

The Archdiocese of New York

Catechist Handbook

Annunciation-Our Lady of Fatima Parish

Revised
7/1/2016

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Religious Education Philosophy/Mission Statement/Vision

At Annunciation - Our Lady of Fatima, we regard religious education as a total parish experience involving not just the child, but also parents, families, Catechists, clergy and religious. We believe that religious education is getting to know Jesus and learning what is expected of one who chooses to follow him in the Catholic tradition. Our program reflects an integrated learning experience composed of catechesis, prayer, sacramental preparation, traditional Catholic doctrine, biblical studies, liturgy, community building and other dimensions of a vibrant Church life. Through the light of faith we hope to develop in those entrusted to our care a deeper relationship with God.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

The Catechetical Program represents the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and endeavors to bring the Gospel message to all who come for instruction. Therefore, it is completely antithetical to its mission to discriminate because of age, race, color, national origin, sex, marital status (except as it affects one's status as a practicing Catholic), or disability of any individual. The Catechetical Program does reserve the right to act on the basis of its religious principles at all times including to admission to service of volunteers and other like activities relating to their supervision.

CATECHISTS

I. *The Role of the Catechist*

A Catechist is a person of faith whose primary mission is to communicate God's love by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and creating an atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to bring about growth in faith among believers. Catechists minister to adults, youths, and children in a variety of locations and parish faith formation programs.

The six fundamental tasks of a Catechist¹ are to:

- Promote the knowledge of faith;
- Give moral formation;
- Provide liturgical education;
- Teach how to pray;
- Educate for community life;
- Initiate into the missionary dimension.

The person of the Catechist is essential to the catechetical mission of the parish. The *General Directory for Catechesis* states:

“No methodology, no matter how well tested, can dispense with the person of the catechist in every phase of the catechetical process. The charisma given to the Catechist by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life, constitutes the soul of every method. Only his own human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other catechetical instruments.”

II. *Basic Requirements for acceptance as a Catechist or Catechist Assistant*²

The applicant must be a practicing Catholic who is faithful to and living a lifestyle consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Personal prayer life is fundamentally important in the life of the Catechist. This is fostered through regular Mass attendance, reception of the Sacraments, daily prayer, scripture reading and participation in retreat opportunities.

The prospective catechist must be willing to participate in the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program as well as in the Catechist formation opportunities provided by the parish. Catechists are also expected to attend the Archdiocesan Catechetical Congress and other meetings designated by the Parish Religious Education Director.

The prospective catechist must be ready to spend time each week preparing the catechetical session using the Catechist's manual selected by the parish program and the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechists.

The applicant must agree to know and abide by the policies and directives as outlined by the Director and described in this handbook. Applicants for the role of Catechist or Catechist Assistant are selected by the Director and must receive final approval from the Pastor.

III. *Application for Volunteer Catechetical Personnel*

All those who volunteer (Catechist, Catechist Assistant, Clerical Assistant, Hall Monitor, and any volunteer in the program who interacts with the children) must complete an application form and submit it to the Director prior to their involvement in the program. It will include the following information: personal, catechetical, educational, and religious educational background and two references. The disclosure of previous termination or conviction of a criminal offense is required by the Archdiocese of New York of anyone who will be

1 From the *Handbook For Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*.

2 From the *General Directory For Catechesis (GDC) #16*.

associated with children and youth in the Parish Catechetical Programs. An explanation of this confidential information must also be given. The volunteer applicant, the Director and the Pastor, must sign this form. The signatures validate the form. This form may be updated each year, as necessary.

Interview

Upon receipt of the application, the Director will meet with the prospective Catechist to give an overview of the program and to speak with the individual about his/her life experiences and reasons for wanting to share the faith. Information about formation and training requirements will be explained to the prospective Catechist. The Director will ascertain the readiness of the prospective Catechist and schedules of formation and training will be arranged.

Background Check and “Safer Spaces” Training

All catechists must undergo a background check and attend “Safer Spaces” training about ensuring the safety of the students who attend Religious Education.

IV. *Orientation of New Catechists*

Prior to the beginning of his/her ministry each Catechist is required to participate in an introductory formation program designed to:

- Introduce the ministry as a vocation.
- Introduce the curriculum.
- Teach age-appropriate formation process.
- Introduce ways to maintain an effective catechetical environment.
- Introduce lesson-planning skills.
- Acquaint the Catechist with resources.
- Review the policies and procedures for catechesis in the parish and Archdiocese.
- Introduce the process for continuing Catechist formation and certification in the Archdiocese.

This orientation to the parish catechetical program usually takes place prior to the opening day of the religious education program. Orientation offers the new Catechist an opportunity to meet fellow Catechists, become familiar with parish facilities and visit the classroom he/she will occupy.

V. *Responsibilities of the Catechist*

Planning and Preparation

- Establishing long range and immediate teaching goals and objectives;
- Familiarity with Archdiocesan Guidelines and textbooks provided by Director;
- Appropriate lesson planning including review, presentation of new materials and reinforcement;
- Requesting and obtaining materials, audiovisual equipment and supplies for specific needs;
- Preparing questions for discussion;
- Structuring lessons to meet individual needs;
- Correlating home assignments with lessons taught.

Instructional

- Creating a joyful, loving and caring Christian learning environment;
- Giving witness to the Gospel by word and example;
- Developing a faith community;
- Manifesting an attitude of enthusiasm for learning;
- Fostering an attitude of mutual respect and understanding;
- Helping children to become creative, cooperative and self disciplined;
- Guiding children as they attempt to apply knowledge of their faith to real life situations;
- Setting high expectations and encouraging individual growth.

Evaluating and Reporting

- Administering assessments (written and oral) provided in textbooks or supplied by Director;
- Acquiring knowledge of each student's personality, background and social influences that affect a student's faith development;
- Monitoring and evaluating each student's growth on a short and long term basis;
- Referring children with academic or behavioral problems to the Director.
- Holding informal conferences with parents as needed.

The Responsibilities of an Assistant Catechist

- Assisting with small group discussions;
- Helping individuals or groups with projects;
- Possible presentation of all or part of a lesson;
- Assisting with recording of attendance;
- Helping to maintain discipline and order;
- Assisting with the distribution or collection of class and home activities.

Professionalism

Catechists and other staff members by their appearance, dress and all their actions should reflect their role as religious educators entrusted with the sacred task of handing on the faith. In particular, dress and appearance should be modest and non-distracting.

Information regarding the Religious Education Program, children who attend the classes and other parish staff should be kept confidential. Professionalism should also be reflected in the Catechist's preparation for class, interaction with the children, parents and other Catechists. Record keeping should be neat, accurate and timely made.

Inappropriate Behavior or Unsatisfactory Performance of Catechetical Personnel

The Director will advise a Catechist of any behavior that is inappropriate or unacceptable. The Catechist will also be advised of the evaluation of his/her performance indicates an unsatisfactory teaching/learning situation. The Director will give suggestions for improvement. In either of these cases, a written account of the notifications will be made and placed in the Catechist's file. If the unsatisfactory behavior or performance persists, the Director advises the Pastor of the situation. The Director specifies, in writing, the behavioral changes that are necessary.

VI. Reasons for Dismissal of a Catechist

Volunteers can be dismissed just as paid employees can be and the procedure is similar.

Allegations of child abuse or molestation result in *immediate suspension*. Any allegation of child abuse or molestation must be reported to the Director who will inform the Pastor and the Regional Director of the Catechetical Office.

Some of the reasons for considering the dismissal of a Catechist are:

- Consistently demonstrating a failure to maintain control in a group or catechetical session;
- Consistent failure to follow the Archdiocesan Guidelines or the designated curriculum;
- Consistent resistance to the leadership, directives and guidance of the Director;
- Excessive absence from the program;
- Behavior that fosters divisiveness and a spirit of negativity among the other Catechists and staff;
- Physical or mental incompetence in carrying out the supervisory and educational responsibilities;
- A lifestyle that seriously and obviously violates Catholic morality.

If improper behavior/performance occurs, the Catechist is warned in writing that a failure to change the behavior or improve the performance may result in a change of area of service or even dismissal as the situation warrants. If the behavior/performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the Director will change the Catechist's area of responsibility or dismiss the Catechist.

VII. Catechist Formation

*“Catechesis needs to consider, as its primary task, the preparation and formation of Catechists in the deep riches of the faith... The Quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel. The instruments provided for catechesis cannot be truly effective unless used by trained Catechists. Consequently, Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay Catechists.”*³

The Bishops of New York have *mandated* that all Catechists who teach in the Archdiocese should be actively pursuing catechetical certification.⁴

Catechetical Forum

The Catechetical Forum is an annual Archdiocesan event that brings together all those involved in the catechetical ministry. The Forum includes Mass, workshops, exhibits of catechetical publications, resources and a prayer service. Admission tickets are available through the parish Director. The Forum is traditionally held on a Saturday during the month of September or October. Information concerning the venue for the event and a schedule of workshops is distributed to each catechist.

Catechist Certification

Certification is a two level process by which a Catechist acquires a basic knowledge of the theological, spiritual and catechetical principles that should be known by a person entrusted with the catechetical formation of children. The Archdiocesan Catechetical Office publishes twice a year a schedule of Level I and Level II Catechist Formation Sessions, which is provided by the Director along with periodic listings of sessions taking place locally.

The preparation of the Catechist through Catechist Formation is not only required by the Bishops of New York, but is essential to effective parish catechesis. Catechists and anyone interested in religious education are welcomed and encouraged to attend these sessions without cost or obligation.

A record of attendance and an application for certification for both Level I and Level II will be kept in the Catechist's file. These forms will record the session, site, date and/or equivalency taken. It is the responsibility of the Catechist to give the Director the Level I cards, and the Level II cards received upon completion of each session.

Observation and evaluation will also follow this by the Director. When all requirements have been completed, a copy of the evaluation will be sent to the Regional Director of the Catechetical Office. Upon approval by the Regional Director, the Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York will grant certification, which is valid for five years.

Observation and Evaluation by Director

3 ³GDC 33,234.

4 ⁴*The Catechist of the Third Millennium.*

The Archdiocesan Catechetical Office requires an evaluation to be completed for every Catechist during the first year in ministry and every two years thereafter. At the Director's discretion, an evaluation can be done annually. The Catechist is notified of the observation date at least two weeks in advance. Items include: number of years as a Catechist, number of children in the class, length of session, textbook used, concepts explained, materials used, skills exercised, climate checklist, lesson plan checklist, commendable aspects and recommendations or suggestions for implementation. Following the observation and evaluation, the Director and Catechist meet to review the evaluation. Once reviewed and signed, a copy is given to the Catechist and the original is placed in his/her file. When the Catechist applies for certification, a copy of this evaluation report is sent to the Regional Director along with the Application for Certification.

Ongoing Formation

All Catechists are encouraged to continue their formation. The *Institute for Religious Studies* located at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers offers Masters level courses at several sites in a range of subjects for individuals who wish to pursue a graduate degree or to enhance their knowledge. Tuition is very reasonable and evening courses are available. The *New York Catholic Bible School* offers courses in sacred scripture, hermeneutics and other subjects at several sites throughout the Archdiocese for individuals who wish to pursue an in-depth study of the Bible.

Application for Renewal Level II

An application for Renewal Level II certification is filed, documented with record of attendance, program, date, hours, and then is submitted. The programs and events that may fulfill requirements for recertification are:

- Catechetical Forum
- Adult Religious Education Classes
- Scripture Programs
- Retreat, Day of Prayer
- Other religious enrichment programs.

Each certification is valid for five years. The catechist is encouraged to attend ongoing formation.

CLASSROOM

I. Supervision

The Catechist's responsibilities include supervision of the children designated to his/her class. Supervision is a mental as well as a physical act. Therefore, the Catechist must be attentive to those in his/her care as well as being physically present with them.

To provide such supervision the Catechist is expected to adhere to the following:

- Have the classroom and lesson set up prior to the children arriving.
- Meet and lead the children from the arrival site to the classroom.
- NEVER** leave the class unattended by the Catechist or Catechist assistant.

If the Catechist must leave the room (emergency, illness, etc.) And there is no assistant catechist

1. Ask the hall monitor or other responsible adult to watch the class.
2. Send one or two children to the Religious Education Office with a message for assistance.
3. Depending on the urgency of need, if no alternate supervision is available, bring the entire class to the office or to another Catechist's classroom.

Early in the year explain to the children what should be done in case of an emergency:

1. Stay calm and seated;
2. Quietly read from the textbook;
3. Designate a specific child (e.g. the one nearest the door) to go to the Director's office for help;

Tell the children that should a fire alarm go off during an emergency when the Catechist is not in the room, they **MUST** leave the room in a quiet, orderly way and leave the building according to Fire Drill Rules. At the end of class, the Catechist is to lead the children, in line, out to the dismissal site.

II. Treatment of Confidential Information

The Director will inform each Catechist about any child who has special needs which could affect the teaching/learning environment (e.g. medical conditions, learning disabilities, custody issues, etc.) This information is to be kept strictly confidential and must be used with discretion.

III. Curriculum

The Religious Education Program of Annunciation - Our Lady of Fatima conforms to the requirements of the Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York and its published *Guidelines for Catechesis*. Our program ensures for all the children of our parish a clear and uniform presentation of the faith in concepts appropriate to each age level. The Religious Education Program is designed to assist parents in their sacred responsibility to educate their children in the faith. It complements, but can never replace parents in carrying out their responsibilities. "Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children."⁵

In addition to enlightening our children in doctrines and tenets of our faith, our Religious Education Program welcomes the opportunity to aid parents in teaching children to walk along the path of faith. We strive to place Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of our student's lives through liturgical worship, frequent prayer, and communication of Christian values and attitudes.

The themes, objectives and appropriate prayers of each grade level can be found in the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis Grades K-6 & Grades 7&8*.

Doctrine

Catechists are commissioned to teach the truths of the Catholic faith. At no time should Catechists offer their personal opinion about matters of faith or morals. If a situation arises where you are unsure about Catholic doctrine, consult with your Director.

Catechetical Program Approaches to Family Centered Catechesis

Sensitivity to the needs and desires of families must permeate all the dimensions of the parish catechetical program and indeed, of all parish life. "The care of the family always remains central, since it is the primary agent of an incarnate transmission of the faith."⁶

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* warmly recommends the home as the first school of prayer.⁷ The Parish supports the "domestic church" (the family) by religious educators helping parents fulfill their role of "first heralds of the faith".

IV. Parent/Catechist Conference

Ongoing communication with parents/guardians may include: an introductory letter stating goals and objectives, as well as class rules; informal conferences on an "as needed" basis; weekly or monthly curriculum updates; written report card comments or in-person report card conference.

5 ⁵From the *National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States*.

6 ⁶From the *GDC 207*.

7 ⁷From the *CCC #2685*.

All communications to the parents from the Catechist must be reviewed and approved by the Director, in advance. All conversations should be documented as to date, time, and nature of communication and with whom the Catechist spoke. Keep a log for record purposes. If a parent claims not to have been notified of something in particular the log can be reviewed for verification.

HOMEWORK, TESTING & PROGRESS REPORTS

I. Homework Policy

Homework reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study, creative thinking and service.

There are two types of homework:

Short Term: Assignments that are given and are required to be completed and submitted at the following class;

Long Term: Assignments spread over a number of weeks that may include such activities as projects, research, extended reading or independent study.

II. Assessment

A certain amount of content and understanding is expected for each child participating in the program; therefore, some study at home is necessary. The objective of assessment is to monitor the growth of each child but also to evaluate the effectiveness of the Religious Education Program. Assessments may take be either oral or written.

If a child does not fulfill grade level curriculum requirements, a meeting will be arranged with the parents, the Catechist, and the Director of Religious Education to discuss the situation. The Director will determine the appropriate course of action.

III. Progress Reports

Religious formation of the child takes place in the home, church and in the class setting. Progress Reports for the Religious Education Program reflect class performance only and are issued twice yearly to indicate the strengths and weaknesses each child is demonstrating. The broad areas of evaluation are: effort and attitude, class participation and knowledge of lessons. The grading scale is: Excellent (E), Good (G), Satisfactory (S) and Needs Improvement (NI). Each child's record of attendance on the progress report includes days present, days absent and times late for both the first and second semesters.

Catechists are encouraged to write positive yet constructive comments in the space provided on the progress report for each child in the class. Begin your comments with the positive and then describe the behavior, not the child. Consult the Director concerning anything of a sensitive nature.

It is important to be vigilant of the students' academic and behavioral record and beneficial to address and document these interrelated areas as soon as issues arise. Keep all records of the deficiency of homework and testing opportunities.

LESSON PLANNING

I. The Importance of Lesson Planning

A lesson plan is a guide for the Catechist. It helps a Catechist make decisions about how to instruct the lesson, what experiences and activities they want to create and use and how these activities will help promote learning

objectives. Having a lesson plan gives the Catechist a sense of the overall flow of things and helps them to budget their time in order to keep focused on their objectives. Most lesson plans contain at least three elements:

- A set of objectives, what you would like the children to accomplish;
- Directions for conducting the learning activities of the lesson;
- A list of materials and resources needed to teach the lesson;

A good lesson planner is a person who examines the blueprint for the lesson, knows how it is built, proceeds to build it effectively and tries to prepare for every possible scenario. Without proper lesson planning you are vulnerable to boredom, poor discipline, lackluster performance and poor participation.

Catechists are expected to submit their lesson plans to the Director on a regular basis. This may be weekly plans or quarterly summaries.

II. Tips for Lesson Planning

Look ahead. The lesson you are planning is only a part of a larger plan for the whole year. You need to get a picture of the whole program calendar year and see how much time you to accomplish your goals. Get a good feel for how this lesson can build off the previous one and lay the foundation for the next.

Get to know your primary teaching resources. They are the following:

Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis K-6, 7&8. The Archdiocesan Guidelines present a clear and uniform presentation of faith concepts appropriate to each age level, correlated with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and provide an easy reference tool for the Catechist.

Examine the teacher's notes in the instructor's manual/guide. Instructor's manuals and on-line resources are often a Catechist's best friends. The layout of the lesson is like a blueprint and offers step-by-step instructions. Sadlier and Loyola Press offer very good resources for catechists.

Visualize yourself teaching the lesson. Visualization is the practice of using your imagination to experience specific situations on hopes of learning behaviors that can be incorporated into your real life repertoire. Good lesson planning involves visualizing you teaching the class.

Make adjustments to fit your particular class. No lesson plan is ironclad. Think of your class' readiness (or lack thereof) for what your lesson calls for and make the necessary adjustment. Keep the following in mind when developing your lesson plan: interest, ability and needs of the children; teacher ability and talent; time allotment; resources available; practicality; adaptability.

Know your goals and learning outcomes (objectives). It is crucial that you know what the purpose of your lesson is. Goals and learning outcomes are statements you include in your lesson plan that state concretely and in measurable terms, what it is you hope to accomplish.

Get your materials ready. Before you go into the classroom be sure you have all of the materials you will need to complete the lesson properly.

Have plan "B" ready. Consider the possibility that what you are hoping to accomplish may not work. Always have an option ready in case something falls flat or just is not working the way you had hoped.

Adolescent Catechesis. The following process can be incorporated into all lesson planning but is especially helpful for catechists of children who are middle-school aged:

- Ice breaker/community building.
- Gathering prayer.

Catechesis.

Small group sharing/activity with the help of older adolescents for junior high age and young adults of high school age

Application to life.

Insertion into parish.

Closing prayer experience.

Long Range Lesson Planning: Before a Catechist can make plans for a specific lesson or topic he/she must have an idea of the scope and sequence of the course. In other words, a Catechist must first look at the whole picture and then fill in the details of it.

The entire faith community of the parish shares the responsibility for an adolescent's faith development. Faith is fostered in "youth friendly" parish communities, where adolescents have a prominent presence. All ministries with adolescents must be directed toward presenting young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ, inviting and challenging them to be disciples side-by-side with the adults of the community.

Adolescent Catechesis is developed within the context of youth ministry. The most successful catechesis with adolescents is given in the context of the wider pastoral care of young people.⁸

If there is a written description of the course be sure to study it carefully. Sometimes all a Catechist has is a copy of the Catechist's manual and the student text for the course. By reading the table of contents, one is able to get an idea of the scope of the course. Most textbook companies provide a scope and sequence chart, which outlines the courses for each grade level and sequences the topics. Sometimes this chart can be found in each copy of the Catechist's manual/guide. This type of chart or overview is very helpful for long range planning.

Short Range Planning: Units usually consist of a number of lessons that focus on different aspects of the same topic. Short range planning usually entails taking a closer look at the next several lessons. Lessons are never taught in isolation. They are related to past lessons and to those that will follow. Catechists doing short range planning should see each unit as a whole before attempting to plan for a single chapter or part. By doing this, Catechists are able to decide:

What aspects of the whole should be emphasized?

The pace to set for a particular lesson.

Anything that can be eliminated, combined, or reviewed.

What adaptations must be made for their particular group?

What adaptations must be made for any children in particular?

What resources, ideas and talents can be shared with other Catechists of the same grade level?

What needs to be prepared for each lesson of the unit?

Immediate Planning: Immediate plans are made for a particular lesson. This is a much easier task if some serious thought has been given to long and short range plans. Catechists' manuals provide lesson plans for each lesson. They must approach these suggested lesson plans with flexibility. They must also have an awareness that these plans are an aid and should be considered before a Catechist uses a prepared lesson plan from a manual.

Putting the Lesson Plan on Paper: Whether using a plan from a manual or an individually designed one, Catechists should always write out their plans. Depending upon the confidence and the experience of the Catechist, plans can be done on index cards, in a plan book or on a piece of paper. The written plan should include key words or phrases to remind the teacher of sequence, content and method of the lesson. There are a variety of lesson plan formats. The following is a suggested format:

8 ⁸From *GDC 184*.

Topic (subject or theme of the lesson).
Aim (goal and objectives).
Materials, resources and equipment needed.
Method or methods of presentation.
Procedures.
Summary.
Preview of next lesson.

Some Final Reminders for Catechists Regarding Lesson Planning:

1. A lesson plan is like a road map containing a number of routes, any one of which may be appropriate on a given day with a particular group.
2. Don't feel "duty bound" to cover every point in the exact order, no matter what.
3. Never risk teaching without a lesson plan.
4. Prepare alternate approaches to the same lesson. If one fails, switch quickly.
5. Determine the attention span of your class. Vary your presentations, activities and methods frequently enough during the course of the lesson to meet the needs of your class.
6. Evaluate each lesson after the session. Adjust your plans for the next session according to your honest assessment of your lesson.
7. Prepare in advance all the materials you need for the lesson. e.g. If you do not know the proper response to a question, research it for the following class.
8. Keep your sense of humor.

III. *Manuals for Catechists*

Each Catechist will be given a manual/guide. These books assist Catechists in lesson preparation. Catechist's editions include the student text and the manual/guide in one volume. Catechists should acquaint themselves with the manual/guide well in advance of the beginning of classes. New Catechists will be introduced to the manual/guide and the text by an experienced Catechist or the Director.

Catechists are encouraged to use the manual as a guide, adapting lessons and projects to their particular group. Manuals & guides are designed as an aid.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE

I. *Some General Comments regarding Classroom Management*

Seating Plan: It is a good idea to establish a classroom seating plan. This provides order and consistency, assists in early identification of each child and is a reference check should an incident arise over misuse of the room.

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal: Catechists are to dismiss classes **only** at the scheduled times. At no time should a Catechist cancel a class or dismiss a class early without the approval of the Director. Early dismissal of a child should be rare and only if the Director has notified the Catechist that the parent/guardian has submitted a written note to this effect including: name of the child and the person picking up the child, date, time and reason for early dismissal and the signature of the parent/guardian.

Classroom Maintenance: The Catechist should briefly check classroom condition before the children arrive. Note anything that is out of order or things that require special care (e.g. display projects). Since we are sharing the classrooms with the teachers and children from the Annunciation School, inform the children in your class that under no circumstances are they to use items from the classroom. All supplies (paper, pencils, etc.) are to be obtained by the Catechist prior to class. Clearly inform the children that any damage, loss, etc., will have to

be repaired, replaced, and paid for by those responsible (This is outlined in the Parent Handbook; each family should have a copy). Those children responsible for any damage, etc. are to be brought to the Director **before** leaving the building; the Catechist is to write up an account of the incident.

At the end of class, the children should assist the Catechist in straightening up the classroom, packing up all materials and bringing them to the Catechist. The Catechist is to check that windows, shades, lights, desks, blackboards, floor are in good condition before leaving the room. Any condition that needs attention should be reported to the Director.

Parties/Snacks: Food should not be served during the classes, especially given some students' medical restrictions to certain foods or ingredients. If a special class includes food (e.g. pretzels for Lent), check each child's medical information in the Director's office file and call parents/guardians to obtain approval.

Classroom Visitors: In view of Diocesan Fire regulations and insurance regulations, only children on the class Attendance Register should be in the classroom. No visitors, parents/guardians, cousins, friends, etc., are to be in the room without the permission of the Director. Any parent who is interested in registering his/her child should contact the Director for registration information.

Restrooms and Water Fountains: Children should not be wandering the halls once classes have begun. If a child needs to go to the restroom, the Catechist Assistant or another responsible student should accompany the student.

Classroom Safety: At no time should students be allowed to engage in activities that may cause harm to themselves or others. Candles or lighted matches are NEVER allowed in the classroom. Students are not permitted to have weapons, matches or dangerous substances of any kind in the classroom. If discovered, these items must be confiscated and the student escorted to the Director.

If a Catechist is unsure about the safety of a planned activity or particular object, they should consult with the Director.

II. Discipline

It is expected that in the Religious Education Program, Jesus' Gospel values of charity, kindness, honesty, respect, sharing, obedience to legitimate authority, etc. that are being learned in class are to be practiced "right now". Therefore, **no violence, prejudice, or abuse** by words or actions will be tolerated by anyone.

Establish Good Discipline Procedures

Most times if the Catechist is well prepared and each child is drawn into the lesson and activities, discipline will be good. However, situations arise that can lead to discipline problems. Therefore, we suggest that the Catechist use the following to establish and maintain good discipline:

- Establish a classroom routine in the first class session and adhere to it;

- Establish several basic behavior rules and consequences with the children in your class;

- Do not allow children to walk or run around the classroom, throw objects, call out of turn, make fun of other's mistakes, etc. Speak to the issue at the time it occurs;

- Students should not have items as toys, games, beepers, cell phones, and other items that could disturb the class. If brought to the classroom, have the child put them in a designated place, to be picked up after class;

- Try to be aware of some of the general family, peer and social influences that might be affecting a child's faith development. If you become aware of such problems, notify the Director. Early attention to minor misbehavior has a better chance of positive learning outcomes;

- Be aware of various positive discipline approaches.

Use of Discipline

Affirm both good and improving behavior to the child and to the parents. Use minor misbehavior as positive “teachable moments” in the class, where possible -- no physical discipline or humiliation is ever permitted.

When Discipline Problems Persist

When a serious problem occurs, or a situation persists, send the Catechist assistant (or a responsible child) to the Director for assistance. Follow the directions of the Director with regard to completion of any necessary reports. If the Catechist suspects a young person in his/her class is in possession of a weapon (or other potentially dangerous items), or appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, do not become confrontational -- notify the Director as soon as practical.

Some Final Comments Concerning Discipline

The Catechist Handbook gives basic instructions for maintaining good discipline and group management. It mandates that under no circumstances should physical contact be used as a form of discipline. The Catechist handbook also stresses that humiliation must never be used as a form of discipline.

The Parent Handbook states that the Catechetical Program reserves the right to remove a child from the group sessions for one or more reasons as outlined below (one or more of these reasons may apply to a given case):

If it is believed that the child would benefit significantly from an individual or smaller group situation;

If the child’s behavior is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group;

As a disciplinary measure for serious and/or persistent disruptive behavior.

Such action should be preceded by a consultation involving the child, the family, the Catechist and the Director.

PRAYER / CHURCH VISITS / LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

I. Planning For Liturgical Seasons, Feasts and Holidays

Be sure to note free days and seasonal lessons. Frequently a liturgical season, feast, holiday will dictate when a particular lesson should be taught. Be aware of liturgical seasons and feasts so the lesson plan corresponds to the respective season or feast. Common sense dictates these decisions, but long range planning will help avoid last minute plan changes or adjustments.

II. Liturgical Celebrations

Liturgical prayer is our public prayer when we assemble as a community to profess and celebrate what we believe. We praise, thank, and ask pardon, and petition God as on body. Participating in this prayer strengthens our bonds with God and with one another. Through words, actions and symbols we connect with God. It is essential for Catechists to prepare the children to fully join with God’s people as they pray in the liturgy, the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours (Christian Prayer), prayer services and sacramental celebrations.

III. Prayer

Prayer is faith coming alive. It is plugging into the energy and power of God, both for the Catechist and the children. Prayer is needed to sustain oneself and the level of creativity and commitment. We all need prayer because without the power of God in our own lives, all the doctrine in the world would be meaningless.

Hints and Suggestions about Prayer

Pay special attention to prayer in the Catechist’s manual/guide or Catechetical Guidelines suggested in the regular curriculum and other catechetical resources.

Introduce ritual prayers – both traditional and liturgical – into the class.

Occasionally use a recorded song as a form of prayer, or as a centering exercise that leads to prayer.

Provide the children with opportunities to design prayers and religious activities.

Encourage gestures for particular prayers or songs.

Kinds of Prayer

Meditation	Contemplation
Centering Prayer	Spontaneous prayer
Vocal Prayer	Liturgical Prayer
Communal Prayer	Prayers to Mary and the Saints
Spiritual Reading	Scriptural Reading
Liturgical Prayer	The Eucharist

Purpose of Prayer

1. **Petition:** We ask for our needs.
2. **Adoration:** We worship God and acknowledge God's greatness.
3. **Contrition:** We express sorrow for our sins and failings and ask forgiveness.
4. **Thanksgiving:** We show appreciation and gratitude for God's gifts.

Tips on How to use Prayer

Pray before you plan a lesson. Ask the Lord to guide your ministry.

Make your planning powerful work. Make your work and act of prayer.

Pray before class begins. Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide you.

Build prayer moments at the beginning, during and end of your lesson. Provide the opportunity for children to offer spontaneous prayer and petitions.

Ritualize. Include experiences in your prayer celebrations that "ritualize" the topic or experience you are covering.

Make sure that prayer is more than talking to God. We need to get beyond talking to and listen, use our bodies, and open up to the many symbols and metaphors through which God speaks to us.

RESOURCES

Resources from various publishers on topics such as the liturgical year, saints and the rosary, as well as other textbooks and reliable internet sources are available for use by the Catechists.

Bibles: Learning scripture is an essential part of our program; we use the Bible as often as possible. A supply of Bibles for the Catechist's use in the classroom is kept in the Religious Education Office. Please return them to the same place when you are finished using them.

Classroom Supplies: Classroom supplies such as pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, glue sticks and various types of paper may be obtained in the Religious Education Office. You will be given a bin in which to store your supplies in the classroom. If you need supplies which the office doesn't normally stock, e-mail the Director with your request or if you need to purchase them, first discuss the cost of the items with the Director prior to purchase, then submit your receipt for reimbursement.

Catechetical Resources: A wealth of information on matters of faith can be found in the Catechist's Guide and the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis*, which is available at www.nyfaithformation.org under "Catechetical Resources". The *Bible*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *National Guidelines for Catechists* are recommended resources for the Catechist's home library. Copies of these as well as other resources, including current periodicals, are available on-line.

Guest Speakers: It is beneficial to your class to have an occasional guest speaker. If you would like a priest, deacon, sister or lay person involved in a particular ministry to speak to your class, contact the Director.

Field Trips & Field Trip Permission: If a Catechist wishes to take a class on a field trip, the Director must approve and permission slips must be issued and arrangements made.

Great care is taken to ensure the safety of the children during the entire course of the trip; this includes the provision of adequate supervision and proper insurance. If field trips are taken, only hired busses, vans, etc., which provide properly covered insurance by the owner should be used. If a situation arises where a Catechist agrees to use his/her own vehicle to transport children from various Catechetical program activities, it must be understood that the Catechist's automobile insurance policy responds first in the event of an accident. (Insurance follows the vehicle, not the driver.) If a field trip is planned for the Catechetical Program, the "Parish Sponsored Trip Form" must be completed by the parent/guardian of every minor who will participate. This form must be taken along on the trip by the Catechist, along with the students' Medical Emergency Information. Telephone calls **will not** be accepted in lieu of written permission forms. These written permission forms must be kept on file for one year after the trip.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I. Guidelines for Meeting the Catechetical Needs of Children with Disabilities

The universality of Jesus' mandate to teach all people includes those who are marginalized because of their disabilities. The Church is responsible to nourish the faith of the baptized person to the degree that the individual is capable of growing in that faith..

Religious Education for children with special needs is a ministry that responds to the religious and spiritual needs of persons with physical, mental, or emotional differences which might benefit from specialized catechetical instruction.

II. Program and Administration for Children with Special Needs

Our Religious Education Program for children with special needs is a component of the total Parish Catechetical Program and is developed and administered within the content of the *Guidelines for the Coordination of the Catechetical Program*.

Our program is open to all families who would like religious education for their children in an environment that accommodates their needs, limited by our abilities to provide the necessary accommodations. Sessions are held at the Pope Francis Mercy Center with catechists who are skilled in special education and teaching materials that are adapted for children with special needs.

!III. Sacramental Catechesis for First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation

In the *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, the US Bishops provide the norms for bringing persons with disabilities into the sacramental life of the Church.

In the case of severe disability, the decision as to whether or not a child may receive the Sacraments of Eucharist, or Penance should be made according to these guidelines. Decisions regarding readiness for the sacrament will be made by the Coordinator/Director and Pastor with input from the Catechist and the student's parents.

OFFICE PROCEDURES

I. Catechist Attendance and Tardiness

Each Catechist should plan to arrive approximately 15 minutes before the class session is to begin. In case of illness in the day of class, call the Director immediately in order that proper arrangements can be made for a

substitute. If a class is to be missed due to personal reasons, ample notification is to be given to the Director and a lesson plan is to be left for the substitute. If a Catechist is going to be late for a class, a call must be made to notify the Director so that appropriate plans can be made until the Catechist arrives.

II. *Volunteer Staff and Grade Level Meetings*

The Catechist is expected to attend regularly scheduled staff meetings. Active participation at these meetings provides for continuous program evaluation, cooperative planning, problem solving and a mutual exchange of ideas.

III. *Volunteer Staff's Expectations of the Director*

Catechists, Catechist Assistants and Director's Assistants should expect the Parish Director of Religious Education to guide, affirm and support them in their catechetical ministry, to pray for them, to explain policies to them, to communicate with them on a regular basis and to be available to them and provide supplies and resources when needed.

IV. *Director's Assistants*

Assistants help supervise the program and manage the Religious Education Office during class time. They monitor the corridors, take charge of attendance registers, make photocopies for Catechists, distribute supplies, answer phone calls, call parents of children who become ill while in class, handle discipline problems and assist in supervising arrival and dismissal. This affords the Director the opportunity of spending time observing the classes and getting to know the Catechists, children and parents.

V. *Other People to Consult*

Don't overlook the human resources that are available to you. In addition to the Director, seek out other Catechists to brainstorm, plan and develop ideas. Remember, too, the parish priest, as well participants in other parish ministries may be able to offer some advice or counsel. Look also to the artists in your parish community as sources of enrichment for the children in your class. When we take opportunities to expose children to sacred music, religious art, creative writing or play acting, lessons become more interesting and lively.

VI. *Office Communications*

Communication with the Director is essential. As the Catechist's main resource, the Director should be consulted regularly. Flyers, articles and bulletins will be distributed to the Catechists via their mail folders which should be checked weekly. Handouts should be given out on the appropriate day so that the children can bring them home in a timely fashion.

VII. *Communication with Parents*

All communications to the parents from the catechist must be reviewed and approved by the Director, in advance. Document all conversations as to date, time and nature of communication, and with whom the catechist spoke. Keep a log for record purposes. If a parent claims not to have been notified of something in particular, refer to the log for verification.

VII. *Attendance Registers*

An attendance register is a legal document and must be maintained by each Catechist. It must always be legible and updated and include each student's record of both absences and tardiness. The official attendance register must be kept in the Religious Education Office at the parish. Entries should be recorded in ink. At the end of the year, the information is transferred to each student's permanent record card by the Religious Education Office staff. Attendance should be taken within the first fifteen minutes of class and attendance should be left with the office staff before going to the classroom.

IX. *Miscellaneous Items*

Permanent Record Cards: There is a permanent record card for each child enrolled in the program that includes dates and places of sacramental celebrations and other pertinent information. These are kept on files in the Director's office.

Calendar: Each Catechist will be given a calendar for the year indicating class dates, meetings, the Catechetical Congress and other special events.

Weather Closings/Class Cancellations: In the event of inclement weather, the Director will e-mail or call each catechist to notify him or her. If Yonkers Public Schools are closed or after-school activities are cancelled, Religious Education is cancelled.

LEGAL ISSUE

I. Introduction

The following Guidelines promote the safety and well-being of the children and youth in Parish Catechetical Programs of the Archdiocese of New York.⁹

II. Child Abuse and Child Neglect

Child abuse and child neglect are complex problems that are not confined to any one family, racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or religious group. They represent a serious breakdown in the family structure, and both the Gospel Message and the legal system of this country call upon the assistance of the wider community in addressing the problem. The parish community, therefore, has a moral responsibility to develop a well planned mode of response to the suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

All studies indicate that children rarely make false allegations of abuse. If a child speaks of abuse it should be taken very seriously. If a Catechist suspects abuse, he/she should immediately bring these suspicions to the Director who, in turn, should consult the Pastor. The utmost confidentiality must be exercised and any involvement of other people on the parish staff must be left to the discretion of the Pastor.

Never contact the parents of the child, even if you think that speaking to the non-suspected offender would help to clarify the validity of suspected abuse. This could further endanger the child and also have legal repercussions.

See Appendix A for more information regarding Child Abuse and Child Neglect.

⁹ From the *GDC 1-21*.

SAFETY ISSUES AND PROCEDURES

I. Emergency Procedures

1. Fire

Catechists should be aware of the fire evacuation routes that are posted in every classroom. Primary and secondary escape routes are indicated on the building floor plan posted by the classroom door.

In the event of a fire, the fire alarm will sound and catechists should leave the building with all students and assistants, following the designated fire evacuation route. Catechists should:

Insure that all children are out of the room and then lead them to the assigned place of safety;

Have the last person out of the room close the door;

Bring the attendance register to verify that members of the class are accounted for and out of the building.

A staff member is appointed whose responsibility is to check the bathrooms and see that any children there exit the building. For each disabled child in the class, an assigned staff member (an adult), other than the Catechist, will assist that child.

Twice yearly, a fire drill is held to ensure all staff and students are familiar with the evacuation procedures.

2. Lock down

In case of an emergency, the Director will make an announcement. Catechists should immediately lock the classroom door, close the window curtains and gather the students on the floor in the corner of the room that cannot be seen from the door window. Everyone should stay in that position until administration or fire/police personnel unlock the door.

3. Accident

Ask a hall monitor or other responsible adult to watch the class if the Catechist must leave the room;

Send one or two children to the Religious Education Office with a request for assistance;

If no alternate supervisor is available, take the entire class to the Office or to another Catechist's classroom, depending on the urgency of the need.

4. Bomb Threat

If a bomb threat is received by telephone or in writing, inform the local police department immediately and accept their advice with respect to appropriate action.

These procedures should be reviewed with the students in the beginning of the year.

II. Liability Insurance

The Archdiocese of New York maintains liability coverage for negligent act resulting in bodily injury or property damage. The Director, the Catechist, and other volunteers are covered as long as they are acting within the scope of responsibilities assigned to them by the parish and as long as the act was neither intentional nor criminal.

III. Medical Emergencies

If a relatively **minor accident or illness** occurs to a child while attending the catechetical program, the following steps are taken:

The Catechist reports the accident immediately to the Director;

If bleeding is involved, the procedures outlined under “Blood Borne Pathogens” are followed; The Director notifies the parent.

In case of **serious accident or illness**:

The Catechist reports the accident immediately to the Director;
Calls 911 or the local police/emergency rescue squad, immediately.

Blood Borne Pathogens

While the fear of Blood Borne Pathogens is real, they present social as well as medical problems and require sensitive and Christian responses. The following are guidelines for dealing with persons who suffer from HIV, AIDS, HBV, or for that matter, any physiological, mental, or emotional condition.

The Director and the Catechist teach the message of Jesus, and therefore, are held to a higher standard of compassion in responding to persons with HIV, AIDS, or any other illness or disability.

Everyone, including people with HIV or AIDS, is protected against discrimination.

All medical information relating to HIV infection of children is confidential and only people with a legal right to know may be granted access to it (e.g. Certain judicial and health care authorities with proper authorization, or upon court order).

Blood Borne Pathogens Instruction Sheet for Catechists

When a Catechist or volunteer needs to intervene and implement “universal precautions,” they do so from an informed, voluntary response under the “Good Samaritan Act” and use prudent public health protective procedures.

Direct or help individuals involved with a blood/body fluid incident to care for themselves with minimal contact from you. If an accident involving a blood spill occurs, encourage the individual to tend to their own injury. For example, if a child has a bloody nose, hand the child the tissues and instruct him/her to pinch his/her nose; if a child has a cut, hand the child clean paper towels to hold over the cut. When the catechist needs to intervene and provide assistance that requires contact, always place a barrier between yourself and the individual. When providing assistance be sure to:

Wear medical grade disposable latex gloves.

Use disposable towels/tissues for each injury.

Keep other children away from the area of blood/body fluid spill. Cover spill with paper towels.

Place any blood/body fluid stained materials in a **sealable** plastic bag.

Remove gloves following proper procedures and place in **sealable** plastic bag.

Wash hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap, using proper hand washing procedures.

As soon as possible, notify the Director who will call a custodial person for immediate clean up. If no one comes to clean up, the 10% bleach solution in the Catechist Kit can be used temporarily as a disinfectant.

Contents of Catechist Kit includes the following items:

Disposable latex gloves.

Paper towels.

Sealable plastic bags.

Sterile Gauze pads.

Band-Aids.

Alcohol towelettes.

10% bleach solution.

These instructions.

Medication

No medication of any kind (including both prescription and over-the-counter) should be administered to, or taken by, any child during the Parish Catechetical Program. If an exception has to be made, the parent must provide a **written** request and directives to the Director.

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I. Introduction

Sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable behavior in the part of any employee of the Archdiocese of New York. It is behavior that is not only disrespectful to another person, it is against Federal, State, and Local law.

When it exists, it is a problem that affects everyone, at all levels and in all types of work. It contributes to a hostile, non-productive work environment and affects work productivity and performance. It is unacceptable behavior by supervisors and managers, as well as by staff members.

Each one of us is responsible for compliance against sexual harassment. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring a work environment that is free of all forms and types of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment.

II. Policy

The Archdiocese of New York is committed to providing a work environment reflecting the highest standards of respect for the personal dignity of every employee. The Archdiocese neither condones nor permits sexual harassment and undertakes to address, prevent and correct any sexually harassing behavior in the work environment. Staff members are prohibited from initiating or engaging in sexually harassing conduct or behavior.

III. Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as any **unwelcome or unwanted** conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, nonverbal or physical, when:

Submission, acquiescence or rejection of such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a condition of employment;

Submission, acquiescence or rejection of such conduct is used as a factor in employment decisions, including but not limited to evaluation, training, promotion, compensation, duties, transfers, privileges and other terms or conditions of employment;

Such conduct substantially interferes with employment by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

IV. Grievance Procedure

Staff members who personally experience sexual harassment, or witness it, are required to report such incidents to the Director of Human Resources or to their supervisor¹⁰ who will inform the Director of Human Resources. Immediate reporting ensures prompt response and resolution of objectionable conduct.

The Director of Human Resources, in coordination with the Department Director will promptly conduct and document an investigation of each grievance reported. The Director of Human Resources will submit a recommendation to the Department Director.

¹⁰*In the parish religious education setting, the “supervisors” or “Directors” are the Director of Religious Education, the Pastor, The Regional Catechetical Director or the Director of Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.*

Such recommendation may include, but is not limited to:

- Formal warning;
- Suspension with pay;
- Termination of employment.

V. Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure

If you think you are being sexually harassed in your workplace, the following procedure should be followed:

- When appropriate, make your displeasure known to the person harassing you. See if the behavior stops;
- If the inappropriate behavior continues, either inform your supervisor who will contact the Office of Human Resources or the Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources directly;
- Interviews will be conducted in a timely fashion;
- Confidentiality will be maintained; only those directly named by the complainant will be interviewed;
- If harassment is determined to be present, appropriate action will follow;
- The situation will be monitored to insure there is not further harassment.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

The Catechist Handbook makes clear that any printed materials that are copyrighted may not be duplicated without permission from the holder of the copyright. The following exceptions may be made:

A Catechist may duplicate a single copy to use in preparing or in teaching his/her class;

A Catechist may duplicate a short printed item for each of the children in the class, but the distribution must be limited to that particular class and time period, and the copies **must** include the notice of copyright.

Music for use in class or program liturgies may **not** be reproduced without securing the permission of the holder of the copyright. The Regional Catechetical Office has available the copyright policies for the major publishers of liturgical music. On-line materials, such as pictures that are not in the public domain, are also protected by copyright laws and may not be copied for classroom use.

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION REGARDING CHILD NEGLECT AND CHILD ABUSE

Characteristics Of The Abused Child; there are four main categories of abuse:

Physical abuse is any non-accidental injury to a child caused by a parent or caretaker which results in, or threatens serious injury to the child. This may include excessive corporal punishment.

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, a youth or another child in a position of power, uses a child for sexual gratification or allow another to do so.

Emotional abuse is characterized by verbal harassment, threats, and the systematic destruction of the child's esteem.

Neglect means depriving a child of conditions necessary for normal development including but not limited to food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and supervision.

Physical Abuse:

Physical Indicators

Unexplained bruises or welts; these may be in various stages of healing or in clusters of unusual patterns or on several different areas;

Unexplained burns; in the shape of cigarette, rope, iron, or caused by immersion, which may appear sock or glove like;

Unexplained lacerations to mouth, lips, arms, legs, or torso;

Unexplained skeletal injuries, stiff swollen joints, or multiple fractures;

Missing or loosened teeth;

Human bite marks;

Unexplained abrasions or bald spots;

Appearance of injuries after school absence, weekend, or vacation.

Behavioral Indicators:

Easily frightened or fearful of adults/parents, of physical contact, or when other children cry;

Destructive to self and/or others;

Extremes of behavior – aggressive, withdrawn;

Poor social relations;

Learning problems – poor academic performance, short attention span, language delayed;

Runaway or delinquent behavior;

Complaints of soreness or moves awkwardly;

Accident prone;

Wears clothing that clearly is meant to cover the body when not appropriate;

Seems afraid to go home.

Indicators of Abusive Caretaker:

Describes the child in a consistently negative manner;

Is a harsh disciplinarian;

Conceals or misleads a provider about a child's injuries.

Sexual Abuse:

Physical Indicators:

ÿ Difficulty walking/sitting;

ÿ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing;

ÿ Genital/anal itching, pain, swelling, burning;

- ÿ Genital/anal bruises or bleeding;
- ÿ Frequent urinary tract or yeast infections;
- ÿ Pain on urination;
- ÿ Vaginal/penile discharge;
- ÿ Poor sphincter control;
- ÿ Venereal disease;
- ÿ Pregnancy;
- ÿ Chronic unexplained sore throats;
- ÿ Frequent psychosomatic illnesses;
- ÿ Loss of appetite.

Behavior Indicators:

- ÿ Sudden radical behavior change;
- ÿ Destructive to self and/or others;
- ÿ Extremes in behavior – aggressive, withdrawn;
- ÿ Poor social relations;
- ÿ Refuses to change for gym;
- ÿ Does artwork depicting sexual themes;
- ÿ Behaves seductively and has sexual knowledge beyond age;
- ÿ Compulsive use of language referring to genitals;
- ÿ Sexually acts out or attempts to force or coerce other children to be sexual;
- ÿ Regressive behavior;
- ÿ Runaway or delinquent behavior;
- ÿ Complains of soreness or moves or sits awkwardly;
- ÿ Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate;
- ÿ Depressed, apathetic or suicidal;
- ÿ Compulsive bathing;
- ÿ Nightmares.
- ÿ Is extremely protective of family privacy.
- ÿ Child is not allowed to be involved in extracurricular or developmentally appropriate activities such as being with friends or dating.

Emotional Maltreatment:

Physical Indicators:

- ÿ Failure to thrive;
- ÿ Developmental lags;
- ÿ Wetting of bed/pants;
- ÿ Thumb sucking;
- ÿ Appears sad;
- ÿ Speech disorders – stammering or stuttering;
- ÿ Health problems – ulcers, asthma, skin disorders, severe allergies, obesity, extreme weight loss;
- ÿ Poor appearance;
- ÿ Drug or alcohol abuse.

Behavioral Indicators:

- Habit disorders – sucking, biting, rocking, etc.;
- Destructive to self and/or others;
- Extremes in behavior – aggressive, withdrawn;
- Phobias, sleep disorders, etc.;

Developmental lags – mental, emotional;
Learning problems;
Inhibition to play;
Cruelty, vandalism, stealing, cheating, fire setting, etc.;
Sadomasochistic behavior toward animals and/or other children;
Overly adaptive behavior – inappropriately adult or infantile;
Depression;
Suicidal ideation.

Indicators of Emotionally Abusive Caretaker:

ÿ Rejects, ignores, terrorizes, or isolates child.

Neglect:

Physical Indicators:

Poor growth pattern;
Constant hunger;
Malnutrition;
Dark circles under the eyes;
Poor hygiene – body odor, lice;
Inappropriate clothing;
Constant fatigue;
Listlessness;
Falls asleep in school;
Consistent lack of supervision, especially for long periods or in dangerous activities;
Unexplained bruises or injuries as a result of poor supervision;
Unattended physical problems or medical needs such as lack of proper immunizations, gross dental problems or the needs for glasses or hearing aids.

Behavioral Indicators:

Developmental lags;
Begs or steals food, forages through garbage;
Always hungry;
Destructive to self and/or others;
Extremes in behavior – aggressive, withdrawn;
Hyperactive;
Assumes adult responsibilities or acts in pseudo-mature fashion;
Exhibits infantile behavior;
Delinquent behavior;
Depressed/apathetic – states “no one cares”;
Frequent school absences or chronic tardiness;
Seeks attention and/or affection;
Hypochondria.

Indicators of Neglect from Caretaker:

May be substance abuser;
Has chaotic lifestyle which might include loss of job, income, housing;