

PARENT HANDBOOK

**ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

2008-2009

**7175 Avery Road
Dublin, OH 43017-2702
614-761-1176
FAX 614-718-5831**

St. Brigid Religious Education Mission Statement

St. Brigid of Kildare Religious Education Program offers opportunities to all parishioners to improve their knowledge and practice of Catholicism. Through year-long classes for students age four through grade eight, high school youth ministry, young adult ministry, as well as seasonal studies, speakers, Bible Study, and specific courses offered on site for adults, all parishioners are encouraged to know and share the truths of our Catholic faith.

St. Brigid of Kildare Religious Education Staff

Office Staff

**Babs Pulsfort
Linda Schirtzinger**

Administrative Assistant

Ermagene Kelly

Preschool/Kindergarten Coordinator

Cheryl Dranichak

Youth Minister

Pam Heil

Director of Religious Education

Mary Fran Cassidy

Religious Education Office Hours

Monday, 9:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday and Thursday, 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, 9:30 a.m. - noon

Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry Office Hours

Monday 12:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Friday and Saturday Office Closed / Call for appointment.

Sunday 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Phone

614-761-1176 - Religious Education Office

614-718-5832 - Youth Ministry Office

Fax

614-718-5831

WELCOME TO ST. BRIGID OF KILDARE'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM!

Thank you for sharing the responsibility of the religious education of your family with us. We strive to provide age-appropriate, meaningful religious experiences while teaching the truths of the Catholic faith through catechesis (weekly classes), paraliturgical and liturgical celebrations (informal and formal prayer services both in the classrooms and in Church), witness and service experiences (e.g. “Kids-to-Kids” Trick-or-Treating at Halloween, Operation Cookie Storm, the Christ Child Society Collection, and various service projects as opportunities present themselves.)

This handbook will help you become more familiar with the purposes of St. Brigid Religious Education Program, the scope and sequence of classes offered, as well as the policies and practices used to keep our weekly catechetical classes running smoothly while providing sound religious education for everyone in our parish.

DIOCESAN GRADED COURSE OF STUDY

The Diocese of Columbus has a *Graded Course of Study* to be implemented throughout the diocese in both the Religious Education Classes held outside of school time and in the Catholic Schools. The *National Directory for Catechesis* states “Catechesis aims to bring about in the believer an ever more mature faith in Jesus Christ, a deeper knowledge and love of His person and message, and a firm commitment to follow Him.” (p. 54) To that end, The Diocesan Office of Religious Education and Catechesis, in conjunction with teachers, principals, catechists and catechetical leaders from the diocese, created the current *Religion Graded Course of Study Preschool – Grade 12*, “a systematic and age-appropriate way to present the mysteries of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church so that students will be led to a closer union with Jesus Christ and be led by the Holy Spirit to find the many traditions of the Catholic Church, e.g., its prayer, liturgy and sacraments, and its moral and social teachings, beneficial to their lives now and in the future.” St. Brigid of Kildare Religious Education Program adheres to the Diocesan *Graded Course of Study* for each grade level. Therefore, **attendance during every grade level is crucial** to the religious educational development of each person. **Those who have not attended regular classes either in St. Brigid Religious Education Program, St. Brigid School, or in another religious education program, or completed the work in an approved home study course must complete the work for the grades missed before continuing at grade level.** During the 2006-2007 school year we began offering the *Basic Review Course* for those students who have missed middle grades in addition to the *Sacraments* class for those students beyond second grade who have not yet received their First Communion. Our goal is to provide the foundation for *a lifetime* of learning and growing in the Catholic faith.

While the purpose of this handbook is to outline the program for grades K-8, please remember that our High School youth are served through our *Living the Questions*, which meets on Sunday evenings throughout the school year. A wide variety of classes and programs are also offered for adults both during the day and in the evenings. There is literally *something for everyone* in St. Brigid Religious Education!

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF THE PROGRAM

PRESCHOOL THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

Children in our Preschool Program will use the “Discovering God” series published by The Sadlier Company. Every lesson contains faith-focused activity pages, “Read to Me” pages, including age-appropriate Scripture-based and theme-related stories as well as songs, poems, and other activities. Each lesson also includes Prayer Experiences for the children.

The basic text for students in kindergarten through grade six is the **WE BELIEVE** series published by The Sadlier Company. This series is used in both the Religious Education Program and St. Brigid School religion classes. Both editions embrace the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Moral Life, and Prayer* by incorporating them throughout each chapter. The texts are “spirited by the *General Directory for Catechesis* and have been approved by the U.S. Catholic Bishops.” The family pages in the texts are for you to complete with your child following each week’s class. In addition, I encourage you to access faith-based activities and resources to correspond with each chapter by logging on to www.WEBELIEVEweb.com, integrating family, faith, life, liturgy and technology!

Students in grades seven and eight use *We Live Our Faith*, also a part of the **WE BELIEVE** series, with seventh grade focusing on the New Testament and morality and eighth grade on the history of the Church and social justice.

Students in grade eight will also be using *The Spirit Sets Us Free*, also published by The Sadlier Company, as immediate preparation for Confirmation. Throughout the year, they will also be involved with the Parish Youth Minister as well as their regular catechists in planned group activities to help them in their preparation for Confirmation.

Students beyond second grade who have not yet received First Communion use the Sadlier *Our Catholic Faith* text, providing a comprehensive review of the basic teachings of the Catholic Church, in addition to **WE CELEBRATE THE EUCHARIST** which is described below.

WE CELEBRATE THE EUCHARIST is used in immediate preparation for First Communion. One of the greatest strengths of this program is the parental/family involvement in the preparation of the children to receive this sacrament of initiation. The National Directory for Catechesis states “Parents also have the right and duty to be involved in preparing their children for First Communion. The catechesis offered should help parents grow in their own understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist and enable them to catechize their children more effectively.” (NDC, 36.A. 3a) Parent sessions are held monthly from October through April.

The National Catechetical Directory states “The Eucharist is the center and heart of Christian life for both the universal and local Church and for each Christian... All that belongs to Christian life leads to the Eucharistic celebration or flows from it.” Based on this premise, each theme of **WE CELEBRATE THE EUCHARIST** is developed around a particular part of the Mass, offering the opportunity for each family to deepen its appreciation of and involvement in this central act of worship of the Catholic Church.

HIGH SCHOOL

St. Brigid Youth Ministry Program provides an opportunity for all parish teens to grow in their Catholic faith, form supportive relationships with others, and extend God's love to the world around them. St. Brigid Youth Ministry offers a wide variety of opportunities for spiritual, social and emotional growth through their weekly meetings and Special Events. Sunday evening meetings, "Living the Questions," are held from 6:15-8:00 p.m. and BYBS: Bible Study and Application, from 8:00-9:00 p.m. High School Confirmation Catechesis will be determined by the Confirmandi's schedules. The Youth Ministry Office and Teen Room are located in the Parish Center. You may stop in any time or call Pam Heil, Youth Minister at 718-5832.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

The St. Brigid of Kildare young adults group is an opportunity for married and single people, age 22-39 to socialize and have a faith sharing community through monthly social activities, Bible studies, and service projects. Please check the parish website for more information. http://www.stbrigidofkildare.org/youthgroup/Young_Adult_Ministry.html

ADULT

Opportunities for faith formation are offered regularly throughout the year for adults in our parish. These include but are not limited to the *Tuesday Morning Discussion Group*, and *catechist certification classes* offered through the Diocese of Columbus here at St. Brigid, and Scripture Study, in addition to the R.C.I.A. Program in the parish.

Presentations on the Eucharist and on Reconciliation are scheduled throughout the academic year. While these are offered primarily for the parents of children preparing for and/or studying these sacraments in depth, **all adults are invited to attend**. Baby-sitting is provided during most of these evening meetings.

Introduction to Scripture will be offered from 7-9 p.m. in October (15, 22, 29) and November (5, 12, 19). Debra Sabo, M.A. is the instructor. This course may be taken for personal enrichment and/or catechist certification credit.

The *Little Rock Scripture Study* is back at St. Brigid for the 2008-2009 school year! The first series is *The Acts of the Apostles*. The series will run from September 11, 2008, through December 4, 2008. All classes will be held from 10 a.m. until noon. For a complete list of dates and times, see the enclosed flyer or check the Parish Website: www.stbrigidofkildare.org.

Other courses offered throughout the year include *Morality, Christ and the Church, Liturgy and Sacraments*.

Specific calendars listing the classes currently scheduled for the 2008-2009 school year are available throughout the year in the Religious Education Office. Additionally all classes are listed in the weekly bulletin as well as on the monthly calendars sent home with the family packets. Invite your friends! **All adults of the parish are welcome and encouraged to participate in all St. Brigid Adult Faith Formation.**

POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

The excellent attendance records of most of St. Brigid Religious Education students reflect your outstanding efforts to make Religious Education a priority! Thank you! If your child is ill and unable to attend class, please call the office to report his/her absence. Your child will then be marked "Absent, Excused". You can have his/her work be sent home with a neighbor or sibling.

Attendance awards are given at the end of the year for **Perfect Attendance**. **Perfect Attendance** means **No Absences**, excused or otherwise. The exceptions to this rule are the fourth and sixth grade outdoor education classes, the eighth grade class trips, and other school-dictated activities and performances which are mandated by Dublin City Schools. All of these absences must be reported to the office before the date.

SNOW DAYS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

St. Brigid Religious Education Program follows the Dublin City School schedule. If school is canceled for the day due to a weather emergency, St. Brigid will **NOT** hold Religious Education classes that day. If the weather turns bad during the day, or if there is a building emergency, cancellations will be announced on the radio and television stations used by the schools:

RADIO: WBNS, WMNI/WBZX, WNCI, WSNY, WTVN/WLVQ, and WXMV/WRVF.

TV: WBNS/10, WCMH/4, and WSYX/6.

SAFETY FIRST!

Please observe the signs posted at the driveways: **ENTER using the North entrance (the one closer to Avery Park) marked ENTER ONLY, and EXIT using the South entrance marked EXIT ONLY. Please exercise extreme caution when driving through the Parking Lot!** Please see the diagram of the Parking Lot and procedures for pickup on page 12.

DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS HARASSMENT POLICY

Please note the Diocesan Policy concerning harassment contained on page 13 of this handbook. In compliance with diocesan policy, please sign and date the Harassment Policy Verification Form on page 15 and return it to the Religious Education Office. We must have this signed form on file.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

As in previous years, **please come inside to pick up your children. No child is allowed to leave the building without a parent or other designated adult.**

THE PRESCHOOL DOORS ARE NOT TO BE USED TO ENTER OR EXIT THE BUILDING.

All parents and children are to exit through the cafeteria to keep the flow of “traffic” moving smoothly. Students in grades five through eight will be dismissed to the cafeteria and are to remain with their teacher/teacher aide until they are picked up.

Older siblings are not permitted to pick up younger siblings and take them to the cafeteria. Parents, please do not ask your children to break this pattern. It has been designed to insure the safety of everyone and to assure that children go home with the right person.

If you are going to be late picking up your children, please call the office if possible. We will stay with your children in the cafeteria until you are able to come for them. **Please do not ask your children to wait outside for you or to meet you at your car.** They will not be permitted to do so, and this will cause them anxiety, wanting to please you and still follow the rules. Remember, the rules are made for the safety of all of our children. Thank you for your cooperation and support!

WALKING

Each year several requests come to the office asking that the children be allowed to walk home. First of all, **parents assume full responsibility for the safety of their children on their way home.** Secondly, requests must be made **in writing** and presented to the Religious Education Director **prior to** the first dismissal. Parents and children need to bring the written request to the Religious Education Director in person. Children who are walking home need to check with the Director at the door of the cafeteria/commons area **each time** before leaving the building.

CLASS TIMES

Preschool and Kindergarten Classes meet during the **Sunday 9:00 and 10:45 Masses.** Please bring your children to class before Mass begins, but not more than fifteen (15) minutes before. **Kindergarten classes** will also meet **Mondays and Tuesdays at 4:30.**

Classes for **grades one through eight** are offered at **4:30 and 6:00 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays.** **In addition,** classes for **grades 6, 7, and 8** are offered from **7:30-8:30 p.m. on Mondays.** The **Basic Review Class,** for students who have missed grades between First Communion and Middle School, will also be held **Mondays at 7:30 p.m.** The **Sacraments Class,** for those students beyond second grade who are preparing for Baptism and/or the Eucharist, will meet **Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.**

Students are to remain in the classroom with their teacher and teacher aide for the full period of one hour. We appreciate your efforts to bring your children and pick them up **on time.** Early dismissals are **not** the prerogative of the teacher or the parent. If an emergency arises, please notify the office as soon as possible. If you must pick up your child early, please bring a **written request** to the Religious Ed Office, have it signed, and then take it to the teacher. Students **will not be allowed to leave the assigned class meeting area or be dismissed early without prior written permission.**

DISCIPLINE

Classes meet for only one hour per week. To enable everyone to experience the best possible Religious Education during that time, the following procedure for dealing with inappropriate behavior has been established.

1. When a student misbehaves, the teacher informs him/her that such behavior is not acceptable.
2. If the student continues to misbehave, the teacher informs the student he/she will be sent from the room.
3. If the student must be sent from the room, he/she and the Director of Religious Education will discuss his/her behavior in the office and reach a conclusion about appropriate behavior during Religious Education classes. A notice of this incident will be placed in the student's file. The student will then be returned to class.
4. The second time a student is sent from class, the Director of Religious Education will call the parents and inform them of the situation and set up a meeting with them to discuss the student's behavior. Both the event and the parent meeting will also be noted in the student's file. The student will then be returned to class.
5. The third time a student is sent from class, step four will be repeated except that **the student will not be re-admitted to class** without a parent accompanying him/her until the teacher, the parents and the Director deem that the situation has been resolved and the student has continued to display appropriate behavior.

In all of the years since we initiated this policy, only two students have reached step five and that was shortly after the policy was begun. I expect that this year, no one will even reach step three. Our students, teachers, and parents all have the same goal: to have a great experience knowing and sharing the truths of our faith!

CLASSROOM SNACKS AND PARTIES

In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and faith development and to accommodate the large number of people using St. Brigid Parish Educational Center each day and night, **no food or drink of any kind will be allowed at any time in any classroom. NO EXCEPTIONS.** For special occasions, e.g. Thanksgiving, celebration of First Communion or Confirmation, when a celebration with food is appropriate, such events can be scheduled in advance to be held in the cafeteria. In the interest of fairness, however, all classes of that particular grade level will be included in the celebration.

COMMUNICATION

Handbook

We continue to explore ways to maintain effective communication between the office and your home. You are holding in your hands at this moment one of the key tools of communication. Please make a habit of picking up a Parish Bulletin each week from Church and of checking the parish Web Site, www.stbrigidofkildare.org, weekly. All activities and meetings are listed there each week.

Family Packets

Information packets are provided monthly and will include the calendar for the coming month, any flyers from various groups (Women's Club, Knights of Columbus, Athletic Association) announcing upcoming events, as well as information about specific projects or programs of a timely nature. These packets will be on the tables in the cafeteria during class time for pickup. You will be responsible for picking up your own packet. If you are carpooling, you will be responsible for picking up the packets for the families in your carpool. The Packet dates for 2008-2009 are: **August 16/17 after all Masses, September 29/30, October 27/28, November 18/24, December 15/16, January 26/27, February 23/24, March 30/31, April 27/28. Please mark your calendars!**

SERVICE PROJECTS

St. Brigid Religious Education Program has a tradition of helping others. In the course of the year there are four major events which directly benefit others.

Trick-or-Treat for Kids-to-Kids

"Trick-or-Treat for Kids-to-Kids", sponsored by Holy Childhood Association, offers children in grades K-5 the opportunity while they "beg" for candy to collect money for children who have to beg for food each day. Last year this collection of nickels, dimes and pennies (and some dollar bills as well) has yielded over \$1,700.00! All of the money is sent to The Holy Childhood Association, which in turn helps to feed hungry children throughout the world! Boxes will be distributed October 27 and 28, to be used on Thursday, October 30, 2008. Boxes should be returned to class the following week.

Operation Cookie Storm

Since **Operation Cookie Storm** began in 1991, St. Brigid Religious Education Program has sent literally thousands of packages of Christmas cookies, homemade cards, ornaments, prayers and good wishes to service personnel stationed overseas during the holidays. Plan to bring your entire family to participate on Saturday, December 6, 2008. If you have a family member or friend who is serving overseas and would be able to distribute packages, please bring his/her name and address to the Religious Education Office by Thanksgiving.

Christ Child Society

Our annual collection of new clothing during Advent benefits The Christ Child Society of Columbus. During the past seventeen years, St. Brigid Religious Education students have contributed hundreds and hundreds of items of clothing to help meet the needs of the poor children in the greater Columbus area. A detailed list of requested items will be distributed in November and the items brought to class throughout the Advent Season, December 1 through December 16, 2008. The classroom with the highest percentage of participation in this collection is awarded the *Little Red Wagon* award. The name of that class is engraved on a plaque attached to the wagon, which comes to the classroom filled with treats just before Lent.

Operation Rice Bowl

Each year St. Brigid Parish participates in Operation Rice Bowl, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. Each family is encouraged to participate in this parish-wide project.

Parish Social Action Committee

This year the Social Action Committee is planning collections throughout the year. Families are encouraged to participate in as many of the collections as possible. Permanent collection bins are available in the Gathering Area of the Church for your use to help our parish continue this important ministry. For more information, consult the Parish Bulletin or Parish Web Site: www.stbrigidofkildare.org.

ST. BRIGID LENDING LIBRARY AND GIFT SHOP

St. Brigid Lending Library and Gift Shop is located in the Parish Center. It is opened on Sundays during the school year from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. The Lending Library Extension is located in the Religious Education Workroom in the Educational Center.

FAMILY GATHERINGS

This year, there will be one “Family Gathering” which will focus on Reconciliation and afford families the opportunity to delve into the sacrament and do some activities as a family.

This year, due to the priest shortage, we will not be offering the students in grades 5-7 the opportunity for Reconciliation during their class times, but instead will be encouraging families to come together to the parish Reconciliation Services in Advent and Lent.

“Reconciliation: It’s a Family Affair” is scheduled for Sunday, April 5, 2009, from 3:45-4:45 p.m. in the Parish Center. This Family Gathering will afford families the opportunity to experience something similar to the Family Reconciliation Workshop, which will be offered to our Fourth Graders on March 7, 2009. All families, those without children as well as those with children of all ages, are invited to the Family Gathering. The Parish Lenten Reconciliation Celebration will follow at 5 p.m., beginning with Vespers. Other diocesan priests will be available following Vespers for individual confessions.

MAKE THIS PROGRAM YOUR OWN!

As St. Brigid Parish continues to grow, each of us must make an effort to keep the family spirit alive and well at St. Brigid. The best way to do that is to help one other person by sharing your own special gifts in whatever way and at whatever level you feel comfortable. Perhaps you’d like to teach or help out in a classroom or work in the office during class time. Perhaps you’d rather work during the week while the children are in school. Perhaps you already have at least one full time job, volunteer at your child’s school, and are involved in at least one Church committee. Whether you can volunteer every week, or once a month, or once a year, your participation will help our program continue to grow and you will be teaching your children in the best way possible--by your own example--what it means to be Church! Remember, God is never outdone in generosity. Whatever you give to the Lord returns to you a hundredfold! I know this to be true! Come, share the joy!

HOME SCHOOLING

The Home Schooling Option is made available for those parents who wish to conduct their child's regular religious education classes at home rather than have their child participate in the weekly classes offered here. The same Diocesan Graded Course of Study is to be implemented and regular times must be set aside each week for classes in your home.

To assist you further and to provide you the opportunity to share with other families who are choosing the Home School option, I have scheduled four meetings in the course of the academic year. These **mandatory meetings** will begin following the 9:00 a.m. Mass in the Educational Center cafeteria, and will include a time for shared prayer and reflection, a time for the children to work together with a Master Catechist and for the parents to work together with the Director of Religious Education, and finally for all to gather for a closing prayer. Please put these dates on your calendar now. To continue in the Home School Program, you must attend these meetings and turn in the children's work each time.

Schedule of Home School Meetings

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10:15 | Meet in the Educational Center |
| 10:15-10:30 | Opening Prayer
Introduction of the theme of the day
Sharing by participants |
| 10:30-11:00 | Children move to Rooms 301 & 302 with Master Catechists.
Parents remain with Mary Fran. |
| 11:00-11:05 | Parents and Children gather for final prayer and dismissal. |

HOME SCHOOL CALENDAR

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| September 28, 2008 | Introduction to the year |
| November 16, 2008 | Preparing for Advent |
| February 8, 2009 | Preparing for Lent. |
| May 17, 2009 | Final Evaluation of the year and all work due. |

Home School Resources

We Believe

Students in Kindergarten through grade 6 use the *We Believe* series, published by the Sadlier Company. Please refer to page 3 in this handbook for a complete description of this series.

Since both Eucharist and Confirmation are sacraments of Initiation, home schooling is not an option for second or eighth grade students.

Due to the nature of the seventh grade curriculum, home schooling is no longer an option for seventh grade.

Home Lesson Plans

Published by Sadlier to accompany the *We Believe* series, these books provide parents with additional background information for each lesson.

Diocesan Graded Course of Study

The revised **Graded Course of Study** published by the Diocese of Columbus, outlines which major concepts are to be initiated, developed and mastered at each grade level, kindergarten through grade 12. **Parents are expected to follow the Diocesan Graded Course of Study** as are the catechists who teach each week.

Team Leader Outline of Classes

Each grade has a Team Leader, a Master Catechist who outlines the sequence of classes, plans special projects, materials, and activities for his/her grade level. You will receive the sequence of classes as they will be taught in weekly classes here. Please follow this same sequence of lessons as you present the material to your children. In addition, you are encouraged to bring your children to all class activities throughout the year, e.g., Stations of the Cross, Reconciliation, the Advent Assembly, and speakers. Please call the office to make arrangements prior to the event.

You are always welcome to return to the regularly scheduled classes. Please call the office to make those arrangements.

The Team Leaders are also available to you as a resource person should questions or concerns arise as the year progresses.

Other Resources

Each year I strive to find useful materials to enable you and your family to get the most benefit from your experience of catechesis.

For your convenience, the Team Leaders for each grade level are listed below.

TEAM LEADERS

Grade	First	Last Name	Address	City, State, Zip	Phone
1	Debby	Alexander	6313 Oisin Court	Dublin, OH 43016	873-1400
2	Karen	Albrecht	7809 Craindow Court	Dublin, OH 43017	792-7645
3	Peggy	Iannarino	7266 Innisfree Lane	Dublin, OH 43017	798-9763
4	Dave	Francis	5970 Dunabbey Loop	Dublin, OH 43017	761-0597
5					
6	Deb	Sabo	6259 Valley Stream Dr.	Dublin, OH 43017	766-1125
7	Tom	Cassidy	240 West Central Ave.	Delaware, OH 43015	740-363-3319
8	Gayle	Spagna	5196 Kittiewake Ct.	Dublin, OH 43017	764-0593
P/K	Cheryl	Dranichak	5964 Glenfinnan Ct.	Dublin, OH 43017	766-5554

PARKING LOT DIAGRAM AND PROCEDURES FOR PICK UP

St. Brigid of Kildare Religious Education

HARASSMENT POLICY

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasium, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.
2. It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spiritually enriching environment, in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No participant, volunteer adult leader, or parish staff member – male or female – should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.
3. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions;
 - Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
 - Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance;
 - The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures, or objects;
 - Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
 - Graffiti of a sexual nature;
 - Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
 - Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.

Sex harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature – it also includes harassment that is based on **gender**. Gender-based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or conduct which are based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between employees and volunteers must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement.

Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a catechetical leader hugging a child after an accomplishment, a catechist consoling an adolescent with an injury or physical conduct during an activity to enhance catechetical learning like engaging in movement to accompany liturgical music would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, participant, or visitor to the parish activity.

5. Any person who believes that he/she is subject to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of religious education. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a program administrator or a pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan director of religious education. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The Diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

PARISH RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Periodically each parish shall give staff and volunteers a copy of the Harassment Policy. It is recommended that the Harassment Policy Verification Form be signed and returned.
2. Each parish program shall follow diocesan procedures for timely investigation and response to complaints.
3. Each parish shall periodically train program administrators, staff and volunteers to ensure that they understand which types of behavior constitute harassment, the prevention of harassment, and how they should respond in the event of experiencing such behavior. Records are to be kept of training dates and names of those in attendance.
4. Each parish program shall include the Harassment Policy in materials distributed to the program's staff/volunteers.

HARASSMENT
POLICY VERIFICATION
FORM

I, _____,
please print your name

(check all that apply)

- an employee of
- a volunteer at
- a parent/guardian of a youth participant
- a youth participant (grades 6-12)

have received copies of the diocesan policy on harassment.

I understand that it is necessary that any complaint of harassment must be filed with the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor or (c) diocesan director of religious education. I have had an opportunity to read the policy and am confident I understand the content and purpose.

St. Brigid of Kildare Religious Education
Name of parish and program

your signature

Date: _____

**Department of Religious Education
Catholic Diocese of Columbus**

Adopted: 08/04

Please return to St. Brigid Religious Education Office by October 9, 2008

St. Brigid Religious Education

7175 Avery Road
Dublin, OH 43017-27202
614-761-1176
FAX 614-718-5831

I have received and read the Parent Handbook for St. Brigid Religious Education Program. I understand that I am responsible for and will abide by the information contained therein.

I have the following questions:

I have the following concerns:

I have the following comments:

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Please return to St. Brigid Religious Education Office no later than October 9, 2008.

