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# CATECHETICAL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2010-2011

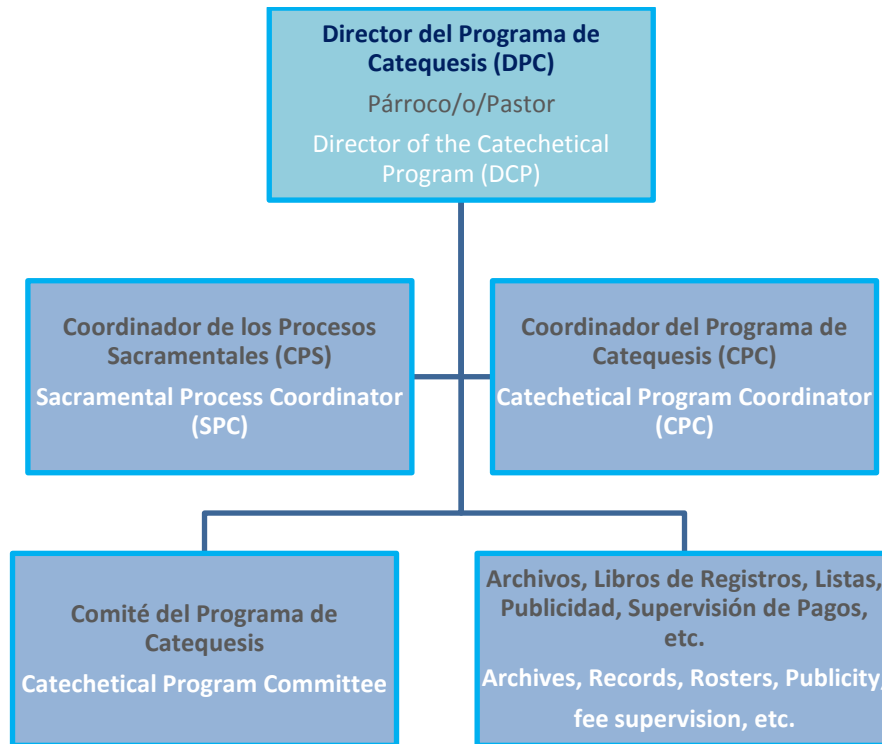
Catechist Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Lady of Guadalupe Catechetical Program

### Policies and Procedures

The following program of Catechesis applies only to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish due to the high number of enrolled students that receive the Catechesis each year as well as from past enrolled student statistics and experiences. Due to the high number of students we will be considering a new program which will be on a trial basis for an entire year.

In the organization of the Catechism Program, first and for most we have the priest as a director of the Catechesis. The priest will serve as spiritual guide which is one of his many assigned responsibilities.



- **The function of the Catechist Director (C.D.P):** is to administer and supervise the program and that the program takes place accordingly. First and foremost they should make sure that the entire program has the same direction and objective and that at the same time they do not differ from the ones that The Archdiocese of Denver follows.

The function of the director of the Catechesis (pastor) is to supervise the program that it is functional and to change whatever may be needed to ensure the growth of the program. He will ask for a monthly report from the Catechist Coordinator, Sacramental Process Coordinator or the

Committee of the Catechist. This report will indicate how the program is running. In this report these coordinators/committee could add their suggestions of what is needed or needs revision. The director of the Catechesis (pastor) can request meetings that were not scheduled and only he has the right to do this. If you are absent at any meeting we will assume that you are agreeing to everything that will be decided in the meeting, in case you can not attend you should notify the Coordinator before the meeting.

If for any reason the D.C.P. will be absent he will assign the C.C.P or a member of the committee of the Catechist.

The D.C.P. together with the members of the catechist committee (the Catechist coordinator, Sacrament Process Coordinator, at least two catechists, two parents, and one deacon) will direct the Catechetical Program. **Keep in mind that the D.C.P. who is the assigned pastor has the right to change or make decisions according to his pastoral beliefs.**

The D.C.P. will maintain a file for each catechist and his/her assistant. These files will contain a background check, any workshop certificates, a certificate of the care of a child, the code of conduct (assigned by the Archdiocese of Denver) signed by the Catechist, or her assistant, and a copy of this document of Catechist Program). **If the Catechists or assistants do not comply with providing these documents we will be forced to take them out of any catechist program or events.**

**The Catechism Program Coordinator Responsibilities (C.P.C):** The Catechist Program Coordinator will be responsible for the preparation and formation courses of the Catechist and catechist assistants. Furthermore, they will have to organize workshops and prepare courses and confirm the attendance of the Catechist and the catechist assistants. If for any reason the Catechist is not available or is absent with no justification you should notify the director of Catechism (pastor) and the committee. They will look at each situation individually and take the appropriate actions required. This person will monitor the Catechist very closely to make sure that the teachings are aligned with every other Catechist.

The C.P.C. will make sure that the Catechist has the appropriate materials to teach his/her courses. Every catechist will have their own textbook and every student will have their own. Any material beyond the textbook will not be needed because the textbook has the appropriate material that should be discussed according to their age group. The cost of any additional materials that are used will not be covered because it is up to the discretion of the Catechist, and will have to be paid for out of pocket.

This C.P.C. will be the first to arrive at the scheduled class time and will solve any problems that occur during classes and/or will direct them to the appropriate department to help solve their problem. This person will assure that every group has their classroom available for their scheduled class time, they need to make sure that the classroom is clean and ready to use (they will coordinate with the office and the appropriate maintenance personnel). They will make sure that the Catechists are using the appropriate material and if necessary to order more supplies if needed. They will make sure that the students are in their classrooms and not outside the building or in the street.

The (C.P.C) will take attendance of the Catechists and if any Catechist is absent they will need to get the appropriate coverage or he/she will act as the substitute for that class.

The (C.P.C) will make sure that the Catechists are encouraging the students to attend mass weekly. If any student misses more than three justified and unjustified absence from class or mass the C.P.C. must notify the Catechism director and the committee which will take the appropriate measure regarding each individual case.

**The Catechetical Program Committee:** The committee will consist of the Catechism Director(Pastor), the Catechism Coordinator, the Sacrament Process Coordinator, at least two Catechists, and at least two parents, and one deacon.

This committee will work together to make any decisions that are related to the Catechism Program.

Any problems that exist, especially the most relevant should be brought to the committee and the committee members will take the appropriate actions to solve the issue/problem.

- **Registration:** in order for a child to be registered he/she should abide by the following requirements.
  1. A registration fee of \$120.00, which will cover the cost of all materials and expenses for the year.
  2. Provide a Baptismal Certificate and original birth certificate (bring your own photocopies of these documents).
  3. In addition bring two photographs the size of 4.5cm x 3.5cm of the person who is registering (similar to passport photo, this will be used for identification and for our records).

No one will be allowed to register without these requirements. If any exceptions are made the Process Coordinator of Sacraments should be notified. The Process Coordinator of Sacraments will then notify the director of the Catechism program. Every student must be registered otherwise they will not be able to receive their Sacrament/s. There will be no exception for any student not registered or who does not attend class.

The C.P.C (Catechism Program Coordinator) is not permitted to make any exceptions. This includes the children of catechists or people who belong to a parish group. It is not permitted that the Catechist has an assistant who does not have the required sacraments unless he/she is a student at the time. Neither a catechist nor the C.P.C. may teach private classes to a child or an adult (this also includes priests, religious personnel, seminarians or any other competent person). Furthermore, they may not give private classes or give the students special homework assignments that can be considered as class time. This is to prevent surprises at the end of the year (ex. people who did not attend classes and at the end of the year show up expecting to receive the Sacrament)

- **Changes:** The students, parents or guardians that desire to change the time, catechist, class language, or room must come into the office and speak to the Sacramental Process Coordinator (S.PC). Any changes must be made within the first month of classes. Changes have to be done in person. To complete this change a form must be filled out for any request. This is the only way an adult student, parent, or guardian can accomplish a change. **The C.C.P. is not able to make changes because they do not have access to the files and is not part of their responsibilities.**
- **Clothes:** The church is a fully religious institution with good customs, one of their priorities is teaching the virtues of a good education. Having said that we ask the C.C.P., the catechist and their assistants to advise the students to dress in a manner appropriate when attending classes as well as mass. Saint Paul in the first letter stated “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (1 Cor 6, 19-20). One of the obligations of the catechist is to encourage the students to think more deeply about this topic. Encourage them to not dress “gothic” or to have piercing (on the eyebrows, nose, tongue etc.). Also discourage them from combing their hair in an outlandish manner. Please let them know that those actions are contrary to what the Catholic Church teaches. We are charged in the Catholic-Christian formation and should take part in it. We must remember that we are dealing with adolescents and they are highly influenced by society which may cause them to act out. Therefore, we need to be patient with them and not embarrass them in front of their peers and always treat them with respect. **No catechist is permitted to impose or obligate any student to obey these rules.**
- **Mass:** As Catholic-Christians the ministries of our faith are centered in the Eucharist which is a sign of the real presence of Jesus Christ. The catechism classes will not be of

any use without our attendance at holy mass. The students accompanied by their parents/guardian should take part in the Eucharist (mass), and should not be absent. The absence at mass will be considered a missed class.

The C.C.P. should put extra interest in making sure that this is achieved with the help of the Catechist as well as their assistants. Catechists should attend mass with their students but they can also attend other masses, and they must always attend mass.

- **Class:** The Catechumen, First Communion and Confirmation classes for the children and teenagers will be held for a span of one year and will be two hours a week. The children/adolescents must be punctual.

All the students may have up to three justified absences with a verbal or written statement from their parents or guardian. This should be communicated to the Catechist, and not to the C.C.P. More than three absences may result in the suspension or cancellation the student which will include the suspension of their Sacrament. Not attending mass which is mandatory will count towards a class absence.

The students will have scheduled vacations i.e. Christmas and Holy Week. If there are other holidays that coincide with class time, the C.C.P. will decide if it is observed and inform the Catechists, students, and parents.

- **Community Service:** The students that are in Confirmation classes including adults in catechism and catechumens should perform 12 hours of community service at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. The community service hours should be performed only on the parish premises. Teenagers who are performing their community service should be accompanied by their parent or guardian: this is the only way they will be allowed to do community service in our premises.

Parent may help complete up to five hours of community service with their adolescents. A parent will not be allowed to perform community service hours unless the student is performing it at the same time. Community Service hours should be performed with the designated person that they have been assigned to as well as the hours they were assigned to. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that their hours are recorded correctly.

- **Announcements** – When the catechist, catechist assistant, students and families need to be made aware if there are any changes, updates or other important information regarding the Catechism Program it will be noted in the weekly parish bulletin, this will be the main mode of information for the Catechism Program. As soon as the course begins there will be a reminder to the Catechist, catechist assistant students and families of this source of information (the weekly parish bulletin). They must also know that there will not be any other source for updates unless there is an emergency. At that point we will notify them of the change. There should not be any expectations of updates in the form of memos or flyers.

The Catechist should be available to be the first to inform the students and parents. This may be done verbally or with a written statement which could be written on the information board in class (please have students write important information in their notebooks especially the information that is documented in the weekly parish bulletin. Everyone who attends mass needs to make sure that they pick up a bulletin; they should also be reminded that it can also be downloaded in our website at [www.ologden.org](http://www.ologden.org) or at [www.seekandfind.com](http://www.seekandfind.com).

- **Materials:** The materials that are handed out for the course of Catechism will only be given once a year. It is the responsibility of the student and parents to take good care of them. In case the materials are lost the student's must let the Catechist know. The family will have to pay for new replacements. The material is essential for this course and the preparation of the student. The Catechist as well as the C.C.P. may ask the student to replace their material if the material (bible, book or notebook) appears to be in an extremely unacceptable condition.
- **Meetings:** The C.P.C together with the. Catechesis Committee will plan meetings for the parents and adult students currently attending classes. These meetings should be held every three months. The C.P.C. will head these meetings and the D.C.P. will intervene only if necessary. During these meetings the C.P.C.. will inform the parents of any advances or problems with their child or if there are any situations that need clarification. It would be appropriate to review the information that is in the back of the registration form to reiterate the important points. It is mandatory that the parents and the adult taking catechism classes to attend these meetings according to the commitment on the registration form that was signed the date of registration.
- **Retreat:** Student as well as their parent/guardians should attend a spiritual retreat. This retreat will take place approximately around the end of the year. There will be a cost for this retreat which should be paid by the parents/guardian of the child and by adults attending catechism classes. This retreat should be planned two to three months before it takes place to assure that all needs are met and that there is ample time for parents/guardians who work to ask for permission from their jobs. The retreat will be the responsibility of the C.P.C. to plan, organize and is carried out successfully with everyone's help.
- **Godparents:** the requirement is only one Godparent either female/male of which should be 18yearsrs or older. The godparents should have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist and if married, should be married by the church.
- **Attire** - For Baptism, they will need a candle and a bible, and dress in white.

For Confirmation and first Communion, males should dress in a white shirt and dark slacks (no jeans), females need to dress in a white dress appropriate for church. (No bare Shoulders.)

**The Catechist:** The Catechist will be the main person involved with the students and doing your function in the catechisms will be essential. A Catechist must have the

preparation, be obedient and faithful, which are two main virtues that Christ has taught us. . If the catechist does not have these two qualities it will be very difficult for her/him to perform the duties within the program

The Catechist must always be obedient to the priest who represents Christ and be loyal to the Catholic Church and its doctrine The Catechist must keep in mind that the good or bad formation of a Christian or a future Christian depends on our teaching. Therefore, we ask that what you teach be in compliance with the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. For the best outcome of the program the Catechist should be the first one to adopt the decisions of the Catechism Director (pastor) as well as the Catechism Program Coordinator have made for the better function of the program.

. It is the responsibility of the Catechist to comply as follows:

- a) Be faithful and obedient to Christ and His church as well as being open to donating your time and dedication to the teaching of the Catechesis. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Being open to the time that will be assigned to you (remember that the class times will be scheduled in the parish office). Be on time for your class and be kind to the students. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) To avoid any situation that could potentially harm our church and for the protection of the Catechist you must follow the following guidelines:
  - I. Take the classes that are required and offered by the Archdiocese of Denver and which are the classes that we at Our Lady of Guadalupe require of all Catechists. The class name is “Protect the Child” this class will show you the correct and appropriate way of interacting with a child. After the class is accomplished you will get a certificate which gives you accreditation in dealing with minor children. A copy of the certificate will be retained and recorded in the office. \_\_\_\_\_
  - II. Give the information that is necessary to conduct a background check. Please remember that this information completely confidential and no one but the priest will have access to it. \_\_\_\_\_
  - III. Read, review, and sign the Code of Conduct that is presented by the Archdiocese of Denver. Once this is signed, you should submit it to the pastor who will place it in you file. \_\_\_\_\_
  - IV. Read, review, and sign the Catechist regulations program of Our Lady of Guadalupe. You should submit it to the pastor who will place it in you file. \_\_\_\_\_

- V. The Catechist needs to be aware that all documents must be submitted and if there are any items that are missing he/she will not be allowed to be part of the Catechetical Program.\_\_\_\_\_
- d. The Catechist must attend all workshops that are required (remember that it is necessary to learn before you can teach others). Each Catechist should attend at least one preparation workshop and always remember to bring the certificate of completion which will be placed in you file.\_\_\_\_\_
- e. The Catechist should be disposed and open to having the Catechetical Program Coordinator as their leader and consequently be agreeable of the necessary decisions that are made by the Coordinator. The Catechist must know that his/her cooperation is necessary; they must follow what the C.P.C. has addressed. Remember that the C.P.C. is the intermediary between them and the Parish Catechesis Committee and the voice and representative Director of the Parish Catechesis Committee.\_\_\_\_\_

Lastly, the Catechist can not be autonomous and must remember that they are collaborators with the pastor of the Catechesis. They must also be collaborators of the formation of the students, which must be no different than what the Catholic Church teaches.\_\_\_\_\_

**Classes:**

- a. You need to prepare your classes in alignment with the Catechism book. This book will be provided by the C.P.C.\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Be punctual to your classes, be kind and polite to the students (remember that this is essential to demonstrate good Christian values). Start the class with a prayer and take the student roll call (remember that class attendance is an important factor for the new Catechism program).\_\_\_\_\_
- c. File and give the attendance sheet to the C.P.C, who will turn it into the office of S.P.C (Sacramental Process Coordinator). The catechist must be very careful not misplace the attendance sheet. On this sheet you must also add the students that did not attend class, their name and pertinent information.\_\_\_\_\_
- d. The estimated class time is two hours. Due to the extended time of class you need to give the students a break every hour of will consist of 10 to 15 minutes. Remember that prolonged time could be ineffective. Classes should be held in the classroom which was assigned, if there is a need to change the location of the class you need to notify the C.P.C.\_\_\_\_\_

- e. The Catechist can help the C.P.C. with the guidance of the students, if they are not in their classroom, they need to direct them back into their class. They should direct the student back to their parent at the conclusion of class.\_\_\_\_\_
- f. **At no time or for any reason** is the Catechist allowed to be isolated with the student before or after class. If they need to take care of any situation with the student they must take the matter outside the class room or in an area were other people are present. Catechists are not allowed to give personal Catechesis classes or see the student outside of class unless the C.P.C. or the Parish Catechesis Committee has permitted it.\_\_\_\_\_

The catechist can not go out on any outing with the students, if any catechist is planning an outing this matter must be taken to the Catechist Committee and they will evaluate it. If it is approved you must get a written consent from the Catechesis Committee, please remember that these outings can not happen frequently.\_\_\_\_\_

It is strictly prohibited for the catechist to go on field trips of any type with any student. If any Catechist goes on a field trip with any student/s without the written and signed consent of the Catechist Committee they will automatically be dismissed from the Catechetical program.\_\_\_\_\_

- g. No student is allowed to be disrespectful to any Catechist. If any student disrespects a Catechist they should notify the C.P.C. as soon as possible so they can take action on the matter. The Catechist must remember not to get into the deeper issue with the students and allowing the C.P.C. take care of the situation.\_\_\_\_\_
- h. If for any reason the Catechist has to miss class they need to notify the C.P.C. ideally at least two days prior to class time so there is time for a substitute teacher can be found.\_\_\_\_\_
- i. The Catechist must prepare an exam for the students and they must also evaluate individually each student's advancement in the class. The Catechist should advice the students not to miss an exam and if they do miss the exam they must take the exam during the next attended class.\_\_\_\_\_
- j. It is the Catechist responsibility to inform the students of any updates or changes of the Catechism program (this can be found in the weekly bulletin specifically in the updates section). Out of courtesy these updates must be reviewed and if possible written on the board and the students can take notes in their notebook. Please invite the student to take one home. This will help them with being more responsible and to develop their skills.\_\_\_\_\_

- k. The Catechist must remember that the C.P.C. is in charge of the Coordination Program, should fully support each other.\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:**

- a. The material which will be required for Catechism will consist of a textbook, a bible and other items such as pencils, crayons, and scissors for the students. The items listed depend on the students' group level.\_\_\_\_\_
- b. The Catechist should use all the material that will be provided and if other resources are wanted such as the internet or other items will be the Catechist discretion in supplying it (this will include any additional copies). No copies will be made in the office. Catechists please note that the material that is provided has been reviewed by the Catechism program and is considered as basics for teaching Catechesis. Any other material that is retrieved from the internet must be reviewed and approved by the Catechesis committee.\_\_\_\_\_
- c. That is why the preparation classes are recommended so the Catechist can be fully prepared to be a Catechist. The textbooks provided will have all the material needed for the learning that is required for receiving a Sacrament.\_\_\_\_\_
- d. The day of registration we will be asking for 2 photographs, one will be used for identification for the Catechetical program. This identification must be worn in a visible place by the student when they attend class and have it on hand in case it is asked for. This will help us prevent any possible problems. The Catechist will supervise that the students have their identification visible.\_\_\_\_\_
- e. If any Catechist needs extra items besides what has been provided, they will need a written request to the C.C.P. This request must be provided at least one to two weeks prior to the date the item is needed. This material must not be excessive and must be within the budget for the group. The Catechists should recognize and be conscious of the parish situation and help save and conserve learning materials.\_\_\_\_\_
- f. We ask the Catechist to put special emphasis in supporting the parish by informing the parents that the cost of the registration is not only for the materials needed but also for the usage of the electricity, water, parish insurance, maintenance, as well as other services that the parish must pay.\_\_\_\_\_

**Student responsibilities:** the most important priority of the student is to learn the Catechism of Catholic-Christian doctrine. The student must have a desire to be in the Catechism and must accept to be taught by the Catechist.

- a) The students must get to class on time. If they arrive just before attendance is taken, will be counted as a tardy. Three tardies are considered one class absence.
- b) The student may have up to three absences, which should be authorized by their parent /guardian. They should take a written excuse to the catechist not the C.P.C. indicating the reason for the absence. If a note is not given to the Catechist it will be seen as an unjustified absence.
- c) If the student has more than three justified or unjustified absences the parents must contact the Sacrament Process Coordinator, they must monitor the student's status. This must be done the first month of the last absence. It is the Catechist's responsibly to inform the student and parent/guardian of what was decided.
- d) If for any reason the student has four or more absences, justified or unjustified they will be dropped from the catechism program. There will be no exceptions. Any action taken will be decided by the Catechism Committee.
- e) The teaching and the learning will be the priority for each individual student. At the end of the semester or at the end of the course the student will be given an exam. This will show the student's progress. Any student that does not take the exam will be dropped from the course. This exam will not determine if the student will receive his/her Sacrament.
- f) The catechist must do their best in advising the students to make it a habit of dressing in a respectful catholic manner when coming to class. Try to discourage students from dressing "gothic", or having piercing in their eyelids, lips or tongue, or for males wearing make-up. Also try to discourage the students from coming to class/mass with extreme hair styles. Remind them that the church is a place where good morals are taught.
- g) Any student that disrupts class or and/or is disrespectful of the catechist will be suspended indefinitely and could be dismissed from the catechism program.
- h) If any student has a problem with the Catechist, he/she should let the C.P.C. know as soon as possible so the problem can be resolved.
- i) The students will have scheduled vacations (Christmas and holy week) and only in case a holiday lands on the weekend will be allowed to take it off, only if the C.C.P has given the approval of the suspension of classes for all groups.

- j) The use of cell phones during class will not be allowed. Only in case of an emergency the student must immediately notify the catechist. No other electronic devices may be used during class or mass (I pod, CD player, lap top etc.). The use of these electronic devices could result in suspension from the Catechism program.
- k) Student must complete 12 hours of community service at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Students who are required to do the community service are the students that are enrolled in Confirmation classes or adults taking Catechism classes. The adolescents must be accompanied by an adult. The adult could assist the student with his or her hours. However, they may only help the student with no more than five hours. The student must be present when the adult is helping him/her with their hours and they must be helping them as well. Any student not capable or has a conflict for accomplishing his/her hours must speak to the Sacrament Process Coordinator to make the necessary arrangements.
- l) The students as well as the parent/guardian must attend mass every Sunday; remember if the student misses mass, it will count as a class absence.

**Parents or Guardians:** The parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for the religious education of their children. The main focus of the Catechetical Program is that the Catechist will be there to support the student. For this reason the parent or guardian should be interested in the religious education of their children is the best it can possibly be.

The parent's or guardian's responsibility in the Catechism program is as follows:

- a) Help their child complete all the requirements of the Catechetical Program. For example being the Catechism teacher at home.
- b) Make sure that your child is attending class and mass.
- c) Attend Sunday mass and teach your child how to behave in mass and in the church.
- d) Be aware of all the information given in the Catechetical Program. This information will be found in the weekly parish bulletin. You can take one home as you leave mass. Another way to be involved is when you pick your child, ask the Catechist how your child is doing and if there is any new important information that needs to be considered.

- e) Attend all scheduled trimester meetings and try to accomplish what was discussed in the meetings.
- f) Attend the retreat that is indicated in the Catechetical Program and if possible help as a church volunteer in the organization of the retreat. Also, remember that for this retreat there will be a necessary donation, having said that we would like to invite parents/guardians to be generous.
- g) Assist your child with the community service. We especially ask that you accompany them when they are required to perform the community service.
- h) We ask that you understand the rules and regulations that have been put in place for the Catechism Program. Furthermore, we ask that you read and review the obligations and the commitments that you will sign at registration. This will be a commitment not to us but to the religious education of your child.
- i) Parents are responsible for the calendar until the end of the current period enrollment.

At the End of the term

- a. The students that have followed all the requirements that have been stated in the program will receive their Sacrament.

According to our parish Catechetical Program the course will last one year for children and teenagers and approximately eight months for adults. Furthermore, there is a series of rules that the students must follow while in class. If any student has an abundance of absences of classes/mass and did not receive the full preparation and/or has not been compliant to ALL the regulations stated in this book they will **not** receive their Sacrament.\_\_\_\_\_

The students who have been compliant with following of the preparations and regulations will receive their Sacrament. If a student has not received his/her preparation in this program will not receive their Sacrament in this parish. **There will be no exceptions** (this also includes students who belong to a catholic school or have received their catechetical preparation in another institution). Only the Catechesis Committee will make any decisions which will be carefully reviewed on an individual basis as the issue/concern arises.\_\_\_\_\_

If a committee member does not agree with the acceptance of this student into the program/classes we will not accept him/her into the catechesis program/classes. In other words, the decision has to be unanimous. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. The celebration of the Sacraments which will occur during the month of May of June will depend on the itinerary of the Archdiocese of Denver provided to our parish. All this information will be provided at least one month prior to the celebrations in the parish bulletin. It is the responsibility of the Catechist to fully inform the students of these dates and clarify any questions that the student or parents may have. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Our Lady of Guadalupe parish depends on the Liturgy group which supports all celebrations including the Catechism Program. The committee will be in charge of organizing and making all the necessary arrangements with the liturgy group that are required for the success of the celebrations. A Catechist may not organize their celebration nor make arrangements for the Liturgy. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Catechists are not allowed to ask the student or family members for any economic assistance (money), if a Catechist is found doing this, he/she will be dismissed from the program without any right of consideration. \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand all of the above concerning this program and I agree.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

Office Seal