

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Given the diverse needs of families, parishes find themselves with a variety of different options for their religious education programs. Listed below are the three most common types of programs in the Rockford Diocese. It is recommended that you choose the type of program that best fits the needs of your parish community.

Traditional Program

A traditional religious education resembles a school setting.

- The Traditional Program is a classroom structure meeting at least one time per month, and as often as three or four times a month.
- Catechists organize their instruction into units by teaching from children age-appropriate materials posted on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Conformity List.
- The content is arranged and presented in a systematic manner based on the *Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines for Religious Education*.

Home School Program

Homeschooling is a type of religious formation where children learn outside of the parish setting under the supervision of their parents. The family determines what is taught and how it is to be taught based on the *Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines for Religious Education*.

The National Directory for Catechesis states, “Home-based catechesis must be both complete and authentic. It is a cooperative effort between the children, their parents, parish leadership, and the diocesan bishop.” (NDC #61.3)

- The Home School structure is taught from home with no parish classroom attendance.
- Parents, the primary catechists for their children, organize their instruction based on diocesan guidance and catechetical materials approved by the diocesan bishop.
- The content comes from the *Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines for Religious Education*.
- To determine readiness for the celebration of a sacrament, follow the “Guidelines for Sacramental Preparation for Home-Schooled Children” on page 80 of the *Catechetical Leaders Handbook*.

Family Program

The National Directory for Catechesis states, “Within family-centered catechetical programs are opportunities for parents to catechize their children directly, for spouses to catechize each other, and for children to catechize one another and their parents.” (NDC #61.2)

- The structure of this program involves parents and children exploring themes based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* at home and at the parish.
- Family catechesis is organized in such a way that it involves a combination of parish participation and home study by the entire family.
- The content of family catechesis includes prayerful celebration within the family, liturgical celebrations at the parish, opportunities for Christian service within the family and neighborhood, and content from the *Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines for Religious Education*.