



Department of Faith Formation



Parent Handbook

Revised August 2009

Saint Jane Frances de Chantal
Department of Faith Formation
8499 Virginia Avenue
Pasadena, Maryland 21122

In order to insure quality Religious Education at Saint Jane Frances de Chantal Parish, as well as providing a safe, nurturing, and faith-filled environment for all our students while in our care, both parent/guardian and children should read the following procedures and policies.

These policies are established to provide uniformity of our programs and we recognize that some families may have special needs.

Parents are encouraged to call the Religious Education Office at 410 437-4727
if there are any problems or emergencies.

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Registration

All Registration Forms and information are posted on the Parish Web Site.

<http://www.stjane.org/Faith%20Formation/Faith%20Formation.htm>

Registration Policy:

New Students

Pre-K4 - Children should be 4 years old by September 1st.

Kindergarten – Children should be 5 years old by September 1st

First Grade – children should be 6 years old by September 1st.

A Family Registration Form must be completely filled out with Family information.

A Student Registration Form must be completed for each child being registered for the program.

All registration material should be received in the parish office by August 1st.

The children will be assigned to a class and parents will receive this information by email in early September.

All families must be registered members of the parish.

Returning Students

A Student Registration Form must be completed for each returning student.

We will continue to use the information currently on file unless, any family information is changing, then a Family Registration form should accompany the Student Registration form.

Children currently registered in our program are promoted to the next grade level, providing they have attended a sufficient number of classes.

Classrooms

Parents are asked to take their Children to there classroom no earlier than 9:55 A.M. All Catechists have been instructed to be in the classroom by 9:45 A.M., so that they can begin class promptly at 10:00 A.M.

Tuition Policy

Tuition fees help to defray the cost materials, programs for special liturgies, copyright permissions, retreats, etc.

Book Fees pay for the cost of the Student Textbooks

Book Fee - \$30.00 (Can not be waived)

The book fee must be paid at the time of Registration to ensure that they will have a text book when we begin in September. The book fees are not refundable.

(Tuition Policy Continued)

The tuition fees are:

- One Child - Tuition \$65.00 Book Fee \$30.00 for a total of \$95.00
- Two Children – Tuition \$120.00 Book Fees \$60.00 for a total of \$180.00
- Three Children – Tuition – \$90.00 Book Fee \$90.00 for a total of \$180.00
- Four Children – Tuition \$ 60.00 Book Fee \$120.00 for a total of \$180.00
- Five or More – Tuition \$30.00 and Book Fee per Child is \$30.00 per child.

Tuition payment is due as follows:

- New Students: \$30.00 non refundable Book fee per student with the registration and balance by August 1st.
- Returning students: :\$30.00 non refundable Book fee t per student with the registration and balance by August 1st.

Please note that for both the regular Religious Education Program and Sacramental Programs NO CHILD WILL EVER BE DENIED PARTICIPATION IN ANY PART OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM BECAUSE OF A FAMILY'S LACK OF ABILITY TO PAY TUITION. If a family is unable to pay the tuition for any reason, please complete a hardship request form and return to the Minister of Religious Education. Your request will be held in confidence. If we have not heard from you, we expect that you will honor the tuition policy.

All parents who have their tuition waived are required to volunteer in our program as an aide or in the office on Sunday mornings.

The Text Book fee can not be waived. Payment arrangements may be made to pay the \$30.00 fee per child.

Mass Attendance

An integral part of our children's faith formation is participation in Sunday Liturgy. While attending classes is important for the practical knowledge that is learned, faith should also be experienced. To be part of the parish family, to worship together each Sunday is to be part of faith in action. We expect that you will give your child both experiences – classroom and Church – so that he/she will be encouraged to practice and live his/her faith. Mass attendance is a component of their Religious Education Class attendance.

Visitors/ Friends Attending Classes

Only students that are registered may attend classes. This is due to the liability that the parish would incur if we allow friends of students to attend. We have no formal relationship with these children or their parents. If you allow friends to spend the night on Saturday please remember they **CAN NOT** attend Religious education classes on Sunday Mornings with your children.

Movement between Buildings

Attendance will be taken in the classroom before the children leave the school building. Catechists are to be sure that all children remain with them during moves between the church and the school on days that the Sunday School of Religion attends the 10:30 A.M. Mass. Catechists have been instructed not to stop to talk with anyone once the group leaves the building. When Mass is over the children must return to the school building for dismissal. Children may not be released from their care in the church or in the parking lot. Attendance will be taken once you are in the church for a second time to ensure that every arrived one safely.

Fellowship Sundays

Parents are encouraged to participate in the fellowship Sundays. Catechists are not allowed to take their classes to fellowship in place of or during class.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE:

The Religious Education Program calendar year consists of 30 classes during the year from September to the beginning of May. During these weeks there are often Penance Services and other speaker presentations vital to the faith formation of the children and youth. Each class is one hour-forty minutes in length. The fifty hours per year of instruction is truly not sufficient to complete all the lessons planned for the year. If the parents do not reinforce at home what has been taught in class, it will be difficult for the children to retain in such a short time the teachings that will form the very foundation of their faith and spirituality.

- Every student is expected to attend all scheduled religious education classes in addition to participation in Sunday Liturgy.

If a student has more than 3 unexcused absences, he/she may be asked to repeat that grade. If arrangements are made with the Catechist to make up the work missed, the unexcused absence will be changed to an excused absence

IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT FROM CLASS:

· Please call the office (410 437-4727). Leave the following information:

1. Your child's full name
2. Your child's grade and teacher's name

Absence:

Excused – A note was provided by the parents and make up work has been completed and accepted by the catechist.

Unexcused – The child was absent with no notification from the parents and no make up work completed.

Tardiness:

Frequent tardiness can cause interruptions in class. It is important that children be on time for class. Children who arrive after 10:00 A.M. will be marked late.

Sports/Cheerleading Absences:

Absence for Sports/Cheerleading events is not acceptable.

While we recognize that sports and cheerleading help to make our children well rounded individuals, we ask that parents not allow the children to miss class due to sporting events or cheerleading. In case of any absence, parents should check with their child's catechist for any make up work.

Family Concerns:

If there is a severe illness or death in the family, please notify the Faith Formation Office. Should you need support, we would like to be present for you and your child in difficult times. We will also notify your child's Catechist.

Medical Concerns:

This information should be included on the student registration form. Please make us aware if your child has any allergies, special medications, or special needs, please inform the teacher. While we always try to make accommodations for our families, we cannot be responsible for dispensing medications; and children should not be bringing any medications to class. Also, if your child has any learning disabilities we would like to provide whatever accommodations available to assist your child in having a good experience in the program.

Arrival and Departure:

Parents are expected to bring their children on time. The volunteer teachers spend time preparing their lessons, and it is important that they have enough time to present them. Students arriving late can disrupt the schedule. Parents are expected to bring the children to their classroom and pick them up based on the dismissal policy. Safety is our number one priority. For students on Sunday morning, class begins promptly at 10:00 a.m. so arrival should be no later than 9:55 a.m. Dismissal is at 11:40 a.m. Also, the Catechist may have plans of his/her own after class, so a prompt pick-up is expected.

PROGRESS EVALUATION REPORTS:

Students are evaluated in the following areas:

Attendance Class Participation Grade Level Understanding Conduct

These four components determine how well the student is doing in the Religious Education Classes.

Evaluation Reports are distributed to students twice annually. Teachers may give quizzes and chapter unit tests in order to measure understanding.

- Attendance at both Class and Mass form the attendance component for Religious Education.
- Progress reports are used to advise parents/guardian of the student's progress.
- If class scores show a lack of understanding on a Church teaching, the Catechist will cover the material again.

Classroom Policies:

Good conduct, cooperation, attention and courtesy are expected during class time. Students are expected to respect the property of other students.

These rules are simple and no different than what we would expect during regular school day classes.

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated, with respect and kindness
- Teachers, children and students should be treated with respect at all times.
- Students must use assigned seating.
- Care and respect must be shown for the school and parish property.
- Books must be brought to class unless the Catechist advises otherwise.
- Absolutely no cell phones, hand held computer games, or other electronic devices.
- Absolutely no gum, candy, food or beverages allowed in the school or church property

Communication:

The preferred method of communication is by E-mail. All Catechists have an email address on the St. Jane Frances Email server. All Parents must provide us with a current email address.

We will no longer utilize mail due the higher cost of postage. All Communication will be emailed. If you don't have an email address please consider getting a free one from gmail, msn, or yahoo. All communications will be posted to the Faith Formation Web site at stjane.org.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, feel free to email them to us – either to the Catechist or to the Minister of Faith Formation.

DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS:

We believe that you send your children to our program with the direct purpose of assisting you in bringing your children closer to God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: to model for them the way to walk with Jesus in their lives; to respect and love the sacraments; to understand this family we call Church. To accomplish this there has to be an environment of peace and respect. Sometimes to attain this learning atmosphere, discipline is necessary.

Based on Dr. Glasser's "10 Steps to Discipline," we have formed the following policy in relation to classroom behavior expectation:

- Ask the child what he/she is doing (to help identify inappropriate behavior).
- Discuss with children what is appropriate for classroom.
- Advise the parent of repetitive disruptive behavior.
- Set a probationary period for youngsters to adjust.

Catechists are most agreeable to discussing behavior difficulties with parents. The Minister of Religious Education is also available for conferences.

Any student who consistently disrupts a class or who continually fails to cooperate with the catechist and other students within a class shall be subject to the following procedures.

1. First incident - The Catechist will speak with the student then, after class, notify the Director of Religious Education.
2. Second incident - Catechist will send the student to the Principal's/Director's office. The Principal or Director will contact the parents, and the student will not return to class that day.
3. Third incident - The Director will contact the parents to schedule a conference about the situation. During this conference, the student will be asked to enter into a contract which will seek to resolve the problem. The contract will name the problem situation, the corrective action agreed upon and the penalty for failure to comply with the contract. The contract will be kept on file in the Religious Education office.

If there is no improvement, in fairness to the Catechist and other students in the class, the Minister of Religious Education will request that the Parents attend class with the student.

Dismissal Plan:



At 11:35, the first bell is sounded for all classes on the 1st floor (Grades PK, K, 1, 2, and 3) of the building. The children on the first floor are to remain in their classrooms until they are picked up by their parents. When the second bell sounds at 11:40, the classes on the 2nd floor of the school (Grades 4-8) are dismissed and should be brought to the first floor hallways by their teachers. All children will wait in the School building until their parents come for them. The Teachers from the second floor will be hall monitors and outdoor monitors of the school building.

All classes are dismissed on the Second Bell at 11:40.

For the safety of all our children, we ask that the following guidelines be followed:

Children in Classrooms (Grades Pre-K to Grade 3) on the First Floor are to remain in their rooms until the parents pick them up.

All Children are to be picked up inside the building by the parents.

Parents are asked to park their cars and come into the building to pick up their children.

No cars are allowed in the circle in the front of the building.

Class Cancellation:

Whenever Anne Arundel County declares a weather emergency or Anne Arundel County Schools are closed due to weather, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SESSIONS WILL BE CANCELED. We request that you do not call the Rectory for this information. We will always leave a message on the office answering machine (410-437-4727) as to any special closings, etc. You can also check the parish web site at <http://www.stjane.org>. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to help out as aids in the classrooms. If you wish to help in the classroom, you must be STAND certified. The Catechists would appreciate the help with the lessons and projects presented during class time.

Annual Pancake Breakfast

Parents are encouraged to help with the Annual Pancake Breakfast. Help is needed to work in the Kitchen, selling raffle tickets, baking cakes, and working at the various wheels at the breakfast. If you can help please contact the Faith Formation Office at 410 437-4727.

Partners In Faith Formation (Education Committee)

Jesus formed His disciples into a community of faith. He instructed them, prayed with them, showed them how to live, and entrusted to them the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. After His death and Resurrection, He sent them the Holy Spirit and commissioned them to go out and teach all nations. The fundamental task of catechesis is, therefore, to form Disciples of Christ and to send them forth in mission.

Partners In Faith Formation is a group of Parents, Teachers, and Religious Education Administrators working together to:

- Promote the knowledge of faith
- Promote meaningful participation in liturgical worship and the sacramental life of the Church.
- Catechesis integrates moral formation into a Christian way of life.
- Teach how to pray with Christ, in Christ and in communion with the Church.
- Initiates the Christian into the life of the Parish community and fosters active participation in the mission of the Church
- Promote the missionary spirit that prepares Christians to be witnesses to Christ in society.

These six tasks of catechesis constitute a unified whole. While each task realizes the goal of catechesis, all of the tasks are interdependent. For catechesis to be effective, no task should be separated.

The Committee will establish policies regarding the parish Religious Education Program. These policies will be reviewed by the Minister of Religious Education and the Pastor for consistency.

The Partners in Faith Formation will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Notice of the meeting will be announced in the parish bulletin. The Committee will make sure that these tasks are implemented into the Saint Jane Frances de Chantal Religious Education Program.

STAND – (A Program of the Archdiocese of Baltimore)

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is committed to providing a safe environment for the children that are entrusted to us for Religious Education. All Volunteers must complete the Archdiocese of Baltimore Application for Volunteer Services complete with names of references, and a volunteer criminal history screening consent form, and take the STAND training that is online regarding child abuse and protection for children. All Catechists and Classroom Volunteers must be STAND trained and certified.

Parents may attend no more than 2 classes without STAND certification. After the second class, any Parent who comes into the class and remains must be STAND certified.

All STAND Materials are available on the St. Jane Frances Parish Web Site at the following URL:
To take the online training follow the instructions at this web site.

<http://www.stjane.org/Volunteer-stand.htm>

Child Protective Services

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

Maryland requires that any person who suspects child abuse or neglect report it to the appropriate authorities. It does **NOT** require **PROOF** that abuse or neglect has occurred before reporting. Incidents are to be reported as soon as they are suspected. Professionals such as social workers, health practitioners and educators who knowingly fail to report suspected abuse of a child may be subject to professional sanctions by their licensing boards. For those who do report, the law provides protection for persons who make "good faith" reports are immune from civil liability and criminal penalty.

A child abuse reporting form is available online at: <http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cps/mandated.htm>.

Maryland Child Protective Services Phone Numbers

Allegany County: (301)784-7122
After hours: (301)759-0362

Anne Arundel County: (410)421-8400 (24 hours)

Baltimore City: (410)361-2235 (24 hours)

Baltimore County: (410)853-3000 (24 hours)

Calvert County: (443)550-6969
After hours: (410)286-2100

Caroline County: (410)819-4500
After hours call the Sheriff's office: (410)479-2515

Carroll County: (410)386-3434 (24 hours)

Cecil County: (410)996-0100
After hours: 410-996-0228

Charles County: (301)392-6739
After hours call Sheriff's office: (301)934-2222

Dorchester County: (410)901-4100
After hours: 410-221-3246

Frederick County: (301)694-2464

Garrett County: (301)533-3005
After hours: (301)334-1911

Harford County: (410)836-4713
After hours: (410)838-6600

Howard County: (410)872-8700
After hours: (410)313-2929

Kent County: (410)810-7600
After hours: (410)758-1101

Montgomery County: (240)777-4417

Prince George's County: (301)909-2450
After hours: (301)699-8605

Queen Anne's County: (410)-758-8000
Alternate p.m. # 410-758-0770

St. Mary's County: (240)895-7016
After hours: (301)475-8016

Somerset County: (410)677-4200
After hours: (410)651-0630

Talbot County: (410)770-4848
After hours call State Police: (410)822-3101

Washington County: (240)420-2222 (24 hours)

Wicomico County: (410)713-3900

Worcester County: (410)677-6800

After hours: (410)548-4891

After hours: 410-632-1111

Human Sexuality

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is committed to providing children and their parents with education about child sexual abuse within the context of a holistic catechesis in human sexuality. This catechesis is to be offered as an important component of the curriculum of religious instruction and faith formation in the parish religious education or school religion class setting. The National Directory for Catechesis (NDC, Chapter 6, 178) calls for catechesis in human sexuality which “recognizes the duty of pastors and parish catechetical leaders to support and encourage parents as they carry out their role as educators of their children in human sexuality as well as to provide additional instructions regarding Catholic teachings and values that complement and complete the formation provided by parents”

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has made a concentrated effort to protect our community from the devastating effects of sexual abuse. In fact, the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People requires that all arch/dioceses must establish, offer, and provide safe environment training for children as a regular part of a school curriculum. With the support of Cardinal Keeler and in concert with the Bishops Charter for Child Protection the Archdiocese has undertaken a very comprehensive project towards this end.

The human sexuality textbooks teach our children the dignity of human life, Catholic morality and family relationships. These textbooks have been carefully reviewed and selected because they faithfully present Catholic teaching in a sensitive and age –appropriate manner. Since their publication, new information of protecting children has become available. Associated Catholic Charities, in collaboration with the Office of Child and Youth Protection, the Division of Catholic Schools and the Division of Evangelization and Catechesis, has produced a Curriculum Update designed to enhance the child protection elements of the required catechesis for human sexuality program and the human sexuality textbooks used in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The lessons provided in the 2006 Human Sexuality Curriculum Child Protection Update supplement the textbook curriculum with current information and strategies based on best practice recommendations made by experts in the field of abuse protection and treatment. The goals of the Child Protection Update are as follows:

- Goal 1: Encourage formation of healthy relationships and Christian family life.
- Goal 2: Reduce the risk of abuse for all children.
- Goal 3: Reduce the risk that our children will grow up to perpetrators.
- Goal 4: Reduce the stigma and shame associated with sexual abuse, in turn fostering the ability of victims to share their stories and seek help.

Our Religious Education Program has elected to use the “Growing in Love” human sexuality textbooks by Harcourt, one of the three human sexuality programs approved by the Archdiocese of Baltimore Division of Evangelization and Catechesis.

You are invited to review program materials, which are available in my office in the Rectory. We believe that parents are, and should be, the primary educators of their children. Nevertheless, the parish and school community must play a secondary, yet essential role, in educating children for healthy relationships.

Archdiocese of Baltimore
Catechesis for Human Sexuality and Healthy Relationships
Curriculum Update
2006

“Each child is a mysterious gift from God, entrusted not only to one’s parents, but to the whole community as well. One’s wider family, the church community, and the society at large, all have an interest in protecting new members, in safeguarding their rights and fostering their growth and development.”

-- *Human Sexuality, a Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning*, USCC, 1994

Program Summary

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is committed to providing children and their parents with education about child sexual abuse within the context of a holistic catechesis in human sexuality.

This catechesis is to be offered as an important component of the curriculum of religious instruction and faith formation in the parish or school setting. The *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC, Chapter 6, 178) calls for catechesis in human sexuality which “recognizes the duty of pastors and parish catechetical leaders to support and encourage parents as they carry out their role as educators of their children in human sexuality as well as to provide additional instructions regarding Catholic teaching and values that complement and complete the formation provided by parents.”

The *Regulations and Guidelines for Catechesis for Human Sexuality* (Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1994) call for this catechesis to be implemented in all programs, grades Kindergarten through Grade 8, and recommends that youth in high school and adults also receive appropriate catechesis in this subject. “The Church has an important and beautiful message to share about human sexuality, and catechesis for human sexuality is an integral part of the Church’s catechetical ministry which aims to foster growth towards personal maturity and Christian faith in children, youth and adults (CHS, 17).”

“Blending moral and values-based formation with clear and factual information is the best approach to sexuality education, whether done in the family setting or in more formal programs or in some combination of the two (CHS, 13).”

The Catechesis for Human Sexuality in the Archdiocese of Baltimore is in fact a Catechesis for *Healthy Relationships*. The purpose of this catechetical endeavor is to create a knowledgeable school/parish community that welcomes open communication and a holistic discussion around the issues of healthy sexuality and sexual abuse prevention.

Since the introduction of the Archdiocese of Baltimore *Regulations and Guidelines for Catechesis for Human Sexuality* (1994) and the publication of the recommended texts (see Appendix B), the Archdiocese has recognized a number of limitations and concerns with some of the popular approaches for educating children to protect them from exploitation and sexual abuse. For instance, stranger-danger lessons do not address the fact that many children are abused by people they know and trust (see page 3). Evidence suggests that comprehensive school-based instruction, together with parent instruction, increase the use of protective strategies.

Curriculum Update for Child Protection

It takes a community to protect children. Because it is the responsibility of adults to protect children, this curriculum must be accompanied by diligent screening and training of adult volunteers and education of parents and educators on the dangers to children that are present in the culture, as mandated by the *Child Protections Procedures for Implementation and Compliance* of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Although catechetical programs in human sexuality approved by the Archdiocese (see Appendix B) offered the best materials available at the time of their publication, none of them was intended to provide a comprehensive program in child protection education. While the approved texts include some lessons to help children avoid abuse, it is now known that the textbooks require significant amendment.

This *Curriculum Update* was created as a collaborative effort between St. Vincent’s Center, Catholic Charities, and the Archdiocese of Baltimore. It has been reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel. The content is based on best practice recommendations made by experts in child abuse prevention and treatment in concert with the Division of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Shortcomings of Traditional Approaches to Child Protection Education

- Sexual abuse prevention programs that advocate only the “say ‘no’ and tell” approach deny children’s difficulties in saying “no” to those in authority or with more power. These programs may compound the trauma of abuse for victims who feel guilty because they could not or have not said “no”, told, or made the offender stop. Prevention programs should not put the onus on children to be solely responsible for their own safety.
- Healthy relationships programs that concentrate on the dichotomy of “good touch” vs. “bad touch” are not acceptable. The definition of sexual abuse as bad touch may give children the misguided notion that all sexuality is “bad” (even consensual sexual activity between adults). As well, children whose abuse has included pleasurable body feelings may not be able to conceptualize their sexual abuse as “bad” touch (without viewing themselves as bad).
- Programs which provide oversimplified “touching rules” may lead to overgeneralization by children (e.g. “Nobody should touch my private parts.”) or the inappropriate provision of exceptions by parents (e.g. “Don’t let anyone touch your private parts except Mommy, Daddy or a doctor.”) Therefore, healthy relationships and child protection programs should incorporate teaching about legitimate touch e.g. for washing or wiping, medical attention, or ensuring safety) while also recognizing that trusted adults (e.g. family members) may engage in sexually abusive touch.
- A number of curricula focus on dealing with offenders who are “strangers.” Sexual abuse by familiar people is prevalent (95% of all victims know their offenders (National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, 1992). While parents, teachers, and others working with children may be more comfortable omitting warnings about perpetrators the child knows, “stranger danger” curricula should be recognized as very incomplete and should not be the sole focus of presentations to children.

Program Goals – A Holistic “Catechesis for Healthy Relationships”

Goal 1: Encourage formation of healthy relationships and Christian family life.

Provide a holistic catechesis for living a moral life, including formation and information about healthy sexuality that are grounded in the basic Christian principles of human dignity, family life, and social responsibility.

Goal 2: Reduce the risk of abuse for all children.

- Teach adults critical information about risk reduction and provide the information and support they need to nurture healthy sexual development in their children.
- Teach children positive, protective messages that will reduce their risk for victimization.

Goal 3: Reduce the risk that our children will grow up to be perpetrators.

- Work collaboratively with parents to foster healthy sexual development (particularly empathy, gender respect, equality).
- Tune in to the needs of “high risk” kids – particularly those who have experienced abuse.

Goal 4: Reduce the stigma and shame associated with sexual abuse, in turn fostering the ability of victims to share their stories and seek help.

- Ensure the availability of appropriate networks of support for child and adult victims

Need for Child Protection Education

Why should healthy sexuality education and abuse prevention be taught in schools and parish religious education programs?

The latest evidence suggests that as many as one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually victimized before they reach age 18. Approximately 95% of those who are victimized are abused by someone they know – a family member, teacher, camp counselor, family friend. Nine out of ten children who are victimized NEVER disclose the abuse, and, therefore, never receive treatment. Abuse occurs in all racial and ethnic groups and in families from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Child sexual abuse impacts learning and development. Children who have been sexually abused are at high risk for experiencing a number of social, emotional, and cognitive problems, all of which can interfere with their ability to learn in school. For example, the results of one study demonstrate that children with a history of sexual abuse scored significantly lower on reading and math tests than a comparison group of children who had not been abused. Sexual abuse education programs not only nurture healthy sexual development and reduce the risk of abuse for children, but they also encourage disclosures of past abuse, thereby allowing victims who may have not previously disclosed to receive treatment for symptoms and have greater hope for recovery and a brighter future.

Catechesis in healthy relationships teaches important life skills. We teach children about fire safety, traffic safety, and bike safety. Why, then, should we not teach them about body safety? The authors of this supplement have seen the same patterns repeatedly in years of working with victims of abuse at St. Vincent's Center in Baltimore. These patterns suggest that children often are not aware that they have a right to refuse the offender, that they believed no one would protect them from the offender, that they were often "tricked" or misled by the offender, and sadly, that they themselves are to blame for the abusive actions of adults. Our program aims to educate children on each of these points, while also strengthening the protective relationships with supportive adults in their lives.

Parents need community support. We know that many parents are reluctant to speak with their children about sexuality and child sexual abuse prevention because they feel they just don't know where to begin, or what to say first. For many families, the school and/or church is the center of their community and is the place where they turn for critical information and support around issues related to child development, including sexual development. Parents are more likely to feel confident in their decision to discuss this issue with their children if they have support and direction from their church and/or school.

Increased social supports decrease vulnerability. Evidence suggests that having adult support outside the family is a primary protective factor that decreases a child's vulnerability to being abused. Teachers, school counselors, child care workers and administrators are often the primary sources of adult support outside the child's home.

Child protection education enhances identification and reporting. School personnel and child care workers who are in a position to detect signs and symptoms of abuse will benefit from education regarding child abuse identification and reporting procedures.

Parents are and should be the primary educators of their children. The parish and school community must play a secondary but essential role in educating children for healthy relationships. Studies reveal three primary difficulties in relying on parents as sole educators:

- Many parents prefer/choose to have the school educate due to their discomfort with the subject matter and/or their own lack of information.
- While parents claim that they wish to be the primary educators of their children, the majority never raise the issue of sexual abuse, or raise the issue much too late. One out of 7 victims is under age 6.¹ Males are most likely to be victims at age 4 (National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, 1992).
- Parents and family members are the offenders in approximately 50% of cases of child sexual abuse.

Teachers/school/parish personnel can serve as protective figures in numerous ways:

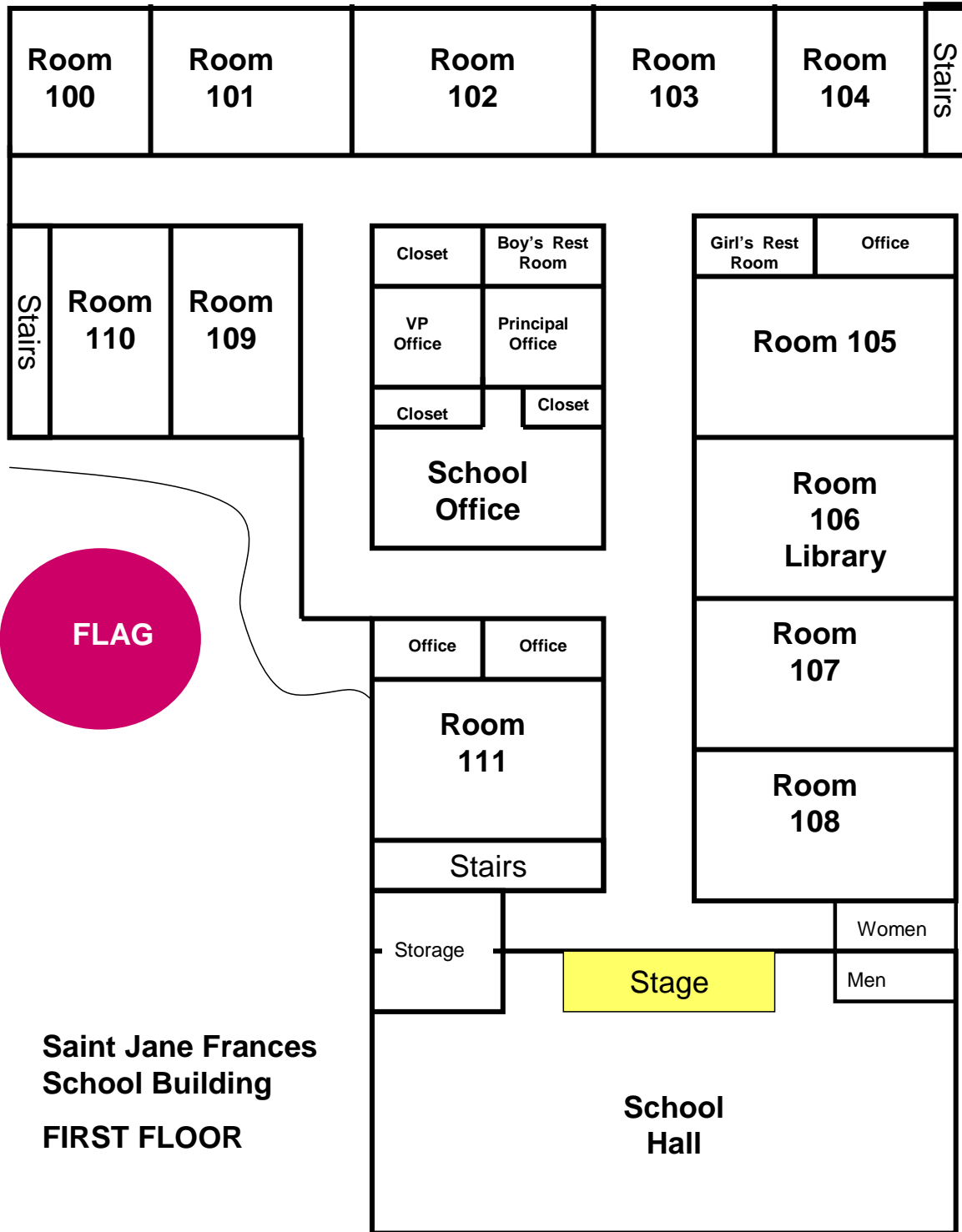
- Teachers and catechists model and teach values and attitudes regarding sexuality and boundaries in their every day work with children.
- Teachers and catechists can serve as supports/helpers for children who may need to disclose abuse.
- Teachers and catechists are in a position to identify and report concerns about possible abuse.
- Teachers, catechists and parents can reinforce lessons learned at school/home to present a stronger, unified, protective message to children.

NOTE: Parents must have the opportunity to examine any and all materials used in this program, including textbooks, additional print, audio, and video material. Any additional educational resources not listed in this curriculum are to be submitted to the Archdiocese for evaluation and approval.

The textbooks and any additional materials may be reviewed in the Faith Formation office on Sunday Mornings.

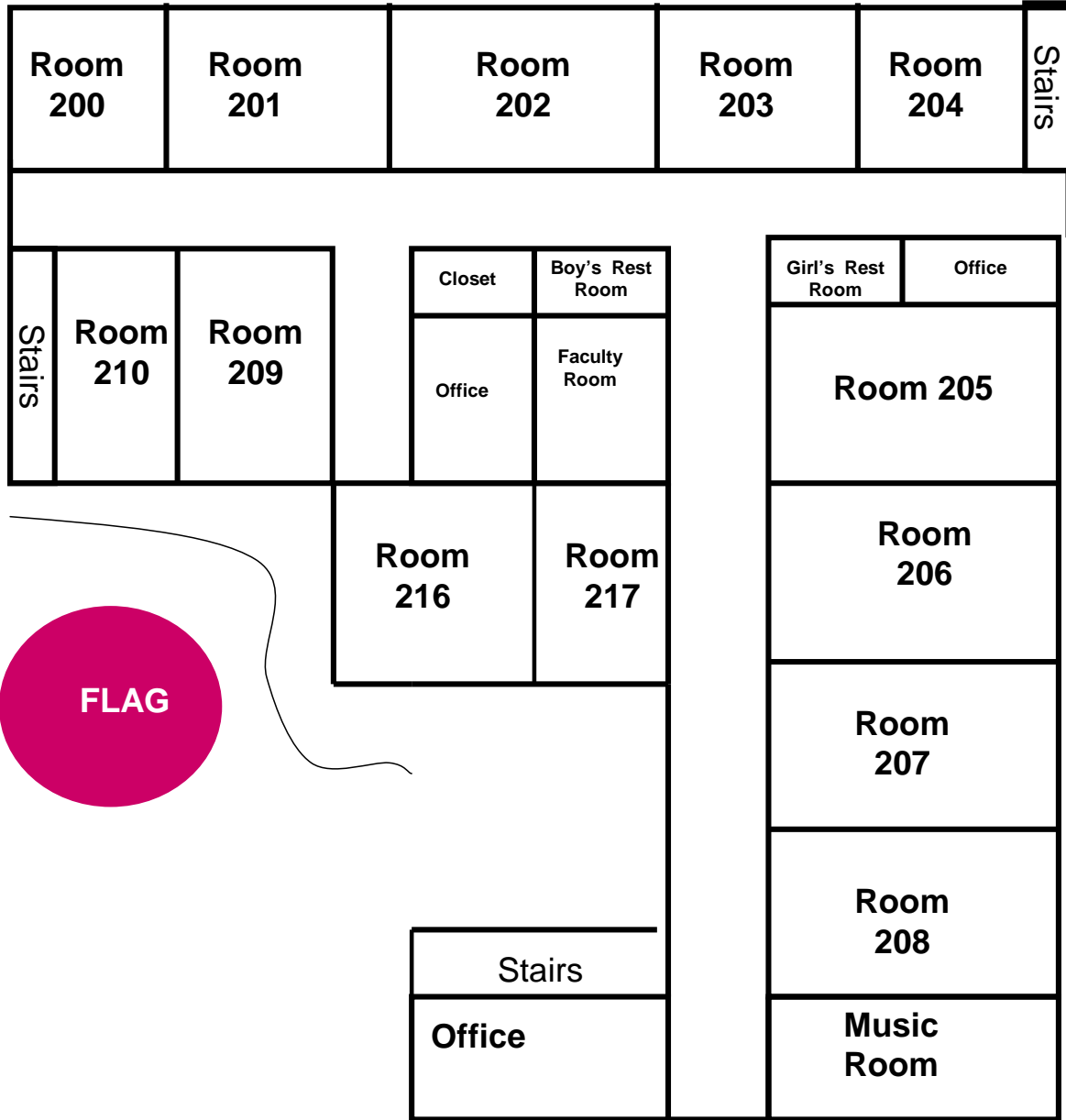
¹ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics, 1991-1996, 7/00.

School Building Diagram



**Saint Jane Frances
School Building
FIRST FLOOR**

School Building Diagram



**Saint Jane Frances
School Building
SECOND FLOOR**

