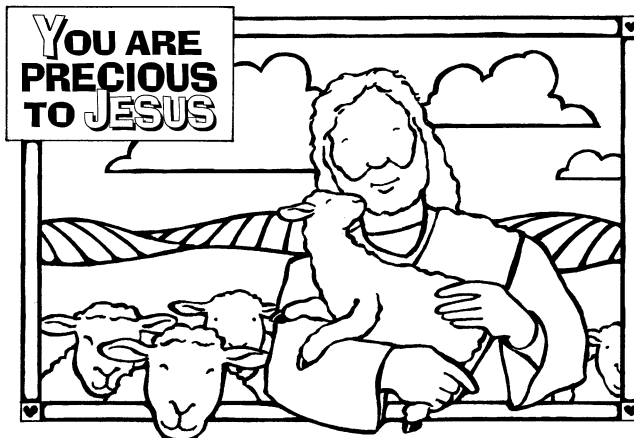


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Revised October 2010

## MISSION STATEMENT

Saint Peter's Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) program is designed to provide religious instruction to the students (Grades 1 - 8) of the parish who do not attend Catholic schools. To the best of our ability we will try to teach the students what we, as Catholics, believe, how we worship in personal and liturgical prayer, and how to live a life of service to God. It is our aim that the students understand and experience the importance of Jesus Christ in daily life.

## PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to answer parents' questions about St. Peter's CCD program.

**Please keep it as a guide and resource to use during your students' enrollment in our program.**



## CCD AT THE DIOCESE LEVEL

### Policies

All Catholic schools and CCD programs within the Diocese of Lincoln must operate within the guidelines set by the Office of Religious Education. The Office of Religious Education (ORE) sets guidelines with the Bishop's approval and helps to maintain consistency in all of the religious education programs throughout the Diocese. The following is a summary of the guidelines:

Each parish in the Diocese of Lincoln must offer a catechetical program for students who are not attending a Catholic school. A minimum of 40 hours of instruction must be provided and each class session should last at least one hour and fifteen minutes.

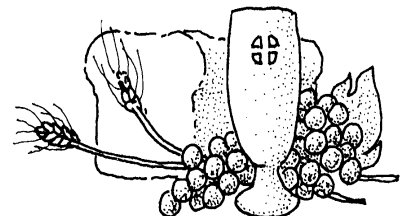
Curriculum: All Catholic schools and CCD programs must follow the same curriculum.

Each grade has specific goals, which include the knowledge of Catholic beliefs, worship and morality.

Textbooks: The ORE mandates that all Catholic schools and CCD programs use the same textbook series. The current required textbook series is *Faith and Life* by Ignatius Press.

Prayers: The ORE provides a list of prayers for memorization assigned by grade level.

Sacrament Preparation: The preparation guidelines provided by the ORE include specific concepts and knowledge that a student is expected to learn. This includes the "92 Questions" for Confirmation preparation.



## Levels of the Church's Ministry of the Word

Various individuals carry out catechesis, teaching the faith. The following is a summary of these levels.

Diocesan Bishop: The Bishop is the chief catechist and is responsible for providing sound catechesis to all people under his care. He does this by means of his own preaching and teaching, and by seeing that the necessary structures and programs exist to carry out the catechetical ministry.

Director of the ORE: Appointed by the Bishop and responsible for implementing the programs and to provide the education and on-going formation of the catechists.

Pastor: The pastor is personally responsible for the organization and administration of the religious education programs in his parish, insuring that the guidelines and policies of the ORE have been implemented.

CCD Coordinator: The coordinator(s) must have an overall view of the CCD program and will implement all ORE policies. The coordinator will provide leadership, recruit volunteers, train catechists, and be a liaison with the ORE.

Catechist: The teacher will plan, prepare and teach the lessons according to the curriculum (textbook, prayers, doctrine, etc.). The catechist and the CCD program are to provide assistance and support to the parents in the religious education of the students.

Parents: The parents are the **primary** teachers of their children, especially in the areas of religion. Even though they have received little or no formal training in religion themselves, they are still the most effective religion teachers. God gives the grace needed to fulfill the duty they assumed when they presented their children for baptism: training their children in the practice of the faith. A CCD program has a student for little more than an hour a week, the parent has much more time with the student and is the main role model for the student. All of the aforementioned levels are available to provide help and support to the parents in this task.



May the Lord direct your hearts,  
into God's love and Christ's perseverance.  
2 Thes. 3:5

## Catechist Training

Catechist Certification Program: The ORE offers course work to complete a certification program. The CCD teachers are not required, but are encouraged, to complete the requirements for certification.

Diocesan Workshops: A lesson planning workshop is provided annually. A Catechist workshop which provides ten hours of instruction is also offered each year. These workshops are held as a five-part series and the topic will change annually.

Guidelines for Successful Catechetics: A booklet prepared by the ORE with lesson planning, teaching tips, and guidelines is given to each teacher.

Additional Programs: Annual retreat, morning/afternoon of recollection, periodic newsletters, Audio-Visual library, and various one time workshops are held at the Diocese level each year.

Volunteer In-Service: St. Peter's holds periodic in-service sessions to assist with teaching and various other religious background topics.

Background Checks: All volunteers are required to undergo a background check and view a video about child abuse.



### **Course Outline**

The following is a short summary of the material covered in the textbook in each of the grades 1 - 8.

Grade 1     *Our Heavenly Father* is a simple introduction to Bible stories and teachings of the faith. The text provides an introduction to the Trinity, with emphasis on the life of Jesus and acquaints the child with Mary, angels and the saints.

Grade 2:     *Jesus Our Life* is designed to prepare the child for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. Emphasis is placed on God's mercy and love. God cares for us and shows us how we can share that love. The children will prepare for and receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

Grade 3:     *Our Life with Jesus* focuses on gaining an understanding that we belong to God's chosen people and that each of us is a child of God. Special emphasis is placed on God's law (Ten Commandments) and the importance of the Mass.

Grade 4:     *Jesus Our Guide* is a study of God's plan of salvation, how we can participate in His plan and the many ways that God helps us in our journey on earth to Heaven through His words, His law and His Church.

Grade 5:     *Credo: I Believe* shows us how we should worship God and how we should love and stay close to Him through the Mass, prayer, and the sacraments. Special emphasis will be placed on preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Grade 6:     *Following Christ* is a blueprint for a life of love. Christ calls us to follow Him, especially in the Ten Commandments and the Holy Mass. This years' focus is on the challenges of God's law and His gifts of grace that help us to fulfill His law.

Grade 7: The Life of Grace is a study of our link with God. God gives us grace through the seven sacraments. The goal for the year is to understand how grace works in our soul and how it relates to practicing virtues in our lives.

Grade 8: Our Life in the Church is the history of the Church from its founding by Christ through the structure of the Church today. Lives of the saints and other holy men and women show us that Christ has a plan for each of us, calls us to a vocation in life, whether it is married, single or religious life.

## CCD AT ST. PETER'S

The CCD Program currently holds classes on Wednesdays at St. Peter's School, 4500 Duxhall Drive. Classes are held weekly during the school year. Grades 1 and 2 meet from 4 - 5:15 PM. Grades 3 – 8 meet either at 4 - 5:15 or 6:45 - 8 PM. Parents may choose either class time, subject to availability. St. Peter's CCD Program currently meets or exceeds all guidelines and policies set by the Office of Religious Education.

### Coordination

The CCD Program has grown large enough to merit a division of duties. One or two individuals will be coordinating the program.

General Coordinator: This individual will set the calendar for the year, revise all curriculum materials, help with sacrament preparation and be in charge of any general information regarding the program and policies.

Weekly Coordinator: This individual will be in charge of the class sessions, recruiting and training of volunteers, helping with sacrament preparation and any tasks associated with the weekly running of the program.

Whoever welcomes one of these  
little children in my name  
welcomes me.



### Policies

We are constantly striving to provide the best CCD program for our students. The following policies have been set to help us reach our goal.

Student Conduct: Courtesy and respect for all people and respect for all property are expected at all times.

New Students: Students must be registered at least two days prior to attending class. The Monday deadline (for each Wednesday class session) allows us to prepare for new student(s). *No drop-in students will be allowed.*

Early Arrivals: Students arriving prior to 3:55 PM (4 PM class) are asked to remain outside the building in nice weather and in the front school hall in bad weather. Evening students should not arrive prior to 6:40 PM. At 3:55 and 6:40 PM, respectively, students are to proceed directly to their classrooms. Students are to remain in the hallway until an adult is in the classroom. All students should use the main doors of the school to enter the building. **PLEASE BE PROMPT!** Late arrivals disrupt everyone.

Absent Students: Parents are asked to call the school at 421-6299 prior to class time when a student will be absent. The phones will be staffed before 5:30 and after 6:30 PM. Attendance will be taken. Parents of absent students (non-excused) will be contacted to ensure student safety.

School Cancellations:

**In Advance:** If the public schools have cancelled classes due to bad weather, CCD classes will not be held.

**During the day:** If classes are cancelled for the same day, the public schools will be called and informed that the CCD classes will not be held. Parents will be informed via the IRIS (Immediate Response Information System) if an authorization form has been completed and is on file.

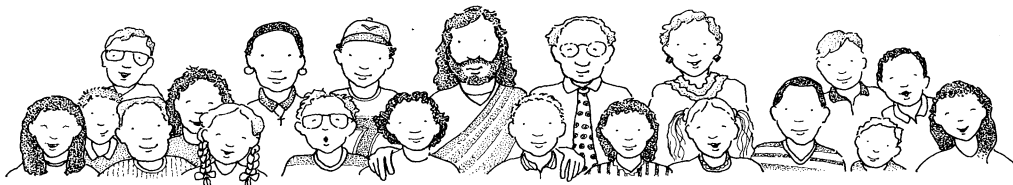
Current Phone Numbers, E-Mail Addresses and Emergency Contacts: Please inform the CCD Program of any changes made during the school year.

Disruptive Students: A parent will be contacted if a student's behavior is disruptive. It is the parents' responsibility to reinforce appropriate behavior. If the disruptive behavior persists, the student will NOT be allowed in class unless accompanied by a parent or parent approved substitute.

Dismissal: Please make arrangements for your student as to how he/she is to get home after CCD classes (walk, ride, car pool, etc.). Students must be picked up promptly. Many of our volunteers are here for both class sessions and any delay will disrupt their short supertime.

Snacks: Students should eat their snack prior to entering St. Peter's school, if at all possible. These snacks should be small, easily eaten, non-messy and **please – peanut free**. No drinks, please. Students should always pick up after their snack and throw away any trash. **ALLERGY WARNING:** Several students are allergic to specific foods and we need to provide a safe environment for all students. Please see our snack policy for additional information.

Guests: No guests are allowed without advanced approval.



### Parking Lot Safety Rules:

**Safety of our students is a top priority.**

1. Park in the lot and walk to the building to pick up your child.
2. Always have the child enter/exit the car from the passenger side or cross over to the passenger side to avoid traffic.
3. Never drive across parking spaces.
4. No parking or traffic is allowed in the drive cut out adjacent to the school entrance.
5. These rules apply to EVERYONE. Failure to abide by these rules may endanger the safety of the students.

### **Parent Communication**

Our program is designed to keep everyone informed of the many things that are happening in the CCD program and at St. Peter's. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to call the teacher, coordinators or the pastor.



Open House: An open house is held prior to the beginning of CCD classes. All are welcome to come and meet the teachers, pick up class information, tour the classrooms, pick up car pool lists and ask questions.

Prayer Folders: Each student in grades 1 - 6 will have a folder containing the text of prayers, card indicating prayers learned, and other information. The folders (and textbook) should be brought to class each week.

Grade Level Goals: This is a one-page summary of the student expectations and the class material for the year.

Parent/Teacher Communication: If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us. We will contact you anytime during the school year if there are any problems or concerns with your child. You may also request a call or a conference at any time.

Progress Reports: Reports are sent home at the end of each semester (January and May). Students will have their performance rated excellent, good, fair or poor in several categories and the students' progress in prayer memorization will be noted. The reports are sent home with students in grades 1 – 6.

HeavenWord: Our CCD newsletter is designed to keep families informed and provide on-going education. It is sent home four times a year.

Notes Home: Notes are sent home on an as needed basis and generally sent one per family. **Please** ask your student for any notes each week.

### **Class Specifics**

This section will outline our basic policies for class related items.

Registration: Early registration, held late April through mid-June, offers a discounted tuition. Regular tuition begins in mid-June. Tuition is waived for weekly volunteers.

Class Calendar: A calendar will be sent home at the beginning of each year. The schedule will be different for the 4 PM and the 6:45 PM students. Notes will be sent home if any changes are made to the calendar. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom and attend our special liturgies.

Class Size: The class size will range from 8 – 15 students. The number of grade sections, rather than the class size, will be increased, if enrollment increases. Classes taught by the School Sisters of Christ the King may be larger at their request.

Classroom Staffing: Each class will have a teacher and an aide. *All will have a background check completed by the parish.* All staff members are role models and are aware that their words and actions represent Christ and His Church. Our CCD staff consists of volunteers, please thank them for their time and efforts and pray for their needs.

Classroom Discipline: The staff is encouraged to use a positive discipline approach displaying respect for all students and staff members. Consistency, fairness and a love for all students is our goal. Teachers are encouraged to use a series of “warnings” with increasing consequences. Although some of the consequences will vary by grade and teacher, they may include loss of privileges, “time-out”, staying after class, conference with the coordinator and/or pastor and parental contact.

Homework: Due to the short class time, homework may be necessary. Completion of the assigned homework is critical to a smooth class. Parents should make a determined effort to set aside a time each week for the student to complete homework assignments. Prayers are best learned by repetition and our class time is not sufficient, in most cases, to memorize them. Therefore, the bulk of prayer memorization will need to be done at home.

And as for you brothers,  
never tire of doing what is right.  
2 Thes. 3:13



### **Sacrament Preparation**

The following is a general outline of our sacramental program. We will need a copy of your child’s baptismal certificate. If you have not yet provided us with a copy, please do so as soon as possible.

First Penance and First Holy Communion: Second grade students will receive these important sacraments. Most of the preparation will take place during class time. Parents will be provided with information at a parent meeting. Parental involvement in this preparation is essential.

An all day retreat will be held prior to the First Communion ceremony. The CCD students are not required, but are encouraged to attend. Attendance at past retreats has been at or close to 100%. Specifics about each year’s retreat day will be discussed at the parent meeting. Consult your current school year calendar for the dates of the sacrament ceremonies and the retreat day.



Older Students needing First Penance and/or First Holy Communion: Please contact the coordinator, each case is handled individually.

Confirmation: Students in fifth grade will receive the sacrament.

Older students who have not been confirmed will also be confirmed when they meet the 1996 Diocesan Synod regulations which *requires a minimum of two consecutive years of religious education attendance before receiving confirmation*. An additional class, usually held on Sunday mornings, is required to prepare for the sacrament. The preparation is essentially the same for both groups and is outlined below.

Sacrament preparation will include learning about the sacrament, the ceremony, the Holy Spirit, lives of the saints and a study of Church Doctrine (92 Questions). Students will be tested and an early start is recommended. Many of the materials, including the 92 questions, will be provided at the beginning of the year.

Students will also need to prepare a saint report and complete a 10 hour service requirement. Service hours can be completed in the community or the church. Our program does not approve specific work, but relies on parental judgement. Parents must "sign-off" the work, thus indicating that the service hours were completed.

An all day retreat will be held a few days prior to the ceremony. The CCD students are not required, but are encouraged to attend. Attendance at past retreats has been at or close to 100%. Specifics about each year's retreat will be discussed at the parent meeting.

The Office of the Bishop will schedule the actual date for the ceremony each year. A parent meeting is scheduled to discuss the sacrament, the ceremony, forms required by the parish and the Diocese, the retreat day and any other areas of concern. Consult your current year school calendar for the actual date of the ceremony and the retreat.

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents are the primary teachers and best role models for their children. Our CCD Program is provided to assist parents in the task of educating their children in our Catholic faith. The following outline will list specific parental behaviors that will provide the students good role model behavior and support the efforts of the program.



Mass and the Sacraments: Attend Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation and receive the sacraments regularly. Stress the importance of the sacraments and show reverence for all things holy.

Attendance: Students should attend classes regularly. Parents should attend the open house, sacrament meetings, and the special events (Mass, Stations of the Cross, Rosary, etc.). Parents are also invited to visit the classroom during regular class time or to help out on special days.

Prayers: Pray with your children. The easiest way to learn prayers is to pray them daily. A couple of minutes spent each day in prayer with your child will help him or her learn the assigned prayers quickly. This is as simple as praying a bedtime prayer or two together.

Homework: Set aside a specific time each week to do CCD homework. Spend this time (10-30 minutes) going over the assignment and talking about your faith with your child. Ask questions about what he or she is doing and learning.

Read Materials Sent Home: Read the newsletter and all notes sent home. Respond to information and action requested in the notes. Ask your child each Wednesday for any notes or information sent home.

\$crip Sales: Parents are encouraged to purchase \$crip certificates to support the program.

Prayer: Families are expected to pray for the success of the program and for our volunteers. Spiritual support through your prayers is needed for the continued success of the program.

Volunteer: Volunteers are needed in class, either teaching or as a classroom aide. Other ways to help include working in the office, selling \$crip or babysitting volunteers' little ones. If you are unavailable to help each week, consider volunteering to help occasionally to listen to prayers, help with a special project, help with the retreat day or work at the \$crip table on the weekend. Volunteering to bring snacks for a special occasion and remembering the students and staff in your prayers can also be a wonderful way to help the program.

Knowledge: Be a life-long learner of our faith. Attend a parish retreat, lectures or workshops offered in our parish or Diocese. Read the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church or other religious books. Learn along with your child. Many of the topics the children are studying will be a good review or provide a new outlook for you! There is always more to learn about God and our relationship with Him.



Participating in any or all of the above ways will help you to be a good Christian role model for your child. It is important to remember that no one is perfect, and that by trying your best to communicate the importance of God in your life to your children and others around you, you will be fulfilling your duty to teach the practice of our faith and to share the Good News with others.

May God bless you and your family!

St. Peter's CCD Program