacher

Catechists pass on the deposit of faith. Lessons are provided, but it is up to us to find the moments to follow God’s lead in discussing topics, answering questions, and helping family members to incorporate the knowledge into their everyday lives.

#### 3. Role Model

Catechists lead by example. A Catechist is someone who is in relationship with the Lord, desires to grow in faith, and is committed to spreading and defending the faith. Catechists are called to model what it means to be a person of faith in

their own lives. Respect for the Church and the Sacraments as well as a sincere desire to show their love for God should be evident.

#### 4. Communicator

As with all Baptized Christians, Catechists are called to be communicators of the Gospel through word and deed. The program implemented at St. Francis Xavier values the parents as the primary Catechists of their children. It is therefore the Catechist's responsibility to respect parental involvement and encourage family participation whenever they can.

#### **Safe Environment Procedures:**

To volunteer as a Catechist, the following procedures must be followed. You will find the highlighted items in the Appendix on the Catechist page on the website.

- All Catechists are required to attend a “Protecting God’s Children” seminar BEFORE teaching. This is a one-time requirement. The program familiarizes you with the signs of child sexual abuse. **A permanent record of your attendance will be kept on the virtusonline website.**
- If you are a returning Catechist and you have not already registered for a Virtus account, please do so now. Go to [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), click “first time registrant”, “begin registration process”, select “Joliet.IL”, create a username and password. Then fill in all information requested, including the date you took the Protecting God’s Children seminar. If you do not remember that date, please contact the office and Jackie can check the date on the certificate you gave us. If you have not had a background check for 5 years, Virtus will generate one.
- If you are a new Catechist, go to [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), click on “first time registrant” and follow the on-screen instructions. After completing the registration process return to your Virtus account home page and open the TOOLBOX tab. On the left side of screen click TRAINING and click to begin the training session. This training must be completed in one sitting. Failure to complete the training will require you to start over from the beginning. **This online option for taking the PGC class will only be in effect until the restrictions regarding coronavirus have been lifted.** For assistance contact: [helpdesk@virtus.org](mailto:helpdesk@virtus.org) OR [SafeEnvironment@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:SafeEnvironment@dioceseofjoliet.org)
- If the virtual class has already been eliminated, go to [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), click on “first time registrant” and click “view a list of sessions” to register for a Protecting God’s Children seminar being taught in the area. You will be prompted to create a username and password and Virtus will automatically set up an account for you.
- In the Appendix you will find a **Code of Conduct** that Virtus prescribes for all who interact with children. Please read this and consider the ways you can observe these directives for the safety of all.
- **YOU ARE A MANDATED REPORTER** and must report any notable suspicion of abuse. The DCFS **mandated reporter form** is found in the Appendix on the website. By signing the **Acknowledgement Form** you confirm that you have read this form and will abide by its directives. A form is also supplied for you to use if you need **to report an incident to DCFS** (found in the Appendix on the website)



- The “Standards of Behavior for those Working with Minors” and the “Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors” are provided online and are to be read by each Catechist. The Acknowledgement Form includes these documents. They summarize appropriate ways to interact with students and the way situations of possible sexual abuse should be handled. Although we are not meeting in person this year, it is still important to become aware of these procedures in the event that a gathering is permitted later in the year, Please be aware of the fact that disciplining students by restraining them, yanking their clothing, nudging them into their seat, etc. could cause a Catechist to be accused of abuse.
- For future reference, anytime students need to be transported to or from an event, parents/guardians are expected to drive their own children, unless there are enough students to warrant the rental of a bus. If parents delegate to a Catechist the responsibility of driving their children, a **Driver Information Form** (found in the Appendix on the website) must be completed by the Catechist and given to the Director to be kept on file. ***Catechists are never to drive students unless another adult is present in the car and the Religious Ed. Director is aware of the situation.***