

**NATIVITY OF THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

**2011-2012  
Religious Education Program**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**(Please keep this handbook in a convenient location,  
as it will provide useful information throughout the  
school year.)**

This Parent handbook contains the policies instituted to help coordinate and facilitate the religious education program at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church. They were drafted by the Director of Religious Education, Deacon Michael A. Illerbrun and approved by the Pastor, Fr. Juan Mendez. These policies are very important to our program, as the success of our Catechists, both teacher and aide are dependent on how well these policies are understood and followed, especially by the parents. Please take time to review them. If you have any questions or need clarification please contact us at 898-5253 x 1 or 2.

**Deacon Michael A. Illerbrun**  
**Director, Religious Education**

Our Religious Education catechists volunteer to teach our children about the Catholic faith. The Director of Religious Education is responsible for providing them training and guidance as necessary. He will ensure that all parish policies are complied with and will provide additional direction as needed.

#### **Parent Participation:**

Parents, as the primary catechist for your children, you are always encouraged to participate in your children's classes or as volunteers with the front office. Please feel free to call us at any time to volunteer or to ask any questions you may have. Our goal is to provide you with the information you need to feel comfortable entrusting your children to us.

#### **Curriculum:**

The curriculum the teachers use is approved by the Director of Religious Education and the pastor. In selecting appropriate curriculum, we must follow the guidelines from Archbishop Michael Sheehan and the Office of Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Standards for curriculum are set by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with recommendations for approved texts that we must follow. We want to reassure all parents who have children in our Religious Education program that we are very concerned they are taught the essentials of our Catholic faith and our treasured Traditions as well as the sacramental and spiritual aspects of our faith.

#### **Classroom Behavior:**

Good behavior is a critical requirement for our program. This is a religious education program. As such, children are expected to be respectful to their teacher, their fellow students and the facility. All of our teachers are volunteers and are offering their time and talent to our children. They should not have to deal with behavior problems. Improper behavior will not be tolerated. If the problem persists, the following consequences will occur.

After a period of time in which the teacher has attempted to deal with the issue in the classroom, he or she may feel the problem is beyond their control. A child who is identified by the teacher as disruptive to the classroom will be sent to the front office where they will be supervised for the rest of class. If the disruptive behavior occurs a second time, the child's parents will be called to pick up their child. We will attempt to resolve the issue with the parents but, if the disruption occurs a third time, the child will be removed from the program.

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken weekly for all classes. If your child is unable to attend please call 898-5253 x 1 to inform Debra of the absence. If your child's absence is not called in, Debra will be calling to find out why the child was not present. All missed classes may be made up. If they cannot make class, you may cover the material for that week with your child. If you do not have the appropriate materials, please stop by the religious education office to pick them up.

**Weather Conditions:**

In the event of inclement weather that would preclude the safe transport of our children or catechists, classes will be canceled. Because of the limited means of communication between our staff and the parents, the following methods of notification will be utilized. The director will send a mass e-mail to all parents who have provided an e-mail address. Additionally, we will institute a phone message to all parents, notifying them of the cancellation. Finally, we will attempt to post the cancellation on the parish Webpage at [www.n-bvm.org](http://www.n-bvm.org) . At all times the safety of your children is paramount. If you feel it is too dangerous to transport your children to class, by all means, keep them home. We can always make up the classwork.

**Special Activities:**

If a Holy Day of Obligation falls on a day when religious education classes are scheduled, attendance at Mass during class time will count for the class time for that day. Please take this opportunity to attend Mass with your children. There may be times when special activities or parties are planned for our students. These activities should appear on the calendar for the year.

**Dress Code Requirements:**

Please ensure your children are modestly dressed and avoid "fad" styles when attending religious education classes. Please ensure your children do not wear halter tops, strapless tops or inappropriate tank tops. This includes, but is not limited to, excessive display of cleavage and inappropriate messages or designs on clothing. T-shirts will be provided as necessary for any inappropriately dressed student to use during class. If dress, shorts or skirt lengths for our females is inappropriate or inappropriate crotch or shorts/inseam lengths for males is an issue, parents will be called to bring appropriate attire for the student to change into prior to attending class.

**Cell Phone Policy:**

The use of cell phones during class is not allowed. This kind of distraction is not conducive to learning. Cell phones will be turned off during class. Any cell phones used during class (including talking, text, MP3s or web surfing) will be confiscated and returned after class. If cell phone use becomes a chronic problem, parents will be asked to pick up their student's phone in the office.

If there is an emergency, please call the office at 898-5253 extension 1 or 2. Your message will be delivered or your student will be **pulled from class** to talk to you as necessary. **In either case we will ensure your student is available for any emergencies that may develop.**

**Student Boundaries Policy:**

Students are not allowed outside of the school building during class time without parental permission. This is a liability issue with our insurance coverage and must be complied with. In the event of an emergency that requires your child to leave the building during class, parents please call the office at 898-5253 extension 1 or 2. Students are to report to the office prior to leaving the school building.

**Supply Requirements:**

Books and supplies are required for each class. The catechist will provide the book, or appropriate section of the book. Supplies include pen or pencil, paper or notebook and any other supplies requested by your catechist for the particular class. If the student forgets any of his/her supplies, have them notify the Catechist. We will attempt to provide appropriate replacements as necessary. This service is by exception, not as a regular occurrence. Please carry your required materials in a pocket folder.

**Parish Website:**

We are attempting to put as much information as possible regarding the religious education program on the parish website. We incorporate weekly newsletters on the website as well as registration materials and any other critical information. Please check the parish website at [www.n-bvm.org](http://www.n-bvm.org) for more information and ongoing updates.