

BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA PARISH

Religious Education



Participant Handbook 2011 - 2012

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Blessed Kateri Parish Mission Statement



We come together as the parish family of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.

As a Eucharistic people celebrating our diverse cultures, we unite as one Body of Christ strengthened by the Sacraments and nourished by the Living Word of God.

As a faith community striving to become disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord, we commit ourselves to serve one another and the community at large.

Blessed Kateri Religious Education Mission Statement

In order to carry the gospel into the heart and structures of culture and society, and restore all things to Christ, the mission of religious education strives to form and equip apostles in discerning and living out their unique vocation given to them by God.

As a center of evangelization and catechesis, we seek to nurture individuals in a life of holiness, established on conversion and encounter with the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and the life and mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

As a house of formation, we strive to incorporate individuals into the life and mystery of the Catholic Church through the four pillars of: 1.) explaining and living out the creed, 2.) the sacraments and the sacred liturgy of the Church, 3.) fostering a life centered and modeled on gospel values based on Christ's moral teachings and the spirit of the beatitudes, and 4.) advancing a life rooted and developed on prayer.

Philosophy

Religious Education is a process that is initiated by the Eternal Father through the Holy Spirit to draw a person into the Life of the Blessed Trinity by a communion and intimacy with the Life, Message, and Mystery of Jesus Christ. This process is transmitted to the people of God by way of the Church who, through the proclamation of parents, catechists, priests, religious, and godparents, promotes knowledge of the faith, liturgical education, moral formation, teaches individuals and families how to pray, educates individuals and families for communal life, and leads individuals and families to missionary activity – all by means of experiential catechesis.

By experiential catechesis the community of believers is brought to a greater understanding of faith by their everyday experience and to an interpretation of the meaning of that experience in the light of God's revelation. Thus the community of believers need to know not just words, but Jesus who is the Word, so that the whole person's humanity is impregnated by that word, changed by the working of grace into a new creature, and as a result set to follow Christ and learn more and more within the Church to think like Him, to judge like Him, to act in conformity with His commandments, and to hope as He invites us to, so that Christ may be given to the world.

Goals and Objectives (taken from the General Directory for Catechesis)

In order to help families have a direct experience of the Catholic Faith and to move them to abandoning themselves "Completely and freely to God": intelligence, will, heart, and memory; to the vocation which the Lord calls them, we must assist families by:

- Promoting knowledge of the faith – by providing an atmosphere of sharing where the Doctrines and Dogma of our Catholic Faith can be transmitted through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Explanation of the Creed.
- Liturgical Education – explaining what the Christian Liturgy is, and what the sacraments are and offer an experience of the different kinds of celebration. We must make symbols, and gestures, known and loved so that families are lead to a true liturgical life.
- Moral Formation – leading families to nourish one another by the witness of their lives so as to transmit the content of Christian morality and cultivate an active evangelical attitude and Christian values.
- Teaching them how to pray – using traditional and spontaneous prayer types and drawing form the rich tradition of the lives of the saints we will draw families into a life of prayer and union with God.
- Education for Community Life – by prayer, social, and educational gatherings, we will edify families to cooperate actively in building up the Church and its work of evangelization.

- The Missionary Spirit – equipping them to take Christ into their school, professional, cultural, and social lives by lesson structures related to the many fascist of vocations: priesthood, religious, consecrated, single, married, and apostolate. So that Christ is announced to the world by word and deed, and the world aided toward full reception of Christ.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Religious Education Office Hours

Monday 2:30pm – 7:30 pm
 Tuesday – Thursday 2:30 pm - 6:30 pm
 Closed on Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Registration

Online registration for Little Church, Elementary, and Junior High takes place annually. Early Bird Registration occurred during March 2011. Regular Registration began on August 2, 2011. It is our policy to have a fair and open registration process for all. The online registration helps make that possible and helps the parish by reducing administrative and material costs.

With the limited number of classrooms, not all children/teens may be placed in a traditional classroom setting. During the registration process when a class becomes full, a waiting list is established and the child/teen will participate in the F.I.R.E. program or home study. Classes are limited to 20 students in Elementary, 20 students for 3 yr olds, 22 students for 4&5 year olds in Little Church.

Parish Registration needs to be completed in the Parish Office before enrolling your family in Religious Education. A copy of your child's Baptismal certificate is required upon entry into the program.

Class Times

Little Church Sunday8:30am (During Mass)

Elementary Monday4:15pm - 5:30pm
 5:45pm -7:00pm

Tuesday4:15pm – 5:30pm

Wednesday (1st and 2nd grade only).....3:00pm - 4:00pm

Wednesday 4:15pm - 5:30pm

Thursday4:15pm – 5:30pm

Junior High Monday 7:00pm - 8:30pm

F.I.R.E. A facilitator will be contacting you.

Program Start Dates

Little Church	Sunday, September 18, 2011
Elementary	Week of: September 12, 2011
Junior High	Monday, September 26, 2011

Class Locations

The Little Church and Elementary classrooms are located on the 1st floor (or basement) of the Blessed Kateri Faith Center. There are 7 rooms: Rooms 1-6 and the Youth Room (YR). In August, you will receive a class entrance coupon. Please bring this coupon with you on the first day of class as it notifies the catechist that all registration processes have been completed and allows your child to enter class. A class list will be posted outside the classrooms during the first week of class.

Jr. High EDGE classes will take place in the Kateri Faith Center in Slattery Hall (formerly the Worship Area).

Religious Education Programs Offered at Blessed Kateri

Little Church

While parents and older siblings attend 8:30am Sunday Mass, our Little Church program provides 3, 4, and 5 year old children a positive and loving first experience with our Catholic Faith. The curriculum, STORIES OF GOD’S LOVE, is based on Bible Stories and Life’s Faith Experiences, thus bringing God’s word to each preschooler. Little Church gives families the opportunity to continue weekly faith lessons at home through Chapter Leaflets that are designed with the entire family in mind. Our hopes are that Little Church enriches the Faith and Church Life of the children, helps prepare them for regular mass participation and gives the rest of the family the opportunity to attend mass while their pre-school child is actively involved in Faith laden fun.

Elementary Classes

This program is set-up for all families with children in grades 1-6 who are seeking to enrich their lives with a deeper communal interaction of their personal faith experience of Christ. These weekly sessions are filled with prayer, games and lectures. They are set-up to support parents in their role as primary educators of the faith. The weekly take home/chapter review assignments are a useful tool that help families further discuss together what was learned in the classroom.

The EDGE (Junior High)

The Edge is a radical new Catholic centered program aimed at young adolescents who are in the 7th and 8th grade. The EDGE is designed to meet their educational, spiritual, emotional, and social needs. As part of the Catholic Church's mission to evangelize, catechize, and spread the gospel message of Jesus Christ, middle school youth are encouraged to go out and bring the faith into the world.

Home Study

This is a home-based version of the classroom program, designed for those families that are not able to attend weekly classes at the parish. It includes required attendance adult formation classes and participation in 1 parish retreat by at least one parent.

F.I.R.E.

This is a "Family-centered Intergenerational Religious Education" program design to help families in a small faith community setting encounter Christ by different activities, prayers, rituals, and faith sharing sessions. Participants will meet once a week at a Facilitator's home at the best appointed time of all families involved.

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Formation sessions provide us with greater knowledge and understanding of the Church's teachings and wisdom. They help us to utilize our Catholic traditions as part of our daily lives. To provide a rich Catholic experience to our Adult Formation sessions we will be dedicating each year to a pillar in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Since the enrichment of parents is so important, participating in Adult Faith Formation is recommended for all parents who have enrolled their child in Religious Education. Attendance at the Faith Formation sessions are required for parents who have enrolled their child in Home Study or FIRE. Parents are responsible for attending a minimum of four sessions throughout the year, September 2010 through May 2011. The sessions will be offered at different times and days throughout the year so that parents will have an opportunity to attend.

Parish Retreats

A parish retreat is a peaceful moment in time to foster a deeper conversion experience with Jesus Christ. This is a time that can be shared with family members, co-workers, friends and neighbors, who may cherish these few moments of spiritual peace, or who are in search of experiencing “more” in the Catholic Tradition.

Whole Community Catechesis

Whole Community catechesis is a concept that implies two main principles. First, because conversion is an ongoing process, we need to catechize and be catechized our entire lives. Growth in faith and religious literacy is not just for children. Second, that growth in faith is mutual. We do not teach our children, friends, family and parish without being taught ourselves. The entire community needs to be involved with formation not just the children. Blessed Kateri “family week” is the assembly component of Whole Community Catechesis.

Family Week

Family week will not occur this year. Instead, we will have a large group teaching twice during regular class time. During this week the children will attend their regular religious education classes. Role will be taken in the classroom and we will proceed to Slattery Hall for a large group activity. Parents will be invited to attend the session. Home study and FIRE families will also be invited. The sessions will be oriented to the entire family; they will begin with light hospitality and end with a faith filled activity.

Sacramental Preparation Programs

Reconciliation & First Communion

Generally, this process begins when the child starts the first level of Religious Ed., which is usually when the child is entering the first grade. It is a two-year preparation program that assists parents in readying their child in the reception of these two sacraments.

Religious readiness, not chronological age or school grade, will determine a child’s readiness to encounter Christ in a sacramental celebration. This decision of readiness rests with the parents and the child in dialogue with the disciple (catechist), coordinator, director and/or pastor. This process affirms the fact that the child celebrating the sacraments is involved communally as well as individually. Many factors enter into a child’s readiness to receive these sacraments. The child may be unable to understand sufficiently about either of the sacraments. For example, although a seven-year old child may be at the age of reason, he/she may not understand the concept of forgiveness, sin, or that the Eucharist (which looks like bread) is truly the Body & Blood of Christ. We are all on our own faith journey, and the young child’s faith develops at his/her own pace. However, this journey becomes easier when families 1) talk about God and faith at home,

2) pray as a family, 3) celebrate Sunday Mass regularly, and 4) help one another with their Religious Education lessons. If, instead, a child is not hearing about God or Jesus at home, seldom prays, or attend Sunday Mass irregularly, his/her faith journey will be much slower even though he attends religious classes. Parents know their child better than we do. However, we can identify concepts in class that might be giving a child difficulty. The disciple (catechist) will inform parents in this case, so that the parent can give extra assistance at home.

These are two beautiful sacraments, which bring us closer to God. Their significance calls for the certainty that a child is ready to receive the sacraments and that the parents are committed to bringing up their child in the Catholic faith.

F.I.R.E. & Older Communion Students

This Sacramental Preparation is a 2 year discernment process for those children who are in the 2nd level of F.I.R.E. and those who are 9 years of age or older (in Regular Religious Education classes) who have not yet celebrated the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. This two year process begins with the First year having the child attend their current grade level in Religious Ed. / F.I.R.E. (their current grade level at school will be their current grade level in Religious Ed.)

The Second year will consist of having the child attend their current grade level in Religious Ed/F.I.R.E./Home Study and in addition attend 3 review classes on Sunday. This Sunday Sacramental Preparation is for all children at the 2nd level of Religious Education who are participating in F.I.R.E. or Home Study. The program is also for Baptized children enrolled in a Regular Religious Education class above 2nd grade who have not yet celebrated the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The children, with their parents, will attend 3 Review sessions which will take place on designated Sundays throughout the year. Attendance is critical at each review because without participation in this class, your child will not be able to celebrate their sacraments in February (Reconciliation) and May (First Communion). It is our hope that no families will find themselves in this position. Participants are also expected to attend both the Reconciliation and First Communion Retreats.

The resources for this home study process will be Harcourt's "Celebrating our Faith"

Confirmation

We envision providing a confirmation process that will empower teens to:

- ❖ Have an opportunity to encounter the Holy Spirit and have a conversion experience and enhance their spiritual development.
- ❖ Understand and love the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- ❖ Live out a sacramental life through prayer, fellowship/community, charity, and attending Mass on a weekly basis.

- ❖ Become involved in the different types of ministries of Blessed Kateri.
- ❖ Stay involved in the Blessed Kateri Parish community well after the Confirmation program.

Methodology of Level 1

- Level 1 will experience a taste of the four pillars of the Catechism: The Creed, Prayer, Sacraments, & Morality.
- Through Catechist teachings of themes, teens will digest the Catechetical teachings of the Confirmation Sunday Session.
- Through small group settings teens will share their feelings and will pray with their group. To ensure a welcoming environment, adult facilitators will guide their teens to experience small group discussions with the help of peer leaders.
- Praise and Worship is a form of prayer when we sing to God, teens will experience the gift of praise at every session.

Level I's curriculum is based on *Total Catechesis* series published by St. Mary's Press, which is grounded in the content of the *Catholic Faith Handbook* and address the four pillars of the Catholic faith as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The manuals in the Total Catechesis series are *STUDY IT! PRAY IT! LIVE IT!*

- grounding in the foundations of Christian Morality.
- *Catechetical Session on Christian Prayer* encourages young people to pray as a way to grow in their relationship with God.
- *Catechetical Session on Liturgy and Sacraments* address to our young people the sacraments of initiation, the sacraments of healing, and the sacraments of the service of communion. Furthermore, giving our people a deeper love and understating of each sacrament.
- *Catechetical Session on the Creed* focuses on the understanding the treasure, the gift, the challenge and the sacrament that is Church. The focus is on our young people because they are in need of supported as they grow in their faith and in their knowledge about the basic truths of the Catholic Faith.

Methodology of level 2

Within Level II candidates will be challenged to develop a “more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit – his actions, his gifts, and his bidding” (CCC 1309). The objective of Level II is to impart to the candidates the tools to fully understand the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation, which is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and seek to implant the notion that faith formation is ongoing. Through catechesis, faith sharing, retreat, and social

interaction, candidates will be formed into learning the skills of arousing their own faith by “assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life and developing a sense of

belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, as well as the parish community” (Cf. CCC 1309). Level II will be a preparation process for being “Empowered by the Spirit.” Level II’s curriculum is based R.O.C. Rite of Confirmation. The R.O.C. Confirmation Series is a comprehensive Catholic model of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The R.O.C. Confirmation Series is a stand alone series that gives practical step by step suggestions of ways to help teens grow Closer to Christ and His Church. Through this series, young people are drawn into a deeper faith that transforms hearts and changes lives through a series of Jam Sessions that are based on creative and experiential Catechetical methods. The formation for the Jam sessions follows the flow of Liturgy with Gather, Proclaim, Break and Send formats.

Requirements of Level 1 and 2

- To assist them in learning how to integrate the Christian attitude of servant hood, candidates are to complete 25 hours. 10 hours in the parish, 10 hours out side of the parish, and 5 hours of your choice.
- To assist them in learning how to integrate the Christian attitude of servant hood, candidates are to pick four different service projects for each level.
- Level 1 as a requirement will be attending a weekend retreat to enrich their spirit and renew their faith as young vibrant Catholics. Therefore; missing this retreat is not optional. Mass is a big part of this program; furthermore, it is a requirement to attend weekly Mass.
- At the end of level 1 there will be a discernment interview to determine if teens are ready to move on to level 2. The date and time of discernment interviews will be assigning to you, and will take place at Blessed Katei Parish.
- Since Confirmation meets for Sunday Sessions only 6 times a year, attendance to Sunday Sessions is a must. Therefore teens will not be able to miss any session. If extraordinary means occur teens will need to call the Confirmation office and express the reasoning for their absence. At that time two options will be presented for making up the missed session.

Youth RCIA

This process is intended for un-baptized children who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age; and children 9 years and older who have been baptized as infants, but have not received religious formation in the Catholic Church.

They seek Christian initiation, either at the direction of their parents or guardians, or, with parental permission, on their own initiative. The sacraments of Christian Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. This process of Christian Initiation requires both a personal conversion, in proportion to their age, and instruction in the Faith. We speak of the process as the child's own "journey of faith". The wonderful part is that the parents and catechists have the privilege of accompanying the child on this journey as they develop a deeper relationship with God and the community. The main focus of RCIA sessions is for the parents and children to feel a renewed sense of "welcome" within our Catholic Christian community.

Adult RCIA

This process is intended for Adults who are interested in learning about the Catholic faith leading to Full initiation at the Easter Vigil. It is for those that were baptized Catholic but never received their other Sacraments, those coming from other Christian faith traditions – baptized or un-baptized, those coming from non-Christian faith traditions or those coming from no faith background at all. This process of Christian Initiation involves both a personal conversion and instruction in the Faith. It meets every Wednesday evening plus a weekly "dismissal" from the second half of Mass for a deeper look at the Gospel reading of the week. It is a 4 stage process starting with the period of Inquiry, then the period of the catechumenate, the period of Purification and Enlightenment and ending with the period of Mystagogy. New inquiry classes begin 2 times a year in September, and February. The process lasts approximately 1 year and a half.

Class Content

Little Church

Little Church offers catechesis utilizing resource material from the *RCL Benziger's Stories of God's Love* for three, four, and five years olds.

Little Church class occurs during the 8:30 Mass on Sundays. Classes are limited to twenty-two students for 4 & 5 year olds and twenty for 3 year olds. **CATECHISTS ARE PREPARED TO GREET YOUR CHILD BETWEEN 8:15 AND 8:30 A.M. PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR CHILD TO THE CLASSROOM ANY EARLIER THAN 8:15 A.M.**

The class continues until the conclusion of Mass. Parents should not open the classroom doors or enter the room until the catechist has indicated that the class has concluded. Any child experiencing separation anxiety will not be forced to remain in the class, and the parents are welcome to stay to comfort their child. Our Little Church program thrives on the help offered by parents for our littlest members. We are asking parents to help a **minimum** of 2 times per year (See the SEP/Virtus section)

THE GOALS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ARE:

To introduce Bible stories and the Fundamentals of our Christian Life to the young children using RCL Benziger's *Stories of God's Love*.

To encourage young children to connect their evolving life stories with the Bible and its relevance to the purpose of their lives.

To incorporate stories, dramas, prayer, services and hands-on activities that help proclaim the Stories and Fundamentals of our Faith.

- To assist the children in identifying what Jesus asks of them in their daily lives
- To show, by example, concrete ways to love and serve their neighbors
- To help children develop a sense of belonging to the Christian community

Elementary

Elementary classes meet once a week for seventy-five minutes. Classes are limited to twenty students.

We are here to share the Catholic faith with children and to develop their experience of Jesus. The more that His message is lived at home, the more your child grows spiritually. Family prayer is especially important, and so is the need to take time for each other. Each year our lives seem to become more hectic, and we should try to slow down and enjoy our family.

Sometimes family problems arise which greatly affect children such as divorce, separation, death of a loved one or the discovery that a child has special needs. It is important that parents inform us when these problems occur so that we can be more understanding, flexible, and patient with the child.

“At Home With the Family” and in the Parish

Each lesson has an activity page to be completed as a family at home. After the family has completed the activity, the parents are to initial the page for review by the catechist at the next session. The student will be asked to share this experience with the class.

Procedures for Elementary Religious Education Program

The following guidelines are to help catechists and families know what is expected from each student in the elementary program. The traditional prayers of the Church are to be memorized by the student. In addition, we hope that the child prays in his/her own words and sees the need for prayer. The following information, the foundation of the grade level, is based on the child's understanding of the subject matter ranging from six to eleven years of age. The amount of information a child is required to know may seem overwhelming at times; however, if the family prays, attends Mass regularly, and talks about God, the child will understand more than we sometimes think. The journey of faith is unique for each of us. The important thing is that we begin that journey. We should ask for God's graces to

help us grow, to help us to become the unique individual that God has created, and to know of His great love for each of us.

The Faith First Scope and Sequence

The Faith First Scope and Sequence is divided into three parts: Doctrine, Scripture, and the Liturgy. These three important elements of Catholic belief, God's Word, and liturgical celebration are interwoven throughout each grade level of Faith First. They are also taught as separate strands in each grade. This balanced approach ensures that children will come to know, love and live the rich heritage of the faith we are proud to profess in Christ Jesus. Each student book includes: 18-19 Doctrinal Chapters, 23 Seasonal Sessions, 7-8 Core Scripture Chapters, and Scripture in every lesson. Each grade level is supported by an interactive web site for pupils.

At the end of each school year the students will be required to know the following prayers within their faith:

Grade 1	Prayers:	Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross.
Grade 2	Prayers:	Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross, Act of Contrition, Prayer Before & After Meals.
Grade 3	Prayers:	Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross, Act of Contrition, Prayer Before & After Meals, The Hail Holy Queen, The Mysteries of the Rosary.
Grade 4	Prayers:	Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross, Act of Contrition, Prayer Before & After Meals, The Hail Holy Queen, The Mysteries of the Rosary, Apostles' Creed, developing a prayer life of their own.
Grade 5	Prayers:	Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross, Act of Contrition, Prayer Before & After Meals, The Hail Holy Queen, , The Mysteries of the Rosary, Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and a prayer life of their own.
Grade 6	Prayers:	Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Sign of the Cross, Act of Contrition, Prayer Before & After Meals, The Hail Holy Queen, The Mysteries of the Rosary, Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and a prayer life of their own.

Junior High (The EDGE)

The junior high program consists of grades 7 & 8 and utilizes the EGDE resource material.

Goals of the EDGE

1. To create a positive experience of the Catholic Church for early adolescents
2. To assist youth in gaining an understanding and appreciation of what the Catholic church teaches and believes.
3. To incorporate the Catholic Church's vision of social justice and peace into the spiritual life of pre-adolescents.
4. To develop an understanding in youth that they are a vital and visual presence within the parish community and the world.

Listening and Prayer Sessions

Since the fostering of communal relationships in a small group setting are vital to the achievement of the EDGE's goals, small group facilitators will be given the opportunity to have listening and prayer sessions through out the year. If a small group facilitator would like to provide a listening and prayer session for their small group they would need to submit a copy and outline of the content of their lesson plan several weeks before the session to the CRE/DRE for approval so that the booking of additional classrooms can be made available to the small group facilitator. Due to the availability of classrooms the number of listening and prayer sessions maybe limited.

Junior High Parent Involvement

Parents have been asked to volunteer in an Edge Session at least 2 times throughout the year. If a parent is assisting you, please take advantage of their presence. Coordination of parent volunteers will be completed by the R.E. Office. All volunteers that are interacting with minors **MUST** have gone through the SEP/VIRTUS program and have prior to involvement with the Edge.

Praying with the Children

Prayer of all kind must always be part of classroom time. Different methods of prayer that can be developed are:

- Formal prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary etc.)
- Scripture/Psalms
- Meditation
- Rosary
- Songs
- Litanies
- Prayer from the heart/Prayers of the faithful (spontaneous prayer)

Discipline Policy

Teaching Christ's message requires an environment, which facilitates order.

Parents can support catechists by ensuring that their children:

- Attend class weekly unless they are ill,
- Refrain from "horseplay" in the hallways, classrooms, or in the church,
- Do not abuse bathroom breaks,
- Respect each other both in and out of class,
- Respect their catechist and follow their directions,
- Avoid abusive or vulgar language, and
- Respect materials, supplies, tables, chairs, and all other items.

Discipline Policy Steps

Step One: A verbal communication as to what they have done wrong.

Step Two: The student will be removed temporarily from the activity and Catechist/Facilitator will counsel with the student about his/her actions and how those actions affect the safety and feelings of others.

Step Three: The student will be removed from the class and sent to the Director's/Coordinator's office.

The director/coordinator or secretary will again counsel the child.

The child's return to the classroom is up to the discretion of the director/coordinator.

Step Four: The student's parents will be notified. The director/coordinator will request that the parents work together with the student's catechist to eliminate the problem.

Step Five: The student will be placed on Home Study.

Absences

Little Church: Parents are to call children's absence on the day the absence occurs or prior to the absence. If parents fail to initiate a call to excuse an absence by the next week, the absence will be classified as "un-excused."

Elementary: Parents are required to communicate to the Religious Education Office within 48 hours of an absence in order for an absence to be excused; otherwise it will reflect as unexcused.

Junior High: Parents are to call the Religious Education office in advance of your child's absence whenever possible. If a child is absent from class without a call, the office will contact the parent on the day of the absence.

A Student is excused from the class for the following reasons:

- Illness of child or the person who brings the child to Religious Education,
- Lack of transportation,
- Family vacation (Please notify the catechist in advance whenever possible,)
- Parent is required to work late and can not bring the child to class, or
- Doctor or dentist appointments.
- Assignment of excessive amount of homework or school project.

A Student is NOT excused from the class for the following reasons:

- Extracurricular activities
- Sporting events
- Birthday parties
- Lack of interest

Due to the fact that we have a waiting list for children who still need and desire to enroll in classes, when students miss three classes due to unexcused absences, he/she will be removed from the regular program and given the option of enrolling in Home Study. There will be no refunds for students who have been removed from the program due to unexcused absences.

In the event of an unexcused or excused absence, the parent is responsible for teaching the lesson to their child at home. Please utilize the syllabus distributed at the beginning of the school year. If this is misplaced you can check the Blessed Kateri Website at www.blessedkateriparish.org where the Syllabus for each class is posted or you can contact Mindy Irwin in the Religious Education Office at 296-6945 ext: 7903 to determine which lesson your child missed due to the absence.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The arrival procedures are as follows:

Little Church: students may be left at the classroom no earlier than 8:15 for the 8:30 Mass

Elementary:

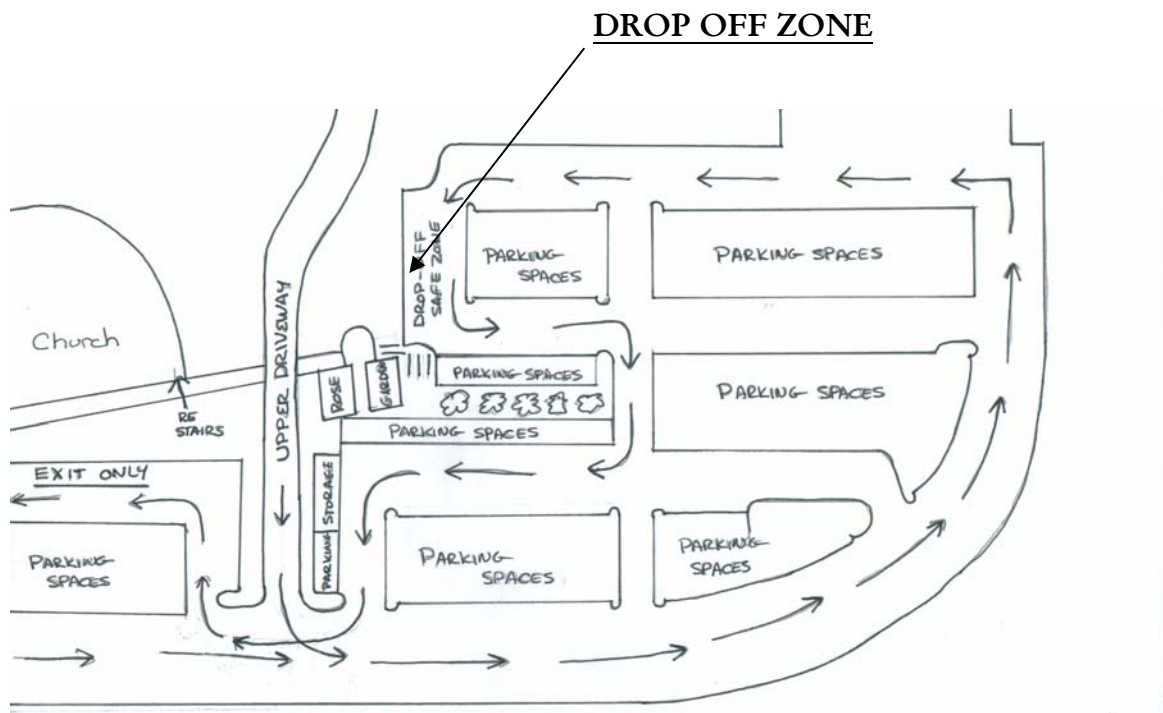
THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE WILL ONLY BE IN PLACES IF ENOUGH PARENT VOLUNTEERS COME FORWARD AS SAFETY MONITORS.

Students may be dropped off at the designated drop off area which is located in the back parking lot ONLY. See Map below

If you choose not to drop your child off at the designated area YOU MUST PARK AND WALK YOUR CHILD TO THEIR CLASSROOM.

Elementary Instructions for Drop Off:

- Enter using the lower gate and proceed to the back of the upper parking lot.
- Follow it all the way around the back to the drop off area by the stairs and behind the rose garden.
- Let your child out at the designated area. A safety monitor will be present to assist you and your child.
- Continue around by the front of the rose garden and exit through the lower gate ONLY
- If there is no Safety Monitor present, then for the safety of your child, you MUST park your vehicle in a legal parking spot and walk your child to class.



JR. HIGH DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

Junior High Teens may be dropped off in front of the steps of Slattery Hall. A safety monitor will be present during the arrival time.

Dismissal Procedures:

Little Church

Little Church students will be dismissed to their parent/guardian from the classroom.

Elementary

Only a parent/guardian or an adult designated by the parent and listed on the carpool list may pick up the child at the classroom, not a sibling (under the age of 18),

Junior High

When Junior High students are released from Slattery Hall, the students will be directed to walk through the tunnel to the Rose Garden. There will be a valet line for parents to pick up the students in the back parking lot. Two facilitators will monitor students to ensure all students' safety. Parents are not to park in front of Slattery Hall to pick up their student.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to participate in the programs by volunteering as Catechists, Co-Catechists, Class Aides, Safety Monitors, Hall Monitors or Office Aide.

Catechist Preparation

All catechists are encouraged to attend Faith Formation and continued education. The Faith Formation course is designed to develop the person of the catechist as a proclaimer of the Gospel. It involves openness to life with God and a calling forth to conversion. Catechists, as proclaimers and faith filled people, must be married in the Church, celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, attending Mass and receiving Communion weekly, and praying daily.

Parent-Catechist Contact

Parents may reach catechists by calling the Religious Education Office at 296-6945. A message will be noted and the catechist will be contacted so that he/she may return your call with the information needed. A catechist may elect to provide their home number to the parents. In which case, the parent is invited to contact the catechist personally.

Health and Safety Issues

A section is provided on the registration form for the parent to indicate any health problems, special needs, and/or special learning needs. It is imperative that each parent

reflects on this section carefully and provided ALL necessary information. Information in this section is kept confidential and communicated to the catechist only.

In the event medication is to be kept in the Religious Education Office, a medication card is to be completed by the parent and physician. The medication card can be obtained from the Religious Education Office.

Carpool and Photo Release Forms.

All parents were required to fill out the photo and/or carpool release forms during the registration process. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES may a minor be photographed (including the Children's Catechumenate) without written permission from the parents on file in the Religious Education Office. No student will be allowed to enter a private vehicle for transportation to any Blessed Kateri function without written permission from their parents on file in the Religious Education Office or Confirmation office. *THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.*

Providing a safe and healthy environment for our children, volunteers and staff is Blessed Kateri's Number One priority

Safe Environment Program Requirements for Volunteers and Staff Members

The United States Congress of Catholic Bishops has released a charter for the protection of children and young people. As a result, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has developed a training program that ALL adults interacting in any significant way with minors in a parish, MUST attend along with a fingerprinting / background check with the Department of Justice prior to entering a classroom or working with minors.

Safe Environment Program Minister's Handbook

All volunteers working with minor children are responsible to adhere to Blessed Kateri's Safe Environment Program. The program is outlined in the Safe Environment Program Minister's Handbook which is available in the Religious Education Office or on the Blessed Kateri Website. Please read, understand, follow and promote the policies in the handbook. Once you have read the handbook, you will need to turn in Appendix A and E to the Religious Education Office.

VIRTUS for Adults Training

Los Angeles Archdiocese regulations prohibit any adult working with minors to enter a classroom or work directly in any capacity with minors in the parish that have not gone through the

VIRTUS for Adults: Protecting God's Children program. Virtus Training sessions will be held throughout the year by Virtus Trainer / Facilitator Michael Dermody and or Wendy Emeterio. The dates and times will be listed in the bulletin, posted on the bulletin boards in-between the classroom doors and on the Blessed Kateri Website. Please RSVP to the Religious Education Office at 661-296-6945 x: 7902 or sep@blessedkateriparish.org prior to the session that you wish to attend. Please arrive about 10 minutes before the scheduled session to sign-in. Latecomers will not be admitted to the training session. Submit a copy of your training certificate to the Religious Education Office.

Fingerprinting

All volunteers working with minors are required to be fingerprinted as required by the parish guidelines. The fingerprints are submitted to the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information for criminal history background. Catechists must be live-scan fingerprinted to comply with the Department of Justice requirements. Live-scan fingerprinting is available through the archdiocese. Alternately it is also available at California Fingerprinting Authority 27833 Ave Hopkins Ste 1A Valencia, CA 91355 for a nominal fee of \$20.00. Fingerprint forms are available in the Religious Education Office and on the Blessed Kateri Website. Return one copy of the fingerprint form to the Religious Education Office.

Classroom Visitors

In order to better maintain the safety of our children and volunteers, our office has implemented the following guidelines for visitors to the classroom.

- All Parents/Visitors who wish to sit in on a class must be 18 years of age.
- All Parents/Visitors must check in with the Religious Education office before entering a class.
- The Parent/Visitor will be given a badge that is worn at all times. This badge will identify to the catechist that you have checked in with the office.
- All Parents/Visitors that are not fingerprinted, have not read the Safe Environment Handbook and who have not completed the SEP/Virtus training will not be allowed to have **ANY** interaction with the children including taking a minor to a bathroom break or being left alone with a minor.
- All Classroom guest speakers must be approved by the coordinator prior to speaking to the students. An outline of the subject matter must be submitted no later than one week prior to the class they will be speaking at.

Early Pick-Up

Parents who need to pick up their child early from class must first check in with the Religious Education Office. Someone from the office will escort the parent to the classroom to pick up the child. The parent should communicate to the catechist the early pick up time when dropping off the child.