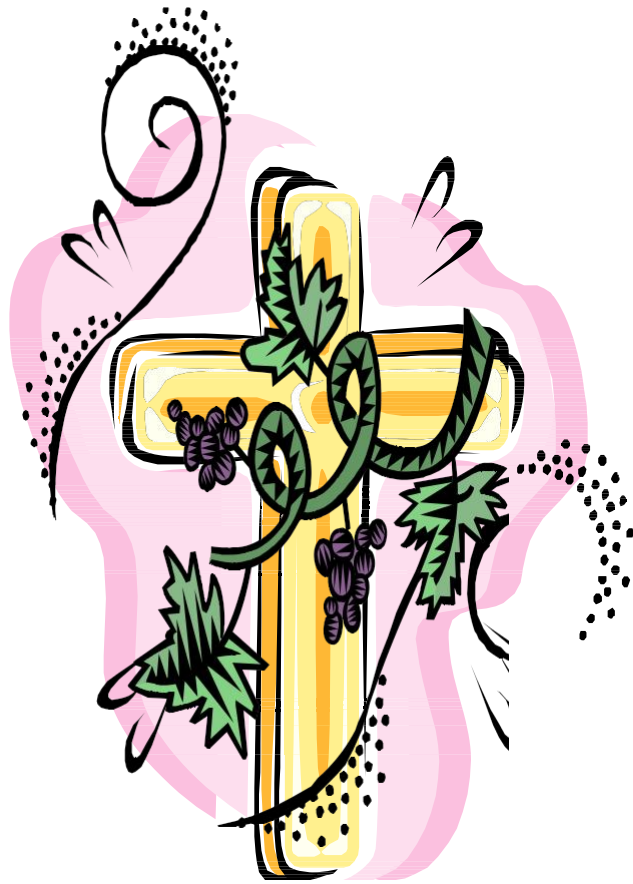


2024

CATECHETICAL LEADER  
HANDBOOK

DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE



“I am the vine, you  
are the branches.”

John 15:5

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# SECTION 1

## DIOCESAN STRUCTURE

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# DIOCESAN MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

## OUR MISSION

We, the People of the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, are called by the Father through baptism to be the new People of God. United in faith and relying on the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, we have access to the redeeming love of Jesus, the Christ, and are called to share in his mission to proclaim the Reign of God in Word, Sacrament and Service.

## OUR VISION

We, the Diocese of Rockford, are a community of Catholic believers in 11 Northern Illinois counties. Blessed with great cultural and ethnic diversity and representing a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, we share a bond of faith in Jesus Christ.

We are called in baptism through the Church to be light and salt to a world in need of hope. We are commissioned by Jesus to go out and bear fruit in his name that all may have life and have it in abundance.

We are a pilgrim people who together are constantly drawn to conversion of heart and the transformation of human structures. Thus, our lives become a social, intellectual, moral and spiritual passage toward the fullness of Life: Jesus Christ, without whom religious activity becomes meaningless.

Our mission, then, is integral evangelization: to proclaim the Good News of salvation in word and deed, putting ourselves at God's service in turning human hearts, attitudes, values and structures to the Reign of God.

We affirm His Reign wherever human beings consciously strive to live the ideal of the Gospel in concert with Jesus, and we commit ourselves to seeking the fullness of His Reign.

As an evangelizing people set on God's Reign, we affirm the primary values of justice, freedom and truth as we work to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy and peace.

Set as we are, on a journey of faith as the People of the Diocese of Rockford, we take upon ourselves the Gospel call to ever simplify our lives and structures so that Jesus the Lord is always visible and central to our vision.

In an age and place where the gift of individuality often grows into the curse of individualism, leaving people uprooted, we affirm the special grace of small intentional communities, where the Christian life can be lived on a deep level of faith-sharing, prayer and commitment to action.

We are a sacramental people who proclaim and bear witness to the truth that God's grace permeates all of life, human and divine, and we work to draw all Creation to God's Reign.

We are a consecrated people who proclaim and bear witness to the truth that God's grace permeates all of life, human and divine, and we work to draw all Creation to God's Reign.

We are a consecrated people who, united with our shepherd, the Bishop of Rockford, make up a spiritual family whose faith is nourished by the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharist. Our pilgrim journey begins in the human family where the love of God is first revealed. Growing in grace, we come to realize that our lives and our destiny are also rooted in the larger families of parish, diocese, Universal Church and, indeed, the whole human community.

As the Diocesan Church, we participate in the mission of the Universal Church, Christ's own mission: Christ was sent by the Father to bring good news to the poor...to heal the contrite of heart (Lk. 4:18), to seek and to save what was lost (Lk.19:10) [Documents of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, #8].

March 25, 1988

## VISION FOR CATECHESIS IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reflects the insights of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Catechesi Tradendae* when it states that catechesis is "the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ" (#4).

More specifically, the *Catechism* goes on to say that catechesis "is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life" (#5).

The Diocese of Rockford, guided by its chief teacher in the person of its Bishop, embraces these concepts which reflect our tradition from the very first days of the Church which have been continually re-articulated and re-emphasized by the Magisterium in its efforts to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. In response to the needs of the people of the Rockford Diocese, diocesan Catechetical Leaders in concert with Bishop David Malloy look to several key catechetical resources in shaping a vision for catechesis: the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2nd edition, (1994), the *General Directory for Catechesis* from the Vatican (1997), the *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005), *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States* (1999) and *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997) from the US Bishops.

The diocesan vision for catechesis believes that faith formation for parishioners of all ages should be guided and directed by the following theological and pastoral principles:

**Catechesis Is Christ-centered** – The heart of catechesis is Christ. To catechize is to reveal in the person of Jesus Christ the whole of God's plan fulfilled in Him. Christ is the mediator and fullness of God's revelation. The object of catechesis is to put people in intimate communion with Christ who is the way, the truth and the life and leads us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and makes us share in the life of the Holy Trinity (CCC 426-427, GDC 36-41, NDC 19B, OHWB 7-11, RV 10).

**Catechesis Is Evangelizing** – Catechesis is understood to be an essential moment in the process of evangelization. The Church exists in order to evangelize; it is Her deepest identity. Evangelizing catechesis aspires to foster a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith (GDC 63-66, NDC 15-17, OHWB 45-63, RV 36-37).

**Catechesis Is Systematic and Comprehensive** – Catechesis must be systematic and comprehensive such that a person receives knowledge of the entire content of the faith, especially: the creed, the liturgy and the sacraments, moral formation, prayer, community life and the mission of the Church (GDC 85-87, NDC 20, OHWB 88-96, CCC 5, RV 19-20).

**Catechesis Is Modeled on the Catechumenate** – Catechesis is more than instruction. It offers a complete initiation into a life of discipleship, which serves as an apprenticeship for the entire Christian life (GDC 29, 65-69, NDC 19D-20, 29H, 35 D, OHWB 81).

**Catechesis Interprets and Illuminates Human Experience** – Experience is a necessary medium of God’s revelation, and so, the catechist must assist the faithful in learning to interpret and illuminate their experience with the data of faith (GDC 152, NDC 29A, OHWB 82-83).

**Catechesis Inculturates the Gospel Message** – It is necessary to inculturate catechesis in such a fashion that the Gospel message retains its power and efficacy and resonates with the people to whom it is addressed (GDC 112, 202-206; NDC 21C, 25 F, OHWB 84-87).

**Catechesis Is Lifelong** – Catechesis of adults is a priority: it is the principal form of catechesis, the organizing principle and axis around which all other catechetical programs revolve (NDC 48A, GDC 59, 275, OHWB 38-44, 129, RV 28-33).

**Catechesis Is the Responsibility of the Entire Parish** - The Church is the natural environment for growth in the faith, i.e. the origin, locus and goal of catechesis, which necessitates that all parishioners have a role to play in the formation of its members. In this sense, the entire parish is responsible for catechesis and acts as the curriculum (NDC 19C, 29 B, C; GDC 158; OHWB 118-121, RV 11-15).

**Catechesis Respects Human Dignity** – All catechetical efforts must recognize, reveal and respect the inviolable dignity of every human person which is rooted in each person’s creation in God’s image and likeness (GDC 19, NDC 41).

**Catechesis Necessitates Ongoing Catechist Formation** – The call to ministry of catechist is a vocation, involving an interior call to serve as mediator, witness, teacher and educator for the mysteries of the faith. This role demands ongoing formation in doctrine, resources and methods for presenting the faith (GDC 156, 238-245; NDC 54B, 55, 29E, OHWB 149-153, RV 40-42).

With God’s blessing and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Catechetical Leaders and catechists throughout the Diocese of Rockford embrace these principles in such a fashion so as to revitalize catechesis, and in doing so, transform believers into disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE ROCKFORD DIOCESE CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE**

The Catholic Education Office, under the Chief Teacher for the Diocese of Rockford:

- Leads through service
- Promotes faith development
- Fosters excellence in education
- Facilitates reconciliation and healing within the educational community

## **MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE ROCKFORD DIOCESE REGIONAL OFFICES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The Regional Office of Religious Education provides for catechetical youth, teen and adult ministries in Catholic parishes and schools within the Diocese of Rockford through consultation, mentoring, advisement, resources and training.

- Encourages and provides catechist formation for catechists in the deaneries
- Mentors and supports all Catechetical Leaders within the deaneries
- Informs pastors in the deaneries about catechetical needs and issues
- Serves as a liaison between the deaneries and the Diocese which provides ongoing collaboration with the Catholic Education Office

## **DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Catechetical Leader recognizes that the mission of the Religious Education Program must be consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church, the Diocese and the Parish. Therefore, when developing a program mission statement it is important to insure that the focus is rooted in the Gospel, the basic teachings of the Catholic Faith, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and guidelines from appropriate and relevant Church documents.

Specifically, a Parish Religious Education mission statement distinguishes the Religious Education Program from other parish activities, making clear what is unique about it. This mission statement should say whom the program is for, what it does, what it stands for and why it is done. An effective mission statement is best developed with input from all those who are involved in the Religious Education Program for the parish.

*A mission statement must answer these specific questions:*

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?

*Tips for writing a great mission statement:*

- Keep it short (3-4 sentences long).
- Describe why people will enroll in your program.
- Define your program clearly.
- Define your ideal participant.
- Clarify the benefits you offer the participant.

*Sample Religious Education Mission Statement:*

The Religious Education programs at \_\_\_\_\_ parish are attentive to the spiritual formation of all members of the parish faith community. At every stage of life, we focus on catechesis, liturgy, fellowship, service, and prayer. As a parish we welcome the people of God; we fulfill our baptismal promise to teach about God in the Catholic tradition; we encourage our community to live the Gospel in service to one another; and, we celebrate together in Mass, prayer and sacrament.

# SECTION 2

## ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

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## JOB DESCRIPTION DEVELOPMENT

The focus of a job description for a Catechetical Leader should ideally articulate the desired results of that position. It is important to note that a job description is to be developed collaboratively between the Pastor (possibly with the addition of a consultative committee) and the individual who holds or will hold that position for which a job description is needed.

A job description is to be realistic. It is developed as something feasible within the time-frame contracted by the parish and the Catechetical Leader.

Job descriptions are to be reviewed annually. A good time for this is during the time of contract renewal.

The following are questions which can be of assistance in developing a job description:

### **Responsibilities of the Catechetical Leader**

- What are the key responsibilities of this position?
- What are the goals/objectives expected for the tasks of these responsibilities?
- What individuals/resources will be required to accomplish the tasks?
- How many staff members and volunteers are to be supervised within this position?
- What is the interaction required for supervision?

### **Responsibilities to the Pastor**

- How often does the Catechetical Leader update the Pastor regarding the catechetical program?
- What information will the Pastor need on a regular basis?
- Are there any areas in which the Catechetical Leader will be asked to serve as a resource to the Pastor?

### **Collaboration**

- What are the areas of collaboration?
- Who is responsible for initiating the collaborative efforts?
- Who is responsible for the results of the collaboration?

### **Professional Support and Networking**

- What Diocesan groups can/should the Catechetical Leader look to for support?
- In what professional associations can/should the Catechetical Leader become an active member?

### **Parish Structures of Leadership**

- On what parish committees should the Catechetical Leader participate?
- What parish meetings should the Catechetical Leader attend? With what frequency?

# ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR CATECHETICAL LEADERS IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD

## Director of Religious Education

The Director of Religious Education is a parish minister who has achieved an undergraduate or graduate degree in Religious Studies and/or Theology. Minimally, DREs have completed the Diocesan Ministry Formation Program and the Catechetical Leader Certification Process. In collaboration with the Pastor, the DRE provides leadership in the development of the faith community and the design and implementation of programs for adults, youth and children.

### Faith Community

- Provides opportunities in faith formation for families and catechists.
- Insures that the basic doctrines of our faith are taught.
- Provides prayer and liturgical experiences for catechists, students and catechetical staff.
- Assists in planning the parish celebration of those sacraments for which the DRE directs catechesis.
- Participates in experiences of faith development with members of the pastoral staff.
- Encourages and develops a spirit of and opportunities for Christian service.

### Vision and Mission Statement

- Collaborates with Pastor, staff, parish Pastoral Council, and key catechetical personnel in the development of the religious education vision and mission statements.
- Insures that religious education programs are rooted in the Gospel, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, guidelines from the *General Directory for Catechesis* and other relevant Church documents.
- Communicates the parish religious education vision and mission statements to the pastoral staff, education commission, catechists, parents and the parish community.
- Initiates periodic review of religious education vision and mission statements.

### Policy

- Implements diocesan, deanery and parish policies and regulations.
- Informs the staff, education commission, catechists, parents and parish community about all pertinent policies.
- Recommends needed policies to the Pastor and parish education commission.
- Keeps abreast of legal issues in religious education.

### Catechists and Volunteers

- Follows diocesan and parish policies and regulations in recruitment, training and formation of catechists and volunteers.
- Serves as a resource for catechists in the parish and school programs.
- Provides ongoing support, supervision and evaluation for catechists.
- Provides opportunities for the spiritual growth of catechists and volunteers.

### Catechesis and Instruction

- Develops goals and objectives for catechetical programs that reflect the religious education vision and mission statements for the parish.
- Designs, develops, directs, implements, assesses and supervises ongoing catechetical programs for persons of all ages and needs.
- Collaborates in the development of parish school catechetical programs and curriculum.

- Provides formation and preparation for the sacraments of Initiation and Penance for children and youth and their parents.
- Evaluates, selects and provides suitable materials for instruction that are approved by the USCCB for conformity with the *Catechism*.
- Establishes and maintains a disciplined environment that promotes learning in a Christian atmosphere.
- Adheres to and informs catechists of the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines*.
- Provides and promotes opportunities for adult and family faith formation.

### **Supervisory Responsibilities**

- Manages enrollment and attendance policies and procedures and supervises the maintenance of all necessary records for students and catechists.
- Establishes and oversees performance and behavior expectations for students.
- Collaborates with Director of Youth Ministry in scheduling youth activities/programs.
- Provides systematic procedures for the assessment of student participation.

### **Communication**

- Channels information from and feedback to the Regional Office of Religious Education and the Diocesan Education Office.
- Provides a regular system of communication with the Pastor, Director of Youth Ministry, the school Principal, the CRE, the parish staff, catechists, parents and students.

### **Personal and Professional Development**

- Pursues ongoing spiritual growth through daily prayer and shared faith experiences.
- Continues to develop professionally through workshops, conferences, seminars, renewal status in the diocesan Catechist Formation Program and professional reading.
- Participates in diocesan and deanery meetings and in-service programs.

### **Finance**

- Prepares, implements, and monitors the religious education budget in collaboration with the parish business manager.
- Authorizes purchases for program materials.
- Oversees the collection of fees.

### **Physical Plant**

- Is familiar with all aspects of the physical plant where catechetical sessions are held.
- Supervises procedures that assure neat and orderly use of classrooms and/or meeting areas.
- Informs Principal and/or Pastor of corrective maintenance needed and any incidents of vandalism.

# Coordinator of Religious Education

The Coordinator of Religious Education is a parish minister who usually coordinates the organizational aspects of a particular portion of a parish catechetical program under the supervision of the Pastor or the DRE. The CRE has achieved, minimally, Ministerial level in the Catechist Formation Program and has experience in catechetical ministry.

## Faith Community

- Assists in providing opportunities in faith formation for families and catechists.
- Ensures that the basic doctrines of our faith are taught.
- Provides prayer and liturgical experiences for catechists, students and catechetical staff.
- Assists in planning the parish celebration of those sacraments for which the CRE coordinates catechesis.
- Participates in experiences of faith development with members of the pastoral staff.
- Encourages and develops a spirit of and opportunities for Christian service.

## Vision and Mission Statement

- Assists with Pastor, staff, parish Pastoral Council, and key catechetical personnel in the development of the religious education vision and mission statements.
- Communicates the parish religious education vision and mission statements to the pastoral staff, education commission, catechists, parents and the parish community.
- Participates in a periodic review of religious education vision and mission statements.

## Policy

- Abides by diocesan, deanery and parish policies and regulations.
- Informs the staff, education commission, catechists, parents and parish community about all pertinent policies.
- Keeps abreast of legal issues in religious education.

## Catechists and Volunteers

- Collaborates with the Pastor and DRE in recruiting and providing training for formation of catechists and volunteers.
- Arranges for evaluation of catechists in collaboration with the Pastor/DRE.
- Provides ongoing support, supervision and opportunities for the spiritual growth of catechists and volunteers.

## Catechesis and Instruction

- Chooses suitable materials for instruction that are approved by the USCCB for conformity with the *Catechism* in collaboration with the Pastor/DRE.
- Coordinates and assists in evaluating catechetical programs for which s/he is responsible.
- Maintains a disciplined environment that promotes learning in a Christian atmosphere.
- Adheres to and informs catechists of the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines*.
- Assists in providing opportunities for adult and family faith formation.

## Supervisory Responsibilities

- Manages enrollment and attendance policies and procedures and supervises the maintenance of all necessary records for the program(s) which s/he is responsible.
- Establishes and oversees performance and behavior expectations for students.
- Provides systematic procedures for the assessment of student progress in collaboration with the DRE/Pastor.

**Communication**

- Channels information from and feedback to the Regional Office of Religious Education and the Diocesan Education Office.
- Provides a regular system of communication with the Pastor, the DRE, the Director of Youth Ministry, the school Principal, the parish staff, catechists, parents and students.

**Personal and Professional Development**

- Pursues ongoing spiritual growth through daily prayer and shared faith experiences.
- Continues to develop professionally through workshops, conferences, seminars, renewal in the diocesan Catechist Formation Program and professional reading.
- Participates in diocesan and deanery meetings and in-service programs.

**Finance**

- Communicates budget needs to the Pastor/DRE or parish business manager.
- Oversees the collection of fees.

**Physical Plant**

- Is familiar with all aspects of the physical plant where catechetical sessions are held.
- Supervises procedures that assure neat and orderly use of classrooms and/or meeting areas.
- Informs DRE, Principal and/or Pastor of corrective maintenance needed and any incidents of vandalism.

# Director of Youth Ministry

The Director of Youth Ministry is a parish minister who has achieved an undergraduate or graduate degree in Religious Studies, Theology, and/or Youth Ministry. Minimally, DYMs have completed the Diocesan Ministry Formation Program and/or have been certified in Youth Ministry. In collaboration with the Pastor and DRE, s/he provides leadership in the development of the faith community and the design and implementation of programs specifically for youth.

## Faith Community

- Provides opportunities in faith formation for families and catechists.
- Ensures that the basic doctrines of our faith are taught.
- Provides prayer, liturgical, retreat, and service experiences appropriate for youth.
- Assists in planning the parish celebration of those sacraments for which the DYM directs catechesis.
- Participates in experiences of faith development with members of the pastoral staff.
- Encourages and develops a spirit of and opportunities for Christian service.

## Vision and Mission Statement

- Collaborates with Pastor, staff, parish Pastoral Council, and key catechetical personnel in the development of the youth ministry vision and mission statements.
- Ensures that youth ministry education programs are rooted in the Gospel, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, guidelines from the *General Directory for Catechesis*, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* and other related Church documents.
- Communicates the parish youth ministry.
- Vision and mission statements to the pastoral staff, education commission, catechists, parents and the parish community.
- Initiates periodic review of youth ministry vision and mission statements.

## Policy

- Implements diocesan, deanery and parish policies and regulations.
- Informs the staff, education commission, catechists, parents and parish community about all pertinent policies.
- Recommends needed policies to the Pastor and parish education commission.
- Keeps abreast of legal issues in youth ministry.

## Volunteers

- Provides ongoing support, supervision and evaluation for youth ministry catechists and volunteers.
- Recruits, trains, supports and supervises adult youth ministry catechists and volunteers.
- Develops a parish youth ministry core team for the purpose of assessing needs and planning.
- Provides leadership training for the youth ministry core team.

## Catechesis and Instruction

- Develops goals and objectives for youth ministry programs that reflect the youth ministry vision and mission statements for the parish.
- Designs, develops, directs, implements, assesses and supervises ongoing youth ministry.
- Along with the DRE, usually provides formation and preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation for youth and their parents.
- Evaluates, selects and provides suitable materials for instruction that are approved by the USCCB for conformity with the *Catechism*.
- Establishes and maintains a disciplined environment in a Christian atmosphere.
- Adheres to and informs catechists of the Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines.
- Provides and promotes opportunities for adult and family faith formation.

### **Supervisory Responsibilities**

- Manages enrollment and attendance policies and procedures and supervises the maintenance of all necessary records for students and catechists.
- Establishes and oversees performance and behavior expectations for students.
- Provides systematic procedures for the assessment of student participation.
- Spends sufficient time with the youth to develop rapport.

### **Communication**

- Channels information from and feedback to the Regional Office of Religious Education and the Diocesan Youth Ministry Office.
- Provides a regular system of communication with the Pastor, the DRE, the CRE, the school Principal, the parish staff, catechists, parents and students.

### **Personal and Professional Development**

- Pursues ongoing spiritual growth through daily prayer and shared faith experiences.
- Continues to develop professionally through workshops, conferences, seminars, renewal in the diocesan Catechist Formation Program and professional reading.
- Participates in diocesan and deanery meetings and in-service programs.

### **Finance**

- Prepares, implements and monitors the youth ministry budget in collaboration with the parish business manager.
- Authorizes purchases for program materials.
- Oversees the collection of fees.

### **Physical Plant**

- Is familiar with all aspects of the physical plant where youth ministry programs are held.
- Supervises procedures that assure neat and orderly use of youth meeting places.
- Informs Principal and/or Pastor of corrective maintenance needed and any incidents of vandalism.

# SECTION 3

## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATECHETICAL LEADER

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*Ministers to the Future*  
*Prayer and Reflection for Catechetical Leaders*

**ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO PRAYER: A STEP ALONG THE WAY**

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent  
enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of  
saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.  
No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.  
This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an  
opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master  
builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

*Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw*

\*This prayer was composed by **Bishop Ken Untener** of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Card. John Dearden in Nov. 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included in a reflection book a passage titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him.

## PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY CHECK

Am I willing to devote myself to the process of spiritual growth, to spending quality time each day with the God who lives within me?

- When do I spend time with God?
  
- Where do I spend time with God?
  
- How do I spend time with God?

Am I willing to seek, hear, and respect the voice of God speaking through the Pastor, the staff, the catechists, and other parishioners?

What would be difficult for me in making a commitment to spiritual growth?

What kind of help and support would I need to continue my spiritual journey?

How would I get that help and support?

# Ministry Formation Program

## What is the Ministry Formation Program?

A two-year formation program for Catholic lay men and women with at least a high school education who want to: offer leadership in an area of ministry, deepen spiritual awareness, enhance theological knowledge, and develop pastoral skills for a particular area of ministry.

## How Long Does the Formation Process Take and What is Involved?

The program takes two years. Classes meet each year from September through May on eleven Saturdays (6 hour sessions), and eleven Tuesday evenings (2 1/2 hour sessions). Classes include: Faith Development, Prayer, Old Testament, New Testament, Apologetics, Jesus: Incarnation & Redemption, Church History, Theology of Church, Sacraments, Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, Theology of Ministry, Morality, Social Justice, Evangelization, Specialization Days and Retreat Days.

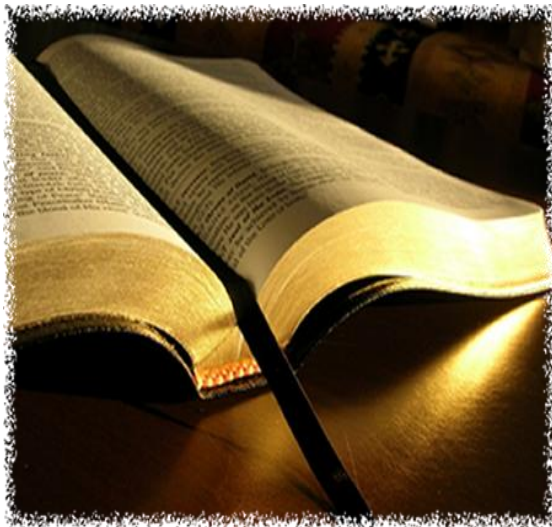
## Will Candidates Receive Training in Specialized Areas of Ministry?

Yes, through specialization formation. Each year's curriculum provides in-service days facilitated by Diocesan leaders in specialized areas of ministry, such as: Family Life, Youth Ministry, Evangelization, Justice & Peace, Stewardship, Religious Education, R.C.I.A., Liturgy, Compassionate Ministry, Respect Life.

These days offer a focused opportunity to deepen understanding and sharpen skills necessary for effective leadership in these ministries. Throughout the two years, each candidate works closely with a Sponsor who provides support and direction. The entire process culminates in a written Learning Report which details the insights received throughout the entire program. A formal Certification Ceremony with the bishop follows completion of the program's requirements.

## How Do I Apply for the Ministry Formation Program?

Potential candidates must be endorsed by the Pastor. It is best to contact your Pastor or a member of the parish staff to discern your involvement in this formation program. The application form can be downloaded from our website at [www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org) or obtained from the Ministry Formation Office. There is a non-refundable fee of \$30 to process an application.



Diocese of Rockford  
Office of Ministry Formation  
P.O. Box 7044, Rockford, IL 61125  
Phone: 815-399-4300 \* Fax 815-399-6278  
Website: [www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org)  
E-mail: [jjlinek@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:jjlinek@rockforddiocese.org)

For more information and an application form or to have any questions answered,

CONTACT:  
MINISTRY FORMATION OFFICE  
555 Colman Center Drive  
PO Box 7044  
Rockford, IL 61125  
815.399.4300

jjelinek@rockforddiocese.org  
-OR- Visit our website @ [www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org)

## CATECHETICAL LEADER

## Certification Program

Diocese of Rockford  
MINISTRY FORMATION OFFICE



### SESSIONS INCLUDE

The Catechetical Leader Certification Program, sponsored by the Catholic Education Office and the Ministry Formation Office, fosters the development and training of prospective catechetical leaders to serve in parish faith formation programs as Directors of Religious Education (DRE) and Directors of Youth Ministry (DYM).

The sessions take place on Saturdays once a month beginning in September and ending in April (9:00AM to 3:00PM) at a pre-determined parish. The sessions also include assigned readings from catechetical documents, occasional research, and active participation.

The classes are facilitated by a Core Team of highly qualified catechetical leaders from the diocese and are based on competency standards of the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

- + Successful completion of the Ministry Formation Program or its equivalent.
- + **Involvement in a parish program** such as Youth Ministry, Religious Education, or Adult Faith Formation.
- + Endorsement of your pastor.

### Catechetical Leader Certification Program

Sessions include:

- Catechetical Leadership: developing vocation and profession
- Developing Disciples of Christ: merging catechesis and evangelization
- Effective Catechetical Leadership: exploring skills and competencies
- Cultivating Volunteers: recruiting, training, inspiring and supporting catechists
- Excellence in Catechesis: creative strategies for ministry
- Multicultural Catechesis: engaging parish diversity
- Catechetical Planning: articulating a vision for catechesis in your parish

## Diocese of Rockford

### Diocesan Theological Institute



An Ongoing Formation Opportunity for the Graduates of the Ministry Formation Program and the Permanent Diaconate

For Further Information,

Contact John Jelinek 815.399.4300

[jjelinek@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:jjelinek@rockforddiocese.org)

Or visit our website @ [www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org)

Previous Classes include:

#### Church History:

- ABCDs of Spirituality
- Church History
- Fathers of the Church
- History of the Catholic Church in America
- The Reformation and the Birth of Modern Christian Denominations
- Vatican II: What Really Happened
- World Religions: Exploring Creeds & Cultures

#### Doctrine:

- Apologetics: Explaining Commonly Misunderstood Catholic Beliefs
- Christology: Early Church Councils
- Contemporary Catholic Issues
- Exploring the Riches of the Catechism
- Jesus of Nazareth
- What a Modern Catholic Believes About Heaven, Hell, Death & Judgment

#### Liturgy/Sacraments:

- A New Look @ RCIA
- How to Pray the Liturgy of the Hours
- Meeting Christ in the Liturgy
- Theology of the Seven Sacraments
- Understanding the Mass: A Fresh Look at Our Sacred Liturgy
- Eight Intriguing Aspects of the Liturgy

#### Morality:

- Catholic Sexual Ethics
- Contemporary Moral Problems
- Contemporary Secular Ethics
- Difficult Moral Cases
- Love, Sex & Marriage: Catholic Theology vs. Contemporary Secular Philosophy
- Ministry of Care

Classes are offered through the Ministry Formation Office for ongoing education in theological studies for all Ministry Formation graduates, Permanent Deacons and their spouses, and other certified or degreed pastoral ministers. Classes are offered at various times and places around the diocese. Each course meets four times for three hours for a total of 12 clock hours per course and costs \$100.

The core theological areas for course offerings are Church History, Doctrine, Liturgy/Sacraments, Morality, Scripture, and Spirituality.

Any participant who completes 12 courses, one from each core area, and six electives, will earn certification from the Diocese. A short reflection paper will be required at the conclusion of each course to determine a Pass/Fail status. Participants can audit a class for no credit towards certification in the Institute. Courses will satisfy ongoing formation requirements for Permanent Deacons and catechists.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES  
FOR EVERY CATECHETICAL LEADER  
IN THE ROCKFORD DIOCESE

Diocesan Resources

*Catholic Education Office Handbook of Policies and Procedures*  
(revised 2014)

*Religion Curriculum Guidelines*  
(revised 2013)

*Religion Learning*  
*Outcomes (2018)*

*Catechist Formation Program*  
(revised 2024)

*Guidelines for Youth & Those Working with Youth*  
(revised 2019)

*Diocesan Code for the Use of Technology & Social Media*  
(revised 2016)

All are available on the Catholic Education Website at  
[www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org)

## REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED CATECHETICAL RESOURCES

### Required for all Catechetical Leaders

Holy Bible, best to use a modern translation such as the New American Bible or the New Jerusalem Bible. These Catholic editions have very helpful introductions and footnotes that reflect Catholic interpretation and theology.

Religion Curriculum Guidelines, Diocese of Rockford, 2013. (\*)

Religion Learning Outcomes, Diocese of Rockford, 2018. (\*)

Catholic Education Office Handbook of Policies and Procedures, Diocese of Rockford, 2014. (\*)

Catechetical Leaders Handbook, Diocese of Rockford, 2018 (\*)

Comprehensive YM Handbook, Diocese of Rockford, 2006 (\*)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1994.

Compendium for the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, USCCB, 2006.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, 2006.

The Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy, USCCB, 2020.  
The Vatican's vision for catechesis.

The National Directory for Catechesis, U.S. Catholic Bishops, USCCB, 2005.  
A vision for catechesis from the American Bishops tailored to the culture of the U.S.

Conformity Listing of Catechetical Text and Series – list of texts in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* issued by the USCCB. (\*)

(\*) indicates it is found on the Catholic Education Website at [www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org))

## **Recommended for Catechetical Leaders**

YouCat, short for “Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church”.

The Catechetical Documents, Liturgy Training Publications, 1996.

A collection of all the most important catechetical documents with very helpful introductions and outlines for each entry. An excellent resource.

On Catechesis in our Time, (Catechesis Tradendae) – written by Pope John Paul II.

On Evangelization in the Modern World, (Evangelii Nuntiandi) – written by Pope Paul VI

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, U.S Catholic Bishops, USCCB, 1999.

The American Bishops’ pastoral plan for implementing adult faith formation in parishes.

Renewing the Vision, U.S. Catholic Bishops, USCCB, 1997.

The American Bishops’ vision for youth ministry.

Go and Make Disciples, broad vision of what Catholic evangelization is about.

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, offers pastoral and theological reflections on the reality of lay ecclesial ministry.

Book of Canon Law of the Catholic Church, system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the Hierarchical authorities of the Church.

## **Working with the Hispanic community**

Welcoming the Stranger Among us: Unity in Diversity by USCCB.

Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry by USCCB.

Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope by USCCB and Mexican Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The word “encuentro” literally means “encounter”. When we use this word in Hispanic ministry, we invoke the memory of the Encuentro process started by the U.S. bishops in 1972 where they called together the Catholic Hispanic community in the United States to use the “See – Judge - Act” method in terms of organizing a “**National Plan for Hispanic Ministry**”. In the past years, many different dioceses in the U.S. have organized their own “Encuentro”.

**1972** First National Hispanic Encuentro calls for greater participation for the Spanish speaking in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels within the Catholic Church and for the establishment of structures for ministry to be implemented.

**1977** Second National Hispanic Encuentro recommendations express the desire of grassroots Hispanics for a more responsive, multicultural, spiritually alive, united, and creative Church through a process of evangelization.

**1983** The U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, “**The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment**”, is published. The U.S. bishops call Hispanic Catholics to raise their prophetic voices again in a Third Encuentro.

**1985** Third National Hispanic Encuentro process involves more than half a million Hispanics in a grassroots consultation that led to the development of the National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry.

**1986** “**Prophetic Voices**” is published: The history and process for consultation of the Third National Pastoral Encuentro.

**1987** The Catholic bishops unanimously approve “**The National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry**”. The Plan provides pastoral priorities and action for Hispanic ministry at the diocesan, regional, and parish levels.

**1990** Bishops' Committee on Hispanic Affairs statement “**Leaven for the Kingdom of God**” is published. The U.S. Hispanic bishops convoke Hispanic Ministry Directors and Coordinators to commemorate and celebrate the collaboration and communion of 50 years of a national ministry effort.

**1996** Pastoral statement “**The Hispanic Presence in the New Evangelization in the United States**”, is published.

**1997** The U.S. bishops approved a fourth national Encuentro.

**1999** “**Hispanic Ministry at the Turn of the New Millennium: A Report of the Bishops' Committee on Hispanic Affairs**” is published.

**Many Faces in God's House: A Catholic Vision for the New Millennium**, a parish guide to prepare for Encuentro 2000, is published.

**2000** Encuentro 2000: “**Many Faces in God's House**” is held in Los Angeles, California, with the participation of more than 5,000 church leaders representing 150 dioceses and 157 different ethnic groups and nationalities.

**2001** The Bishops' Committee on Hispanic Affairs convokes the leadership in Hispanic Ministry to a National Symposium to refocus Hispanic ministry for the new century.

**2002** “**Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry**” is published. “We, the bishops of the United States, have heard the voices of Hispanic leaders-both laity and clergy”.

## **Additional Resources**

The Effective Catechetical Leader Series, Loyola Press / NCCL. 2017, Series titles include:

*Called by Name*

*Catechetical Leadership*

*Developing Disciples of Christ*

*Cultivating your Catechists*

*Excellence in Ministry*

*All God's People*

Religious Education and the Law: A Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders, Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN., NCEA, 1996. Provides essential information concerning civil law and its impact on Church institutions and programs.

How To Choose Catechetical Texts, Revised by Christine Malmevik, NCCL, 2005, A step-by-step process for discerning which texts will work for your program.

How to Create a Parent Handbook for Your Parish Religious Education Program, NCCL, 2002. A step-by-step process for creating a document to assist Catechetical Leaders communicate necessary program information to parents.

A Concise Guide to Canon Law, a practical Handbook for Pastoral Ministers (Kevin McKenna).

The Vision of Catholic Youth Ministry, fundamentals, theory and practice (Robert McCarty, General Editor).

Effective Practices for Dynamic Youth Ministry, (Thomas East).

Growing Teen Disciples – Strategies for Really Effective Youth Ministry, (Frank Mercadante).

Developing a Catechetical Plan, NCEA, 2006. Sets out the practical steps towards shaping a catechetical plan for dioceses, parishes and schools.

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

NCCL – National Community of Catechetical Leaders

<https://www.ncclcatholic.org/> strives to enrich the ministry of catechesis.

NFCYM – “National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry” [www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org) participates by advocating for and supporting Catholic youth ministry on the national, diocesan and local level.

NCCYM – “National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry”

[www.nfcym.org/nccym/](http://www.nfcym.org/nccym/) is the largest adult conference for Catholic Youth Ministers in the country.

NACYML – “The National Association of Catholic Youth Ministry Leaders”

[www.nacyml.org](http://www.nacyml.org) is a professional organization of ordained and lay ecclesial ministers dedicated to youth ministry.

FCH – Federation for Catechesis with Hispanics [www.fhcatechesis.org](http://www.fhcatechesis.org) is part of the NCCL and its mission is “To serve those who minister in catechesis with Hispanics.”

## RELIABLE WEBSITES

The Vatican - [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) - Offers links to Vatican news and documents.

USCCB - (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) - Links to all dioceses in the US, and the latest from the US Bishops.

Catholic Answers – [www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com) - Web site includes library, “This Rock” and links to Ave Maria Radio, The Vatican, EWTN and New Advent. Catholic Answers LIVE is broadcast on 930AM WAUR, Aurora, 11am M-F and on 820AM Saturday 8-9pm.

EWTN Global Catholic Network – [www.ewtn.org](http://www.ewtn.org) - Eternal Word Television Network web site – numerous links – available in English and Spanish.

New Advent – [www.newadvent.com](http://www.newadvent.com) – Resources include Catholic Encyclopedia, Summa Theologica and Catholic Links to Apostolates, Blogs, Canon Law, Devotions, Life Issues, Periodicals and much more.

Relevant Radio – [www.relevantradio.com](http://www.relevantradio.com) - Bridging the Gap between Faith and everyday life. 820 AM Chicago and northwest suburbs offers programs from the Archdiocese of Chicago - M-F 9-10AM, 930 AM - Serves Chicago and western suburbs. 92.5 FM Clinton, IA - Carries full or partial Relevant Radio programming.

Catholic Online – [www.Catholic.org](http://www.Catholic.org) - This youth friendly site offers reliable links including Catechism Class and Catholic Youth On Line.

Family Catechesis – <https://www.growingupcatholic.com> – A set of parish resources that coaches and empowers parents to form their own children in faith.

## SECTION 4

# PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSIONS

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## THE PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSION

**Purpose** - An Education Commission is a group of parishioners and the catechetical staff, linked through the parish pastoral council, whose purpose is to be consultative and advisory to the Pastor and Catechetical Leader.

**Types of Education Commissions** – The type of Commission that is implemented in a parish is based on the vision of catechesis, staffing, responsibilities, Religious Education programs, Catholic School programs, Catholic School presence, and overall parish demographics. Three common types are:

- *Religious Education Commission* focuses on the catechesis of the children and youth in the parish (see following pages).
- *Faith Formation Commission* focuses on the catechesis of the children, youth, and adults in the parish.
- *Education Commission* focuses on all aspects of Catholic Education in the parish and the school, (cf. Administrative Handbook for Catholic schools – Section 1000.)

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSION

**Religious Education Philosophy** – The Commission develops the philosophy of the Religious Education Program based on the Catechetical Mission of the Catholic Church and the *Vision for Catechesis in the Diocese of Rockford* (see Section 1).

**Catechist Formation** – The Commission seeks to support catechists by encouraging them to participate in the Diocese Catechist Formation Program and faith formation opportunities.

**Planning** - The Commission looks ahead to the needs of the Religious Education Program and how they will be addressed. In doing this, its agendas will reflect these kinds of activities:

- Assessing the program’s needs: listening to parents, catechists, students, and administration.
- Setting goals: deciding what the commission will do to achieve them.
- Developing, revising, or tracking long range plans.

**Policy Making** - In accordance with diocesan policies and procedures and the parish pastoral council, the Commission adopts policies as appropriate to meet program needs:

- Identifying policy needs.
- Receiving and reading policy drafts (first reading), discussing (second reading) and adopting policies (third reading).
- Monitoring whether Commission policies are working effectively.
- Reviewing existing policies as they age, asking if they are still useful.

**Finances** - The Commission develops and monitors the financial plan:

- Serve in an advisory capacity to the Pastor and Finance Council on matters such as parish subsidies, tuition, and fees.
- Review the financial reports on a quarterly basis.

**Projects** - The Commission may pursue additional projects such as

- Recruitment of students.
- Participation in the evaluation of the Religious Education Program.
- Provides activities to support the catechists.
- Supplementary fund-raising.

**Evaluation of the Catechetical Leader** – The Commission reviews the Catechetical Leader’s service to the Commission annually using the form provided by the Diocesan Office.

**Commission’s Self-evaluation** - The Commission evaluates its own performance with input from the Catechetical Leader, Pastor, and some parents:

- Tracking the goals and objectives set by the Commission in its planning.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of its policies.

**Communication** - The Commission should be in dialogue with the Pastor, Catechetical Leader, parents and the whole parish.

- The Pastor is kept informed of Commission activities and concerns.
- Reports are received from the Catechetical Leader and from the catechetical staff as needed.
- Periodically surveys parents about the needs of the programs.
- Publicizes Commission agenda and mission.

**Consultation** - The Commission responds to questions and issues raised by the Pastor or Catechetical Leader.

**Signs of an Effective Commission** -

- Prays together.
- Is familiar with key catechetical documents.
- Systematically plans agendas.
- Records, approves, and publicizes minutes of all meetings.
- Periodically reviews and updates the constitution.
- Abides by the constitution in regards to membership and election of officers.

## THE EFFECTIVE PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSION MEMBER

The effective Commission member constantly studies the issues and concerns of the parish Religious Education Programs to learn more about them. This member reads publications made available by the Catechetical Leader. This member prepares carefully for each meeting by reading the material sent out with the agenda. S/he attends Religious Education Commission workshops and seminars designed to make the member better informed, and takes responsibility for his/her own improvement as a Commission member.

Also, an effective Commission member knows that s/he does not make decisions alone. They are made as a unit, by the total Parish Education Commission. That means that a member:

- Subordinates personal interests for the good of the Commission.
- Accepts and supports majority decisions of the Commission.
- Knows that a Commission should have written policies, and sees that the Commission uses and supports Commission policies and actions.
- Understands the need for teamwork among members of the Commission, the Pastor, and Catechetical Leader. Recognizes problems or issues that demand Commission actions, and sees the difference between these issues and those that should be addressed by the Pastor and Catechetical Leader.
- Suspends judgment until the facts are available. Makes decisions once all the facts are in, and the discussion is over.
- Develops alternate solutions to problems.
- Leaves the administrative functions of the educational programs to the Catechetical Leader. Supports the Catechetical Leader in his/her authorized functions.
- With fellow Commission members, represents the Religious Education Commission to the parish.
- Prepares for meetings.

# ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY OF PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSION

Being a member of the Parish Education Commission involves new kinds of responsibilities and relationships. The information that is shared demands a professional ethic that is to be understood by all. Policy and procedure with regard to a code of ethics is to be thoroughly discussed with new members of the Commission and periodically reviewed by all concerned.

## Administration

- How to relate to the many parish ministries
- Gives the necessary time, thought, and study to the work of the Religious Education Commission so that s/he may render effective service.
- Never uses the position for personal benefit or to benefit any other person or agency apart from the total interest of the Religious Education program.
- Keeps in mind that, while the primary function of the Commission is to establish the policies that will give direction to the parish Religious Education Program, the administration of these policies is the function of the Catechetical Leader and staff.

## Confidences & Communication

- Commission members must exemplify confidentiality
- Works with all Commission members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion.
- Realizes that as an individual s/he has no authority outside the meetings of the Commission and, therefore, conducts relationships with all parish and school personnel, local citizenry, and all communications media on the basis of this reality.
- Keeps all confidences shared during closed meetings of the Commission.

## Decision Making

- What approach will they take when dealing with conflicts?
- Bases personal decisions upon all available facts in a situation, voting with honest conviction, unswayed by partisan bias.
- Abides by and upholds the final majority decision of the Commission, regardless of personal feelings.
- Realizes that the welfare of the children and youth comes first in all decisions.
- If approached with a problem, which is of an administrative nature, refers the person to the proper administrator and never attempts to perform functions that are out of the member's area of responsibility.

# SECTION 5

## CATECHISTS AND VOLUNTEERS

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## COMPETENCIES OF THE CATECHIST

Competencies refer to the skills of a catechist as a “facilitator of the learning process.”

**Faith** – They must be persons of faith whose lives bear witness to that faith; and who uphold the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, and who are committed to updating their knowledge of theology and/or religious education reflective of Vatican II. They will be committed to nurturing the Catholic identity of those they serve. (Policies and Procedures Handbook 4111)

**A Solid Grasp of Catholic Doctrine and Worship** - The catechist has a mature understanding of the basic teachings of the Catholic Faith and understands the sacramental nature of the Christian life.

**Familiarity with Scripture** - The catechist is familiar with The Bible and is able to use it for teaching, prayer and reflection.

**Good Communication Skills** - The catechist is able to effectively utilize a variety of communication and group interaction skills and selects suitable activities for desired learning objectives.

**Knowledge and Ability to Use Various Methodologies** - The catechist has the knowledge and skills to be a facilitator of both the faith experience and the learning process of the students. S/he recognizes the unique needs of the students and is able to adapt and plan a class to meet these needs.

**Understanding of the Stages of Development** - The catechist understands the stages of faith and moral development and is able to integrate these into teaching.

The above qualities reflect an ideal toward which all catechists should strive. A good catechist is simply a far more experienced learner committed to continuing self-improvement.

In view of this, it is also important to be aware that the catechist possesses the attitudes of:

- Openness to the Spirit, to people, to new ideas
- Readiness to grow in the art of learning
- Respect for the dignity of every person
- Willingness to collaborate with others

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CATECHIST

Responsibilities refer to the essential tasks that a catechist performs in his/her role.

- Shares and supports the vision and goals of the parish Religious Education Program.
- Abides by Diocesan policies and regulations regarding catechetical ministry including completing all required forms.
- Participates in catechist formation and training programs.
- Keeps current through directed readings in catechesis and teaching methods.
- Attends meetings for catechists as required by local procedures.
- Exhibits a positive attitude in interactions with children, parents, catechetical staff and the parish community.
- Prepares lesson plans prior to class time.
- Arrives before the start of class time to greet arriving students.
- Supervises students' welfare and safety.
- Ensures orderliness and cleanliness in classrooms/meeting rooms used.
- Develops formal and informal prayer experiences.
- Ensures classroom climate that fosters mutual respect.
- Motivates students to serve others.
- Seeks help from Catechetical Leader when having difficulty with students, parents or staff.
- Participates in yearly evaluation procedures.
- Reports suspected child abuse/neglect as mandated by law.

The parish Catechetical Leader assigns further responsibilities and/or clarification of the above responsibilities.

## DEFINING THE VOLUNTEER ROLE

The types of volunteer role descriptions to be developed will vary greatly from one position to another, and the details included will depend on the size of the program. In defining the volunteer role, the Catechetical Leader should consider the following:

### **Identify the Role**

#### Title and general description

Naming the role and giving a brief, general statement that identifies the work of the position is an essential first step. Descriptive titles offer the opportunity to name the role in the broader context of the total parish ministry.

### **Outline the Benefits**

#### Benefits to the volunteer

Often neglected in recruiting efforts are the advantages to the person volunteering. Many ideas for recruiting various roles come from the success and longevity stories of those who remain involved. What do they name as benefits or as the things they themselves gain by staying involved?

#### Benefits to others

There are always others who benefit from the ministry of the volunteer. Naming them also serves to place the work of one person into the broader context of the mission of one's baptismal call to service.

### **Describe the Requirements for the Role**

Attention to this aspect of the role description for all positions can help in two ways:

- Giving the assurance that the right person is being invited into a given position;
- Avoiding the difficulties involved in needing to dismiss a volunteer.

#### Qualities

What personal characteristics are essential for a volunteer in this position?

#### Knowledge

What must the person in the position know in order to function effectively?

#### Abilities

What must the person in this role be able to do?

## **Outline the Responsibilities of the Position**

### Typical Tasks

A clear, succinct listing of the basic, typical tasks offers the volunteer the opportunity to make a realistic assessment of whether or not the role is suitable for him or her.

### Training and Resources Available

An indication of what assistance and resources are available. The Catechetical Leader should provide information on all necessary pre- requisites, catechist formation opportunities, and ongoing support for the volunteer.

## **Clarify Time Commitment**

### Duration

Volunteers need to know that they don't have to be "in for life." Often an invitation to a limited and well-defined commitment offers a comfortable entry point.

### Time Frame Expectation

Offer a description of the volunteer's commitment so as to avoid hidden demands and/or unrealistic expectations.

## **Determine Accountability and Supervision**

### Diocesan Policy and Catechetical Leader Legal Responsibility

For your own protection and to insure the safety of the children, it is essential to follow the diocesan policy regarding forms required of volunteers:

- Illinois State Police Conviction Information Request Form
- Code for the Pastoral Use of Technology and Social Media Receipt
- Code of Pastoral Conduct Receipt
- Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status Form
- Guidelines for Youth and Those Working With Youth Form
- Sexual Misconduct Norms Receipt
- Protecting God's Children™ Training Certificate

### Accountability

Volunteers must know to whom they report and from whom they can receive authoritative responses for their questions and concerns.

### Assessment and Supervision

The Catechetical Leader will put forth clearly defined expectations concerning volunteer supervision and assessment.

## WORKSHEET FOR DEFINING A VOLUNTEER ROLE

### **Role**

Title

General description

Place of role in total parish ministry

Place of role in goals of catechetical program

### **Benefits**

To volunteer

To others

### **Requirements**

Qualities

Knowledge

Abilities

### **Responsibilities**

Typical tasks include

Required training and ongoing formation

### **Time commitment**

Duration of commitment: Starts \_\_\_\_\_  
Ends \_\_\_\_\_

#### Time frame expectations

- On a regular basis
  
- What (meetings, class sessions, preliminary preparation)
  
- How often (weekly, monthly, etc.)
  
- Duration (arrive 15 minutes before, 1 hour session, etc.)

Self-determination (based on role expectation)

Negotiated as needs arise

### **Accountability and Supervision**

Existing diocesan policy and legal responsibilities

#### Accountability

- To who does volunteer report
  
- From whom can volunteer expect help

#### Assessment and supervision

- How often, when
  
- What format

## APPLICATION FOR PARISH CATECHIST

The position of catechist in a parish is particularly significant, since it is a mandate of the Church that all Roman Catholics are entitled to ongoing religious formation. It is the responsibility of the parish that catechists be practicing Roman Catholics; continuing to develop their skills in imparting the faith as it comes to us through the teachings of the Church, and that catechists themselves be enriched in faith as they generously give their time and talents to the local parish.

The parish has a special responsibility for the religious formation of its children. For this reason, we ask all catechists to fill out the following application, commit themselves to the ongoing training that occurs on their local level, and take seriously the witness they are to the children/youth and their parents.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Employed by \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I am applying for position of parish catechist at the \_\_\_\_\_ grade level.

### Education

Degree	Name/City	Area of Study	Yr. Graduated
High School	_____	_____	_____
College	_____	_____	_____
Graduate School	_____	_____	_____
Other (Describe)	_____	_____	_____

Previous experience as a religious educator:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Participation in parish organizations or activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have been a member of this parish for \_\_\_\_ years.

I was previously a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Parish in  
\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_ years.

References: (list name, address, phone number, at least one priest.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever used a surname other than those indicated on page 1?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, state name: \_\_\_\_\_

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Employed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician of choice \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Special concerns, needs, or medical information the Catechetical Leader should know;  
i.e., allergies, medications, special health conditions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I certify the information contained in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I am committed to attending catechist formation sessions, giving religious instruction to the children/youth in the parish, and seeking diocesan certification as a catechist through the parish.

I will comply with all necessary forms and complete the required Safe Environment Forms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Catechist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## PARISH CATECHIST REFERRAL FORM

\_\_\_\_\_ has applied to be a catechist at \_\_\_\_\_ Parish.  
As a catechist this person would be leading children or adolescents to learn about the Catholic faith, to understand it, and to live it.

Diocesan policy states the "parish catechists should be persons of faith whose lives bear witness to that faith; who uphold the teaching authority of the Church; and who are committed to updating their knowledge of theology and/or religious education reflective of Vatican II." Your name was submitted by the above named person as a reference. Following are several qualities and skills necessary to be a catechist. We would appreciate your assessment of the applicant with respect to these. Please complete the form and return it as soon as possible to the address below. We are grateful for your assistance and your regard for confidentiality.

---

### Catechetical Leader

	<u>Low</u>			<u>High</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>
Knowledge of the Catholic Faith	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Commitment to the Catholic Church	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Ability to share the Catholic faith with conviction and enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Ability to relate to children and adolescents	1	2	3	4	5	_____

Is there any reason you would not be willing to recommend this person as a catechist?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comment:

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship with this person?

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to: *Name & Position* \_\_\_\_\_

*Address* \_\_\_\_\_ *Phone* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Diocese of Rockford Required Safe Environment Documentation for Adult Employees and Volunteers**

Employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Rockford are required to comply with all Safe Environment documents and training(s) regardless of the parent/guardian being present during any parish function.

Employees that are full or part-time, and those volunteers who are considered to have contact with minors, will complete the requirements listed in their Virtus Online account ([www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)).

Individuals may also visit the Safe Environment Webpage for more information on compliance ([www.rockforddiocese.org](http://www.rockforddiocese.org) - click on Safe Environment).

*Employees and Volunteers include, but are not limited to: Coordinators or Directors of Religious Education, Coordinators or Directors of Youth Ministry, catechists, youth group leaders, family faith formation volunteers, lectors, cantors, eucharistic ministers, ushers, etc.*

## USING HIGH SCHOOL AGE STUDENTS IN CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS

Mindful that we, as Church, all have a responsibility to use our gift of faith for others, it is important that we encourage people of all ages to witness to the Gospel in the best way they can. Sometimes this will mean that we may invite teenagers to fulfill certain roles in catechetical programs.

Several principles must guide our decision to do this:

- Legal responsibilities that the parish and Catechetical Leader have are a vital consideration. When youth under the age of 18 are catechists, it is necessary to have adult supervision; that is, a responsible adult immediately available in the classroom, office and/or monitoring halls. Youth 18 and under, still in school are considered minors and do not need background checks. Students 18 and older who are out of high school are considered adults and must have a background check and PGC as well as signing all the required forms.
- Close supervision of the teenager by the Catechetical Leader is needed. This responsibility may be delegated to a building or program supervisor, long time catechist, or grade level coordinator. Clearly establish defined responsibilities in this regard.
- It is essential to insure that the designated content and sound catechetical methods are pursued, even in classes with the very young.

Areas in which teenagers could help will be determined by size of the parish, program and availability of personnel. Some examples are:

- An Aide:
  - ❑ An assistant: setting up, checking equipment, running a particular media form, putting away material and equipment. In this capacity they may even work with a catechist to be responsible for this part of a lesson.
  - ❑ Classroom aide: working with the catechist in taking attendance, correcting homework, preparing materials for art projects, supervise students in hallways.
  - ❑ Art aide for one or more grades: helping with projects created as learning activities/experiences for their lessons.

- A Catechetical Assistant: This role is defined as one who works with the catechist in the classroom on a continuing basis; that is, takes a story time, is responsible for creativity areas, perhaps teaches the music to the grade(s). In some instances, the assistant plans the lesson(s) with the catechist, and they work together as a team.
  
- A Catechist: This can be done with the very young age groups, that is 3-5 years old or in first grade; where lessons are frequently pre-planned, where storytelling, art and music help to build an attitude and environment for catechetical learning. It is necessary that an adult also be present or available at all times. Teenagers serving in this role, should be confirmed and generally be no younger than a junior in high school.

Each of the above assumes a responsible adult is in charge.

# SECTION 6

## WORKING WITH CATECHISTS

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<b>Developing a Catechist Handbook and/or Resource Packet</b>	<b>53</b>
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## THE CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM

Listed below are sessions that comprise the Catechist Formation Program for the Diocese of Rockford.

### **FORMATION**

### **SESSION DESCRIPTION**

#### **Core Formation**

8 sessions

Call to Holiness  
Created for Community  
Discipleship  
Encountering God  
Families of Faith  
God's Revelation  
Narrative of Faith  
The Vocation of the Catechist

#### **Doctrinal Formation**

8 sessions

Mary, the Saints, and Our Destiny  
Sacramental Life of the Church  
The Catechism of the Catholic Church  
The Mass and Theology of the Eucharist  
The Ten Commandments and Moral Decision Making  
The Trinity and the Creed  
Theology of the Church  
Understanding Sacred Scripture

#### **Ministerial Formation**

4 sessions

Leading Catholic Prayer  
Salvation History  
Stages of Faith Development in Participants / Students  
The Human Person

4 electives

There are a variety of sessions available for Elective credit. You will need to complete 4 of these sessions. They may be offered virtually, in-person, or pre-recorded. Go to the Catechist Formation section of the Catholic Education Office's website to pull up a current list.

#### **Continuing Formation Electives**

Upon completion of Core, Doctrinal, and Ministerial Formations the participant begins the Continuing Formation process with the goal of completing 18 hours of formation every 3 years. There are a variety of ways to complete these hours. Speak with your RDRE to learn more.

Revised 07/01/2024

## DEVELOPING A CATECHIST HANDBOOK AND/OR RESOURCE PACKET

Catechists deserve to know what is expected of them in the program in which they teach. They need information about the catechetical program as well as about the particular group of students with whom the catechist ministers.

Important components to consider in a catechist handbook and/or resource packet:

- Clear, concise explanation of the program vision
- A progression chart telling goals and objectives of the program and their grade level expectations of the particular age/grade level according to the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines and Learning Outcomes*.
- Complete calendar of the year
- Schedule of catechist meetings and workshops
- Responsibilities of staff members involved in the program
- Names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and office hours of Catechetical staff
- Names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, grade levels taught, time and day of classes and room numbers of catechists and helpers in the program.
- Student discipline policy and bullying policy
- Emergency procedures (evacuation for natural disaster, accidents involving children) c.f. *Diocesan Education Office Policies and Procedures*
- Communication procedures (e.g. mailboxes, memos, newsletters, email, text, flocknote)
- Suggestions for successful communication with families
- Listing of resources and support services available
- Administrative guidelines and how to:
  - obtain a substitute
  - purchase materials and arrange for reimbursement
  - plan time of arrival and departure in building
  - checking out materials
  - handle questions and problems as they arise
- Classroom management guidelines and how to:
  - maintain discipline
  - implement attendance policies
  - plan celebrations
  - implement clean-up
  - use classroom if shared with school
  - use teaching materials
  - use technology aids
- Class list of students: names, addresses, phone numbers, name of school students attend, grade levels, names of parents, notations regarding pertinent medical or allergy information.
- Addressing Gender Identity  
Youth and family are faced with numerous challenges pertaining to sexuality, gender, and identity. The Diocesan document of guidelines can be found at the website: <https://www.rockforddiocese.org/>. The specific links in English and Spanish are

posted under Developing a Parent/Family Handbook in section 9. In the document, items 1 – 3 articulate the expectations of all catechists, aides, volunteers, and everyone who participates in your parish’s formation / youth ministry programs. They must understand these expectations and norms of participation.

(revised 08/2022)

## CATECHIST PRAYER

For the gift of yourself to the world and to me;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For revealing yourself through Sacred Scripture;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For showing your love through the life, death and resurrection of your  
Son, Jesus;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For naming me your child and including me among your people;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For calling me to serve in the ministry of catechesis;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For giving me a story to tell and a faith to share;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For providing students with various gifts, needs and interests;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For preparing me to be a catechist;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For the vision of a world that loves you and seeks to live in peace;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

For the opportunity you give me to serve you and your people;  
Praise and thanks to you, O God.

Adapted from A Teacher's Litany of Praise and Thanksgiving, @ Basic Skills for Church Teachers by  
Donald L. Giggs

## WAYS TO SUPPORT AND RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

The role of the volunteer in the life and ministry of the Church is an important one. The life and ministry of the Church depends on those who volunteer their time and effort to do the various tasks and services that are helpful or necessary for the effective and faithful functioning of the Church.

Volunteers are often taken for granted. They, and the services they provide, often are unrecognized, not thanked, and unsupported. Yet, they deserve our recognition and gratitude.

Recognition is not just a way of saying "thank you," but a response to individual interests and reasons for being involved. It happens fairly automatically in a well-managed program, particularly if the atmosphere is friendly.

Following is a list of ways to support and recognize volunteers and the work they do. Add your own creative ideas and then plan how to implement as many as possible.

- Publish a list of persons who volunteer within the parish and post it on bulletin boards or in the parish bulletin.
- Plan a worship service around the theme of volunteers in ministry.
- Plan a volunteer recognition dinner, invite all volunteers and honor them with speeches, skits, certificates, awards, gifts.
- Reimburse the out-of-pocket costs volunteers incur as part of their involvement.
- Send a birthday, anniversary, Christmas, or Baptismal anniversary card.
- Provide child care service to enable mothers and fathers of young children to volunteer.
- Provide good orientation, ministry training and continuing education opportunities.
- Provide occasions for volunteers to get together for informal sharing of their experiences.
- Give additional responsibility to those ready to handle it.
- Send newsworthy information about the work of volunteers to local newspapers.
- Create pleasant surroundings for their work and meetings.
- Take time to talk with volunteers and express appreciation for their efforts.
- Share the positive comments you hear about volunteers and their work with them.
- Provide scholarships and expense money for volunteers to attend training and continuing education workshops.

- Write thank-you notes to volunteers.
- Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements.
- Provide good resources and equipment for their use.
- Praise volunteers to their friends.
- Provide opportunities for individual conferences.
- Maintain an accurate record of their training and work and be prepared to provide a reference for the volunteers when they seek employment or other ministries.
- Plan a volunteer-of-the-month recognition.
- Send a letter of appreciation to the person's family.
- Say "Thank You!"
- Smile.
- Ask volunteers to write statements on "Why I serve in this ministry" and publish them in the parish bulletin.
- Give the gift of appreciation, for example, a certificate of recognition, a book, or other memento appropriate to their ministry.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to assess their satisfactions, needs, learnings, and growth in ministry.
- Form volunteer support groups for sharing joys and concerns.
- Provide opportunities for members to develop or create ministries to match and use their skills and interests.
- Involve in problem solving.
- Put up a volunteer suggestion box.
- Offer effective orientation and training.
- Let trustworthy volunteers know you trust them.
- Invite to participate in planning and evaluation.
- Say "we missed you" when absent.
- Utilize unique talents and interests.
- Keep environment receptive to volunteers taking initiative.
- Keep records of ways and numbers of people helped by the volunteer.
- Have "get acquainted" staff and volunteer gathering.
- Provide area for volunteer lounge and coffee.
- Sponsor a holiday celebration or picnic for volunteers in the program.

Adapted from "Supporting Volunteers" in the series The Ministry of Volunteers© 1979, Office for Church Life and Leadership, United Church of Christ and Helping People Volunteer, Judy Ranner, Marlborough Publications© 1980.

## DIOCESAN CATECHIST AWARDS

The Catholic Education Office annually sponsors two awards that can be given to parish catechists:

- *Bishop O'Neill Award in Catechetics* allows the parish or school to recognize outstanding service and expertise by faithful Catholics in the ministry of Religious Education.
- *Long-Term Catechist Award* offers the opportunity to honor veteran catechists who have served in catechetical ministry for a minimum of ten years.

Candidates are nominated by the Pastor or Catechetical Leader, using forms sent from the diocesan office in May, to be returned by June 30th. Award certificates are then mailed to the Catechetical Leader and, typically, can be presented in a formal ceremony in the parish on Catechetical Sunday in September.

Pastors and Catechetical Leaders are encouraged to utilize this opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions to parish catechesis by faithful and committed catechists.

## CATECHIST SELF-ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Ordinarily, people who commit themselves to a task want to be successful in doing it. Catechists respond favorably to review and evaluation if they are, first of all, made aware of the methods and times of evaluation before they commit themselves to teach. Secondly, the catechist should be helped to see the purpose of the evaluation and to play a role in planning for it.

The process of evaluation can be a positive one when it affirms the good things that are taking place and offers practical strategies for improvement.

An initial step in the evaluation process of each volunteer can be an interview at the beginning of the year asking such questions as:

- What are you looking forward to?
- What are your hesitations?
- What help do you need?

During the course of the year the Catechetical Leader can pursue informal evaluations of the volunteer through open-ended questions such as:

- What are you doing that's going well?
- What would you like to do to make improvement?
- What will help you return for another period of service?

Similarly, at the end of the year, the Catechetical Leader can surface such questions as:

- How have things gone?
- How have you grown?
- What did you find most rewarding/frustrating?
- Would you/should you continue in this ministry?

A more formal evaluation can also be very helpful. Since the most productive evaluation is based on clearly stated goals and objectives, it follows that the Catechetical Leader and the catechist should meet to formulate such goals and objectives before a formal evaluation takes place. The evaluation is related to the clear role description that was given to the catechist at the time s/he made her/his commitment.

Refer to the following samples for ideas for developing your own catechist evaluation process.

## CATECHIST END OF YEAR SELF-ASSESSMENT

**Personal:** Was this a valuable experience for you?

- What did you enjoy most?
- What was most difficult for you?
- Did you have access to the resources you needed?

**Classroom:** Do you think you were successful?

- Were the students generally cooperative?
- Were there discipline problems?
- What did they like best about the class?
- What did they like least about the class?

**Lesson Planning:** Did you see improvement over the year in regard to:

- Placing Jesus as the center of each of your lessons?
- Incorporating storytelling?
- Using technology?
- Using drama and music?
- Using art and craft projects?
- Planning Liturgy?

What helped you grow spiritually this year?

Did you feel supported by the catechetical leader, the pastor, the other catechists?

## END OF YEAR CATECHIST SURVEY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I will teach next year. \_\_\_\_\_

Grade I would like to teach: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be unable to teach next year. \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions for improving the program for next year: (write on back if needed)

Other people we might contact to teach:

I would like to help teach Vacation Bible School this summer. \_\_\_\_\_

People we might contact to teach in the VBS program:

# SECTION 7

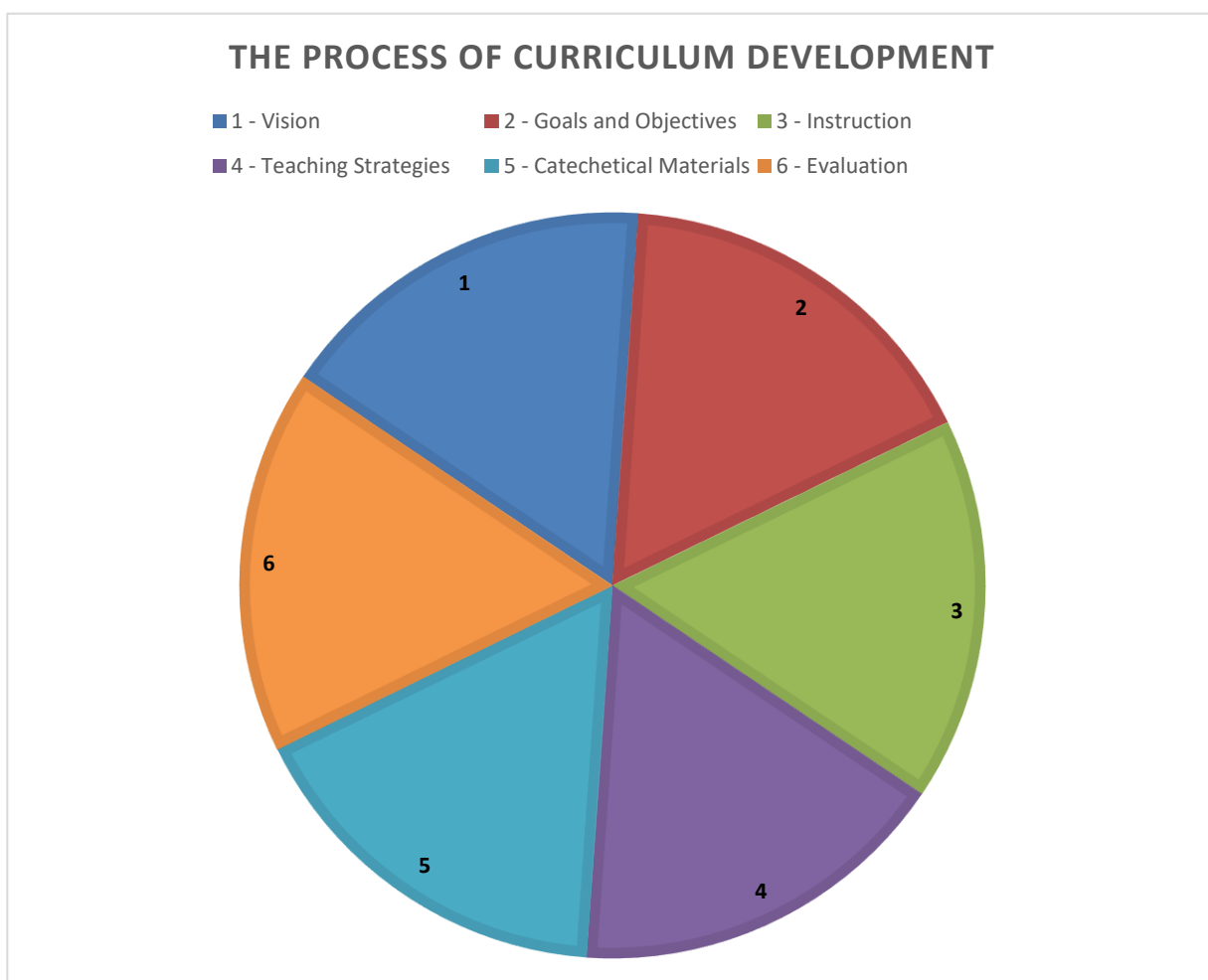
## CATECHESIS AND INSTRUCTION

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## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In their efforts to express and hand on the Deposit of Faith in an organic and systematic way, effective Catechetical Leaders will develop and follow a curriculum, i.e. a carefully sculpted course of instruction that allows all of the faithful in a particular parish an opportunity to come to know the entirety of the Catholic faith. Every Catechetical Leader is responsible for curriculum development. Prior to finalizing a curriculum for a given parish, a Catechetical Leader would want to first consult and follow the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines* which serve as the basis for establishing any course of religious instruction on the elementary and secondary level. The following pages offer information and suggestions for developing and tailoring a curriculum for parish religious education programs.

The process of curriculum development is illustrated with the chart below. The process begins with the writing of a Vision Statement (step 1) and concludes with Evaluation of the learning (step 6) after which the Catechetical Leader begins the process once again. The process of curriculum development is an ongoing process.



## THE PROCESS

1. Vision Statement (see page 70) -
  - The Group's beliefs about teaching and religious education.
  - I believe this about...
2. Goals/Objectives (see pages 71 through 73) -
  - The broad overall aim(s) of the program
  - Therefore, my goal(s) is/are...
3. Instruction (See page 74 and the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines*) -
  - The identification of what is to be taught and when it is to be taught.
  - I will reach my goal(s) by doing these things...in this order...
4. Teaching Strategies (student ability, learning styles, grouping, time management) – (See the Teacher's Manual) -
  - How the material will be taught based on the needs of the students.
  - I will go about accomplishing this in this manner...
5. Catechetical Materials (see page 75) -
  - The texts, Teacher's Manual and materials that will facilitate the teaching.
  - I will use these resources...
6. Evaluation (see pages 76 through 79) -
  - Check to see if my goal(s) has/have been reached...
  - I will make changes based on Evaluation.

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A VISION STATEMENT

### Definition

- A vision statement for a religious education program is a parish's:
  - ❑ Reflection upon itself,
  - ❑ Expression of what it will become,
  - ❑ Naming of the action by which this will be done.

### Elements contained in the vision statement

- A statement of how the parish calls people together into a believing community.
- A statement of its value system in relationship to the values of Jesus.
- A statement as to how the parish sees itself in relationship to the secular world in its broader context as well as its immediate surroundings.
- A statement of its faith belief and ecclesiology; i.e., how it sees itself in relation to God and the Church.
- Reference to the relationship between the transcendental and experiential elements, which create the context of the parish as a believing community.
- The vision statement has a unifying theological theme; such as, a message, community, worship and service, etc.

The vision statement is in harmony with the mission statement of the parish and shows its relationship to the latter.

The vision statement gives direction to the formulation of long-range goals and short range objectives which promote the faith life of the parish.

The vision statement is based upon an understanding of the makeup of the parish, i.e., sociologic, demographic, economic, ethnic, etc.

## CLARIFICATIONS FOR WRITING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOALS:** Statements of broad direction; purposes which identify an outcome to be achieved.

- States in general terms, and usually begins with “to” followed by an action verb.
- Challenges and inspires in that they call for an outcome that does not currently exist but is seen as helpful and desirable.
- Calls for personal investment and involvement by participants.
- Provides a long-range time target, encompassing three to five years.
- Ties into the vision statement for which the organization exists.
- Achieves through a series of objectives.

**OBJECTIVES:** Action plans which are developed to achieve a goal.

- Produces a single result when accomplished.
- Specifies for or with whom an action is done.
- Has a specific date for accomplishment.
- Is measurable.
- Is clear and understandable.
- Is realistic and attainable.
- Accomplishes the expected result, i.e., the implementation of the goal.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVE WORKSHEET

Goal Statement

Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective	Person Responsible	Completed By

## ACTION WORDS FOR WRITING OBJECTIVES

add	estimate	make	share
analyze	evaluate	mark	sharpen
answer	expand	meet	shorten
appraise	explain	motivate	signify
apply	extend		simplify
arrange		name	solve
assemble	finish		sort
attend	formulate	offer	speak
		open	specify
begin	gather	operate	spread
	generate	order	start
chart	greet	organize	store
choose	guide	outline	straighten
classify			structure
clean	handle	participate	study
clear	help	plan	suggest
collect		plant	summarize
communicate	identify	praise	supply
complete	include	prepare	support
compliment	increase	present	switch
compute	indicate	produce	synthesize
conduct	inform	prove	systematize
connect	insert	provide	
consider co-	integrate	put	tabulate
operate	interact		take
criticize	invite	raise	talk
cut	itemize	record	tear
		reduce	thank
decide	join	relate	think
decrease		remove	time
define	keep	repeat	touch
demonstrate	know	replace	type
describe		report	
design	label	return	uncover
designate	lead	review	understand
determine	lengthen	revise	use
develop	limit		
disagree	list	search select	verify
discover	listen	self-actualize	volunteer
distribute	locate	send	
do	look	serve	watch
		set	

## CATECHESIS AND INSTRUCTION

The Catechetical Leader follows principles found in the *Vision for Catechesis in the Diocese of Rockford* (pg. 5) which provides a framework for the development of catechetical programs for persons of all ages and needs. The Catechetical Leader:

- Develops a vision statement for religious education within the context of his/her particular parish.
- Develops goals and objectives for religious education within the framework of the vision statement.
- Develops and designs the catechetical curriculum, as well as the scope and sequence, within the context of the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines, Diocesan Learning Outcomes*, the Scriptures and Catholic Tradition, as established in normative ecclesial documents including:
  - ❑ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
  - ❑ *Documents of Vatican II*
  - ❑ *General Directory for Catechesis*
  - ❑ *Catechesi Tradendae*
  - ❑ *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis*
  - ❑ *Renewing the Vision*
  - ❑ *National Directory for Catechesis*
  - ❑ *Directory for Catechesis*
  - ❑ *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*
- Evaluates, selects, and provides suitable curriculum materials.
- Oversees children for the Sacraments of Initiation following the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
- Instructs catechists on how to use a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of a diverse community of learners.
- Maintains an environment that promotes learning and fosters spiritual growth.
- Assists catechists to evaluate the mastery of concepts through a variety of assessment procedures.
- Evaluates the Religious Education mission's effectiveness with students, parents, and catechists.
- Maintains a maximum class size ratio of 15 students to 1 catechist.
- Assesses the overall effectiveness of the catechetical ministry of the parish.

## SELECTING CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

The Catechetical Leader is responsible for the selection of catechetical materials. Any primary textbook used must appear on the most current USCCB Conformity Listing of Texts and Series (see the link below). Any item not appearing on this conformity list can only be used as supplemental material to your primary textbook.

There are several points to consider prior to your selection.

- Select a representative committee to discuss and review the context and content of the materials being considered.
- Review the current catechetical materials being used...
  - How is it satisfactory?
  - How does it help meet the goals and objectives of the program?
  - How is it unsatisfactory?
  - What more is needed to help meet the parish catechetical goals?
  - Review the variety of catechetical materials in light of the above discussion. Narrow the number of series to be looked at more closely to no more than two or three.
- Use a common instrument to evaluate material for your parish catechetical programs. For example: How to Choose Catechetical Texts, NCCL, 2005.

### Resources

- *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines*, <https://www.ceorockford.org/religion-curriculum/>
- *Diocesan Learning Outcomes*, <https://www.ceorockford.org/religion-curriculum-learning-outcomes/>
- *Conformity Listing of Texts and Series*, <https://www.usccb.org/resources/CurrentConformityList.pdf>

(revised 06/06/2022)

## DEVELOPING A PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Catechetical Leader is responsible for evaluating the program and catechists. There is more than one right way to do an evaluation. No one method or model will reveal all there is to know about a program or person. Therefore, you might consider using a variety of methods and approaches.

Evaluations are a wonderful way to get a handle on the strengths and weaknesses of a program, as well as future avenues for growth. By nature we evaluate things, so why not harness this natural tendency into action, which is positive and pro-active for the program.

Some very important questions are: "What do you want to know, or whose input would you like to receive?" For example, there may be a question about when classes meet. If you are curious about the schedule and have some flexibility in time offerings, you might ask the parents for their time preferences or convenience. However, if the church calendar is full and there are only the current times available for the program to meet, you might not want to ask. If you don't want input on something, don't ask for it.

Many evaluations are based on goals and objectives of a program. This is a great way to see if you are accomplishing that which you set out to do. However, if this is all you look at, it may not lead you to new and creative alternatives. Keep in mind...What do you want to know, and whose input do you need?

Another point to consider is when to evaluate. We often engage in evaluations at the end of the year or just before the renewal of contract. Major evaluations seem to fit well into this time frame, however you might consider using other times of the year as well. A simple evaluation of your catechists in the first quarter could help prevent problems later. Keep in mind there is not one method or perfect time of year to evaluate. It all depends on what you want to know.

## Methods for Evaluation

**Number ranking** – This technique usually employs a scale of some sort. This allows for easy tabulation of results, however, it may not allow for personal comments and explanations. For example:

How well did you like the materials used in the program this year?

Pleased			Neutral			Displeased			
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

**Open-ended questions** – This technique allows for the most flexibility in responding. For example: what did you like most about the materials you used this year? If all things were possible, what additional materials would you like to have available?

**Observing** – Many facets of a program can be observed by simply walking around. The Catechetical Leader can do this during session time. For example: perhaps you want to evaluate the level of participation in the classroom. Walking around and observing the classes in action is one way to gather information. Another option is to have outsiders come and observe the program in action. You might ask one or more persons to come and observe the program; i.e., another Catechetical Leader from a nearby parish, a parent, another staff member, or an Education Commission member. The latter can be very helpful if you are in need of budget monies allocated to a special project. Suppose you need more space. It is one thing to talk about the number and the need. It is another thing to see the classes in action stuffed into their little rooms.

**Interviewing** – Interviewing is an excellent tool for gathering information about the program or staff. Those to be interviewed should be selected from a cross section of the group. Formulate your list of questions, and then set up times of the various interviews. Interviews work best when the questions are allowed to arise in the natural flow of conversation rather than a strict order approach.

**Sampling** – It is not always necessary to gather everyone's opinion in an evaluation, and the reality is that everyone will not fill out the evaluation form and send it back. Therefore, you might consider asking only the first, third and fifth grade parents to evaluate the program. This way you get a random sample without the burden of so many surveys.

# END OF YEAR PROGRAM EVALUATION

## Catechist

Material – (Write on the reverse side if needed.)

- Was the material easy to use?
  
- What did you like most about the material you used?
  
- Were there areas that you felt could be improved?
  
- Any other comments?

Classroom Information – (Write on the reverse side if needed.)

- Did you like the class period length?
  
- Did you have enough time to cover the material?
  
- How was the discipline in your classroom?
  
- Were the students cooperative? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, how did you handle those who were a challenge?

How were the Catechist meetings or training sessions helpful?

How was the Catechetical Leader helpful? (Write on the reverse side if needed.)

Any other comments or suggestions. (Write on the reverse side if needed.)

Name (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return by \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

# END OF YEAR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

## Parent

Please fill out the following and return to the Catechetical Leader.

NAME (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level of child in the Religious Education Program \_\_\_\_\_

- How would you rate each of the following?

(Place an "X" under the appropriate category.)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Known
Program Content					
Quality of Materials					
Room/Space					
Time/Scheduling					
Social Events					
Service Projects					
Liturgical Participation					
1 <sup>st</sup> Reconciliation Preparation					
1 <sup>st</sup> Communion Preparation					
Confirmation Preparation					

- Please comment on your child's spiritual growth and/or behavioral improvement as a result of religious education this year.
  
- What do you think is the best aspect of the Religious Education Program?
  
- What is the one change or improvement you feel would best benefit you, your families, and/or the program?
  
- We welcome other comments regarding the Religious Education Program. Please share your thoughts with us, using the back of this form if necessary.

## GUIDELINES FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR HOME-SCHOOLED CHILDREN

The Diocese of Rockford recognizes that Catholic parents and those who function “in loco parentis” have the primary responsibility of instilling in their children the beliefs and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. In this regard, The Code of Canon Law stipulates that:

- The parents have a right to prepare their children for the sacraments.
- The pastor alone determines the readiness of the child(ren) and the time at which the sacrament may be received.

Therefore, those parents who choose to home-school their children, and do not choose to register their children with their parish religious education program, have the primary responsibility for sacramental preparation, in conjunction with the pastor.

When the home-schooling parent judges that the child is prepared to receive a sacrament, the following guidelines are pertinent:

- The family must be registered members of the parish from which they want their child to receive the sacrament.
- The parent(s) contact the pastor and arrange a conference.
- At the time of the conference, the pastor has a duty and the authority to determine the readiness of the child; such determination is made in keeping with the norms established for catechetical formation by the Diocese of Rockford, Catholic Education Office.
- Once preparedness has been established, the pastor and parent(s) will cooperatively choose a time appropriate for reception of the sacrament.

To assist all parents, Pastors, Catechetical Leaders and catechists, a copy of the norms established as set forth in the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines* and the *Diocesan Confirmation Guidelines* are available from the Catholic Education Office. These guidelines will also be provided to the parents of home-schooled children upon request.

## A MEMORANDUM FROM A CHILD

Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for.	I'm only testing you.
Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it.	It lets me know where I stand.
Don't use force with me. It teaches me that power is all that counts.	I will respond more readily to being led.
Don't be inconsistent.	That confuses me and makes me try to get away with everything I can.
Don't make promises; you may not be able to keep them.	That will discourage my trust in you.
Don't fall for my provocations when I say and do things just to upset you.	Then I'll try for such victories.
Don't be too upset when I say "I hate you."	I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me.
Don't make me feel smaller than I am.	I will make up for it by behaving like a "big shot."
Don't do things for me that I can do for myself. It makes me feel like a baby.	It only encourages me to continue them.
Don't let my "bad habits" get me a lot of your attention.	It only encourages me to continue them.
Don't correct me in front of other people.	I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
Don't try to discuss my behavior in the heat of a conflict.	For some reason my hearing is not very good at this time and my cooperation is even worse. It is all right to take the action required, but let's not talk about it until later.
Don't try to preach to me.	You'd be surprised how well I know what's right and wrong.
Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins.	I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I'm no good.

Don't nag.	If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
Don't demand explanation for my wrong behavior.	I really don't know why I did it.
Don't tax my honesty too much.	I am easily frightened into telling lies.
Don't forget that I love and use experimenting.	I learn from it, so please put up with it.
Don't protect me from consequences.	I need to learn from experience.
Don't take too much notice of my small ailments.	I may learn to enjoy poor health if it gets me too much attention.
Don't put me off when I ask honest questions.	If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.
Don't answer "silly" or meaningless questions.	I just want you to keep busy with me.
Don't ever think that it is beneath your dignity to apologize to me.	An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm toward you.
Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible.	It gives me too much to live up to.
Don't let my fears arouse your anxiety.	Then I will become more afraid. Show me courage.
Don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of understanding, encouragement.	But I don't need to tell you that, do I?

TREAT ME THE WAY YOU TREAT YOUR FRIENDS, THEN I WILL BE YOUR FRIEND, TOO. REMEMBER, I LEARN MORE FROM A MODEL THAN A CRITIC.

Source Unknown

## SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS

Students with disabilities come to religious education programs with special needs. Whenever possible, these students are to be included in the parish program, and should use the same materials modified for individual understanding.

Parish sacramental preparation and celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full participation, according to their capacity.

The Department of Educational Services suggests that a Catechetical Leader recruit parishioners with degrees in special education or learning disabilities to assist students with special needs. When specialists are not available, the Catechetical Leader should assist the catechist in creatively adapting the curriculum, materials and methods to meet the special needs of the student. It may be possible for neighboring parishes to share resources.

Documents available for ministering to religious education students with special needs are:

*Opening Doors: Strategies for Including all Students in Regular Education*

C. Beth Schaffner and Barbara E. Buswell, 1991, PEAK Parent Center, Inc., 611 N Weber, Ste 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

*Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities*, USCCB

*Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, USCCB

NCCB/USCCB Catholic Organizations for Disability Concerns:

*National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities*, P. O. Box 29113, Washington, D.C. 20017.  
(202) 529-2933 [ncpd@ncpd.org](mailto:ncpd@ncpd.org)

*National Apostolate for Inclusion Ministry*, P.O. Box 3-70, Laurel, MD 20709 (800) 736-1280  
[NAIM-USA@EROLS.com](mailto:NAIM-USA@EROLS.com)

*National Catholic Office for the Deaf*, 7202 Buchanan Street, Landover Hills, MD 20781-2236  
(301) 577-4184 (TTY)

Suggested Materials for use with Special Needs Programs:

- *Loyola Sacramental Kits* <https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/special-needs/adaptive-learning-kits/>  
Adaptive First Eucharist, Reconciliation & Confirmation.
- SPRED programs located in specific locations throughout the diocese.
- Contact your Regional Office of Religious Education for additional suggestions.

# SECTION 8

## STUDENT SERVICES

<b>Student Services Outline</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Record Retention Guidelines</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Transfer Form for Parish Religious Education Program</b>	<b>84</b>
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## STUDENT SERVICES OUTLINE

The Catechetical Leader is responsible for the administrative tasks related to student services:

### Registration

- Family information which gathers family, catechetical, Sacramental and medical history pertinent to a child's successful experience in religious education.
- Registration of student in a specific class.
- Person - other than parent - and telephone number to contact in case of emergency. Parent or guardian filling out the form is to notify the person listed as emergency contact.
- Special information such as learning disabilities, allergies or other medical problems. This information is to be made available to the student's catechist when appropriate.
- Name and address of persons to whom mailings are sent during the school year.
- Sacramental information, including date and place (church/city/state) of each Sacrament received. For example, Baptismal information is needed on each child before reception of First Communion.
- Parent or Guardian must give permission for pictures – in which their child appears – to be printed or posted. Photo Permission – See Form on page 86

### Files

- Student catechetical records
- Family information forms
- Program registration forms
- Other special forms relating to the specific child

### Attendance

- Requests that parents call in advance if a child will be absent.
- Takes attendance and calls parents if notification of a child's absence has not been received.

### Students Records – See Form on page 87

- Student records are confidential documents. Only those who are directly involved with teaching the child have access to them.
- These student records are anecdotal. They are not formal legal records.
- Keeps students records accurate. Keeps track of Sacramental preparation and reception. Makes them available to parents when a family moves from the parish.
- Ensures that all Baptisms, First Communions and Confirmations celebrated in the parish are recorded in the parish Sacramental Record Book.

- Ensures that student's record of First Communion and Confirmation is sent to his/her church of Baptism if other than present parish.

### **Environment**

- Provides a safe space for each class that is conducive to learning.
- Collaborates with principal for expectation of use of school classrooms.
- Conducts fire and tornado drills per diocesan policy.
- Provides catechists with attendance sheets in their possession at all times to ensure that all students have been evacuated in the event of an emergency.
- Refer to Section 10 of the Catechetical Leaders Handbook for Safety and Evacuation Procedures.

### **Performance and Behavior**

- Develops discipline policies and procedures. cf. *Catholic Education Office Handbook of Policies and Procedures* #5165 and #5170.
- Ensures all discipline policies and procedures are enforced.

### **Off-Site Activities**

- Refer to *Guidelines for Youth and Those Working with Youth*.
- Ensures that all participating volunteer adults have completed training for *Protecting God's Children*<sup>TM</sup>.
- Obtains completed Permission Forms for all youth participating in an off-site activity.
- Assures that an adult chaperone brings along the original permission forms for immediate access to medical information in the event of an emergency. A copy stays on file in the Catechetical Leader's office.
- Ensures that volunteer drivers of youth in the program are adequately insured.
- Keeps insurance information on file in Catechetical Leader's office.

### **Special Religious Education**

- Reaches out to families with special needs children.
- Chooses texts and other special education material.
- Achieves inclusion in a regular class for a special student when appropriate.
- Refers to Special Religious Education in Catechesis & Instruction (See *Catechetical Leader Handbook* Section 7 page 78.)

# RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES

## Personnel Files

According to Diocesan directive, personnel files are kept for three years after date of termination. See the Record Retention Schedule document posted on the diocesan webpage under the *Forms and Documents* section for this information and additional information regarding payroll records.

## Safe Environment Files

All safe environment files are to be kept indefinitely, either digitally or in paper form.

## Catechist Files

Catechist Files contain a role description, basic information sheet, required forms, and catechist formation records. While there is no formal policy on the retention of catechist files, the norm is based on what is reasonable. Therefore, this is what is recommended.

Obviously, when a catechist is active the file remains open and the diocesan required safe environment forms are signed and filed accordingly at the parish level.

If the catechist is inactive for longer than 5 years and then returns to the program it is recommended that a new file be established, which includes the documents listed above and completion of all new required safe environment forms that have been updated since the catechists' last signature. The exception to this would be the Protecting God's Children certificate. PGC is taken only once and the certificate is good forever.

Based on this interpretation, if the catechist is inactive and/or leaves the program the recommendation is that their file, *excluding* the safe environment forms may be discarded after five years.

Something to consider would be catechist formation information. Over the years there have been issues regarding a catechist's status. For example, a person volunteers as a catechist in the parish program, leaves for a few years, comes back to teach in the parish, another parish, or one of our schools. There are often incomplete formation records or none at all, causing confusion or frustration for the catechist and catechetical leader. Therefore, if a catechist becomes inactive it is recommended that their formation records be given to the catechist for their personal records, and keep an electronic copy in the office.

With the ease of storing these records electronically, it is recommended to get people Level II certified so this information is in the diocesan database, which can always be retrieved. If this Level cannot be achieved, the formation files can be electronically kept

for ten years. By then a parish or school would have a good sense if someone were no longer active as a catechist or teacher.

### **Student Files**

Student Files contain catechetical records, family information forms, program registration forms, attendance sheets, permission slips, photo permission forms, and other special forms relating to the child. These files can be discarded five years after confirmation. Given the age of confirmation in the Rockford Diocese, it is best to keep the files until the end of High School.

Baptismal Certificates and Sponsor information for First Communion can be discarded at the end of the academic year after the sacrament has been received and the information recorded in the parish sacramental registry.

Baptismal Certificates and Sponsor information for Confirmation can be discarded at the end of the academic year after the sacrament has been received and the information recorded in the parish sacramental registry.

**TRANSFER FORM  
FOR PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name	Grade(s) Attended	Sacramental Reception (Dates and Age of Reception)	Absences in Last Year

Name of former parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Catechetical Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per year in the Parish Religious Education Program: \_\_\_\_\_

**WELCOME NEW STUDENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Catechist Name**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Grade/Room**

Please welcome \_\_\_\_\_ to your room.

Special notes:

**WELCOME NEW STUDENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Catechist Name**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Grade/Room**

Please welcome \_\_\_\_\_ to your room.

Special notes:

## PHOTO PERMISSION SLIP

From time to time we take pictures during \_\_\_\_\_ activities.  
[name of parish or school or ministry]

We would like your permission to use these pictures...

- \_\_\_\_\_ on the parish or school website,
- \_\_\_\_\_ on the parish or school's official Facebook page,
- \_\_\_\_\_ in the parish or school newsletter
- \_\_\_\_\_ on the parish or school bulletin boards
- \_\_\_\_\_ in the parish bulletin
- \_\_\_\_\_ in The Observer/El Observador
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Pictures are selected to highlight activities at our parish/school.

*Please take a moment to let us know your preferences regarding our use of photos of your children:*

\_\_\_\_\_ YES. I grant permission to use photos of my child in the ways I've indicated above with an X.

-OR-

\_\_\_\_\_ NO. Please do NOT take or use any photos of my child.

If I marked an X next to The Observer/El Observador, the official newspapers of the Diocese of Rockford, I also give permission for my child's name to be identified as being in the photo.

If I marked an X next to any of the others (on the parish or school website, on the parish or school official Facebook page, in the parish or school newsletter, on the parish or school bulletin boards, in the parish bulletin, or other) I understand my child's name will not be used.

Child(ren)'s Name(s) (PLEASE PRINT):

---

---

---

Parent/Guardian's Name (PLEASE PRINT):

---

Parent/Guardian's Signature:

---

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 06/2018

STUDENT' S FULL NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
FAMILY LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT'S CATECHETICAL  
RECORD CARD**

\_\_\_\_\_ **PARISH**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Father' s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother' s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Information

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptism Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptism Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptism City: \_\_\_\_\_

First Reconciliation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

First Reconciliation Church: \_\_\_\_\_

First Communion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

First Communion Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade

K \_\_\_\_\_

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 \_\_\_\_\_

11 \_\_\_\_\_

12 \_\_\_\_\_

# Absences

Misc. Notes

Additional Remarks

## PERMISSION SLIP

1. Consent: I grant my permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to attend and participate in \_\_\_\_\_  
[SCHOOL SPONSORED and/or CHURCH SPONSORED ACTIVITY]

(hereinafter referred to as "Activity") to be held at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
[INCLUSIVE DATE OR DATES] [LOCATION]

2. Student Cooperation: My child agrees to abide by all the rules of aforementioned Activity and to obey the staff in charge of this Activity. The Parish, School, and Diocese will not be liable for my child's failure to cooperate and/or to abide by the rules. Any infraction of the rules may result in the immediate dismissal of my child from the Activity at my expense and without refund to me of the costs paid for the Activity.
3. First-Aid/Emergency Treatment: I authorize the School, Parish, and Diocese and its employees and volunteers to administer first-aid to my child if deemed necessary and appropriate to preserve the life, limb or well-being of my child. I authorize the Parish, School, and Diocese to contact and engage medical personnel and arrange for emergency treatment of my child, including transportation for medical, dental, surgical or hospital care or diagnosis, and I consent to that treatment for my child. I agree that I am financially responsible for such medical treatment.
4. Administration of Medication provided by parent/guardian of child: If my child needs to take prescription or non-prescription medication during this Activity, I have provided the medication in its original container. I give permission to an adult employee or adult volunteer to administer the medication or assist in the administration of the medication to my child in the dosage prescribed by the prescription or, for non-prescription medication, the dosage recommended on the container by the manufacturer. If there are explicit instructions for this medication, I state them here:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Release: I hereby release and discharge The Diocese of Rockford and its Bishop, and the Parish and School, and the officers, directors, employees, and volunteers of same, from all claims for personal injuries or property damage that I or my child may suffer while my child is attending and/or participating in the Activity, unless the injuries or damage resulted from willful misconduct of the Diocese, the Parish, the School or its employees. If I have provided medication for my child to take during this Activity, I hereby release and discharge The Diocese of Rockford and its Bishop, and the Parish and School, and the officers, directors, employees, and volunteers of same, from all claims for personal injuries or property damage that I or my child may suffer as a result of the administration of or lack of assistance in or lack of assistance in the administration of said medication to my child, whether by my child and/or an adult employee and/or an adult volunteer; unless the injuries or damage resulted from willful misconduct of the Diocese, the Parish, the School or its employees.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
[PLEASE PRINT]

Effective September 17, 2015  
Revised January 1, 2016

## PERMISSION SLIP FOR MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES

1. Consent: I grant my permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to attend and participate in the activities identified on page 2 of this Permission Slip (these events are referred to in this Permission Slip as "Activities").
  
2. Student Cooperation: My child agrees to abide by all the rules of these Activities and to obey the staff in charge of these Activities. The Parish, School, and Diocese will not be liable for my child's failure to cooperate and/or to abide by the rules. Any infraction of the rules may result in the immediate dismissal of my child from the Activity or Activities at my expense and without refund to me of the costs paid for the Activity or Activities.
  
3. First-Aid/Emergency Treatment: I authorize the School, Parish, and Diocese and its employees and volunteers to administer first-aid to my child if deemed necessary and appropriate to preserve the life, limb or well-being of my child. I authorize the Parish, School, and Diocese to contact and engage medical personnel and arrange for emergency treatment of my child, including transportation for medical, dental, surgical or hospital care or diagnosis, and I consent to that treatment for my child. I agree that I am financially responsible for such medical treatment.
  
4. Administration of Medication provided by parent/guardian of child: If my child needs to take prescription or non-prescription medication at any of these Activities, I will provide the medication in its original container. I give permission to an adult employee or adult volunteer to administer that medication or assist in the administration of that medication to my child in the dosage prescribed by the prescription or, for non-prescription medication, the dosage recommended on the container by the manufacturer. If there are explicit instructions for this medication, I will provide same in writing.
  
5. Release: I hereby release and discharge The Diocese of Rockford and its Bishop, and the Parish and School, and the officers, directors, employees, and volunteers of same, from all claims for personal injuries or property damage that I or my child may suffer while my child is attending and/or participating in any of the Activities identified on page 2 of this Permission Slip, unless the injuries or damage resulted from willful misconduct of the Diocese, the Parish, the School or its employees. If I provide medication for my child to take during any of these Activities, I hereby release and discharge The Diocese of Rockford and its Bishop, and the Parish and School, and the officers, directors, employees, and volunteers of same, from all claims for personal injuries or property damage that I or my child may suffer as a result of the administration of or lack of administration of or assistance in or lack of assistance in the administration of said medication to my child, whether by my child and/or an adult employee and/or an adult volunteer; unless the injuries or damage resulted from willful misconduct of the Diocese, the Parish, the School or its employees.
  
6. In the event I later decide to not allow my child to attend an Activity identified on Page 2 of this Permission Slip, I understand I am required to notify the parish/school/Diocesan entity in writing to the following email address:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_.



## STUDENT OR YOUTH EMERGENCY INFORMATION

PARISH/SCHOOL/DIOCESAN ENTITY: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Only ONE EMERGENCY INFORMATION form per family unit is necessary.

Full Name of Child	Sex	Date of Birth	Special Health Condition (describe) or Medication prescribed or Dietary needs, etc.

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mother/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's work number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Father/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's work number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

If divorced, name of legal custodial parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Do Mother and Father have Joint Custody? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

If custodial parent cannot be reached, may we contact non-custodial parent? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSIBLE ADULT(S) who have agreed to assume responsibility for child, if parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Name	Address	Phone	Relationship to Child

Physician of Choice: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital of Choice: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If I, or responsible adult, and physician of choice, as indicated above, cannot be reached in an emergency and immediate medical and/or hospital attention is indicated I hereby authorize the transporting of my child to a hospital or physician for treatment.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective September 17, 2015  
Reviewed January 1, 2016

# SECTION 9

## COMMUNICATION

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## LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Good communication is an important aspect of a Catechetical Leader's role. This means keeping open all lines of communication. The Catechetical Leader (in programs for which s/he is responsible) communicates with many different people and groups:

### **With Pastor**

- Is accountable to the Pastor.
- Communicates and/or meets regularly with the Pastor.
- Advises the Pastor of trends which will affect catechetical planning.
- Recommends the shaping of parish policies affecting catechesis.
- Establishes, reviews and evaluates mutual expectations with the Pastor.
- Collaborates with the Pastor in implementing the catechetical policies of the diocese and the parish.
- Serves as a resource person on catechetical issues.

### **With Parish Staff**

- Communicates and meets regularly with the other members of the parish staff.
- Advises the staff with regard to catechetical program planning.
- Participates in experiences of faith development.
- Serves as a resource person regarding catechetical issues.
- Collaborates in the development of the religious education catechetical plan.
- Advises the staff with regard to catechetical program planning.

### **With Principal**

- Serves as a theological resource to the principal and faculty on catechetical issues.
- Informs the principal and faculty of catechist formation training opportunities.
- Coordinates calendar and program planning with the principal.
- Collaborates with the principal in the sharing of facilities and resources.
- Informs principal of corrective maintenance needed and/or incidents of vandalism.

### **With Parents**

- Assists parents in their role as primary religious educators.
- Communicates regularly with families on matters of catechetical interest.
- Communicates a catechetical calendar for the year.
- Advertises the catechetical program several weeks prior to registration.

- Organizes meetings for parents, such as a parent session for those whose children are celebrating a Sacrament.
- Writes letters to parents as appropriate.
- Contacts families when needs of individual students call for it.
- Facilitates family participation in the on-going development of the parish catechetical program.
- Establishes clear channels through which parents can communicate with the catechist.

### **With Students**

- Informs students of activities and services provided for them.
- Participates in activities provided for students.

### **With Catechists**

- Shares the vision and goals of the parish Religious Education program(s) with catechists.
- Communicates the importance of fulfilling diocesan, deanery, and parish policies.
- Encourages catechists to attend catechist formation training opportunities for catechists.
- Provides opportunities for faith sharing among the group.
- Communicates all correspondence sent to parents.
- Supports catechists in their teaching ministry.

### **With Commission (Where Applicable)**

- Reports regularly on developments in parish catechetical programs.
- Advises the Education Commission with regard to catechetical program planning.

### **With Parish**

- Supports parish projects and programs.
- Assumes leadership in the faith formation of catechists, parents, children and adults of the community.
- Encourages and develops a spirit of Christian service.
- Explains rationale and enlists parish participation and help in catechetical programs.
- Communicates with others in a way that invites their support for participation in the catechetical ministry.
- Assesses parish and community reaction to catechetical programs.

## DEVELOPING A PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK

### Why create a Religious Education Handbook for your program?

A Religious Education Handbook conveys a message about your program. From the cover to the final page, it sets an image for your program. It says to the parents that faith formation is very important, and how they can be involved with their child's religious instruction.

Handbooks are a great way to communicate with the families. In a concise way it allows them to know the basic expectations of the program, and the rules and guidelines that help the program run smoothly. It is a chance to answer many of the basic questions without picking up the phone. For example, it is January 8, and classes are to meet tonight; however, it is snowing. Will the children have class tonight? Several parents will pick up the phone and call you; however, some will remember to look in the handbook for Inclement Weather." Here they will read the plan for the cancellation of classes in the event of snow. Remember, a well-planned handbook can save you time and phone calls.

Keep in mind, no two parish Religious Education Handbooks will look alike. Just as each parish is different, each program will vary. The purpose of this guide is to assist you in evaluating your existing handbook, and to provide suggestions for those writing their first handbook. Don't forget, these are living documents. No matter how well you prepare the first one, there will always be future revisions and additions.

### Helpful Hints for Writing Handbooks

- Handbooks must be readable, concise, and to the point. Try to avoid unnecessary prose, educational jargon, and slang.
- Organize your material in a logical manner. Use bullets or numbers in a series of points as we have done here. A table of contents will allow easy usage of the handbook.
- Important items should be positioned so they can be found quickly. It might be wise to **bold** these items, but do not use this technique too often.
- Make sure your type is easy to read. Type that is too large or too small is difficult to read.
- Do not say **should** if you mean **must**, **may** if you mean **shall**, or **could** if you mean **would**.
- Don't use the word **always** when you mean **usually** or **ordinarily**. Give yourself some flexibility.
- Be consistent in your style. Use only one or two font styles in the entire text.
- Use some interesting clip art.
- Enlist several proofreaders.

## **What should be included in a handbook?**

There is no one answer to this question. Each handbook will be unique to each parish; however, on the following pages you will find ideas for what may typically be found in a Religious Education Handbook.

### Religious Education Office

- Catechetical Leader, Youth Ministry Leader and secretary's names
- Office hours
- Address and phone number (*If you are the Catechetical Leader of a small parish and work out of your home, it is up to you whether you want to list your home phone number.*)
- Catechists list (*Do not list catechists home phone numbers unless you have their approval.*)
- Parish webpage or Facebook link

### Parish Life

- Parish name, address, and phone number
- Parish staff
- Youth activities, contact person/s, (children's choir, children's liturgy of the word, youth liturgies, youth group, altar servers, etc.)
- Mass times, Holy Days of Obligation list, Reconciliation times, and other sacramental information. (*If you want the parents to be active members of the total parish life, then it is good to give them the information.*)

### Catechetical Plan

- Vision
- Goals and objectives of the program
- Curriculum
  - ❑ Text(s) used
  - ❑ List of prayers to be learned at various grade levels. (*May provide text of prayers.*)

### Calendar

- Class dates and times
- Special meeting dates
  - ❑ Sacramental meetings
  - ❑ Teacher meetings
  - ❑ Teacher in-service
  - ❑ Open house
  - ❑ Other special events

*(In addition to printing a yearly calendar, reinforce special meeting dates with follow-up materials.)*

Program Requirements, Policies and Procedures - (Before writing program policies, check the *Catholic Education Office Handbook of Policies and Procedures*.)

- Registration
- Admission requirements
  - ❑ Policy on non-discrimination
  - ❑ Priority for admissions
- Class assignment
- Educational options
  - ❑ Children with disabilities
  - ❑ Home schooling
- Class size
- Change of address notification

### Addressing Gender Identity

Youth and family are faced with numerous challenges pertaining to sexuality, gender, and identity. The Diocesan document of guidelines can be found at:

English:

<https://www.rockforddiocese.org/pdfs/Living%20the%20Truth%20of%20Our%20Creation%20--%20Guiding%20Principles%20on%20Human%20Sexuality%20for%20the%20Diocese%20of%20Rockford%2008062021.pdf>

Spanish:

<https://www.rockforddiocese.org/pdfs/Spanish%20Living%20the%20Truth%20of%20Our%20Creation%20Viviendo%20la%20Verdad%20de%20Nuestra%20Creaci%C3%B3n%2008062021.pdf>

In the document, items 1 – 3 articulate the expectations of participants: youth, parents, guardians, sponsors, Godparents, and volunteers. They must understand these expectations and norms of participation.

### Tuition and Fees

- Tuition schedule
  - ❑ Method of collection
  - ❑ Outstanding tuition
  - ❑ Refund policy (*in the event of a student transfer*)
- Sacramental fees
- Books and supply fees
- Lost books

### Other Financial Issues

- Stewardship
- Children's envelopes
- Fund raising

## Attendance

- Reporting an absence
  - ❑ Making up missed classes
- Tardiness
- Other attendance issues
  - ❑ Mass attendance
  - ❑ Perfect attendance awards

## Sacramental Policies

- First Communion
- Confirmation
- RCIA for children

## Discipline

- Building and grounds rules
- Classroom rules
- Dress code
- Drugs and alcohol
- Gang activity
- Search and seizure
- Discipline Policy and Bullying Policy
- Possession of weapons

## Transportation and Safety

- Arrival and dismissal guideline
- Supervision - Clearly state the time parish responsibility starts and ends. A policy regarding supervision might read as follows: **“ Playground supervision begins fifteen minutes before religious education class and ends fifteen minutes after dismissal.”** or **“The religious education classes begin at 4:00 p.m. and end at 6:30 p.m. No supervision is provided before or after that time.”**
- Area limitation - Specify the area(s) of the parish grounds where the children may be before and after classes. A policy regarding area limitation might read as follows: **The children are to gather in the gym before classes begin. The Catechist will collect his/her class there and proceed to the classroom.”**
- Cancellation of class due to inclement weather - Identify ways for parents to get information.
- Emergency procedures
  - ❑ Illness
  - ❑ Administering of medication
  - ❑ Fire and tornado drills
  - ❑ Crisis management plan which implements action for crisis intervention

- Off-site activities
  - ❑ Protecting God's Children™
  - ❑ Permission forms
  - ❑ Proof of insurance for field trip drivers

### Communications

- ❑ Newsletters
- Other Policies
  - ❑ Athletic policy
  - ❑ Custody - If parents are divorced or separated, the Religious Education Program presumes that both parents have access to the children. If there are other custody arrangements, a copy of such agreement must be on file in the parish Religious Education office.
  - ❑ Lost and found
    - ❑ Parties
    - ❑ Release of student information
    - ❑ Service
    - ❑ Visitors
    - ❑ Identification of visitors in the building

### **Parent & Family**

- Introductory Letters to Parent/Guardian
  - ❑ From the Pastor – or
  - ❑ From the Pastor and Religious Education Staff – or
  - ❑ From the Catechetical Leader
- Role of the Parents
  - ❑ Parent's Prayer
  - ❑ Parent Commitment Ceremony
  - ❑ Ideas for creating a religious environment in the home
  - ❑ Assisting with homework
  - ❑ Assisting with the memorization of basic prayers – (See *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines* pages 22-23.)
- Family Directory - (Do not print the name, address, and phone number unless you have first received permission.)

### **Catechist & Other Volunteers**

- Recruitment
- Formation
  - ❑ Diocesan Catechist Formation Program
  - ❑ Catechists = meetings listed on the yearly calendar

### **Areas to Consider**

- Amendment - Handbooks should contain a clause setting forth the right to

amend. It might read: "Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The Religious Education Program will attempt to keep you informed of all changes as soon as possible. Some changes might be made immediately, however, due to unforeseen circumstances."

- Bilingual programs
- Family events
- Service projects
- Vacation Summer Bible Programs

**Handbook Agreement Form** - *In order to ensure that parents have read and accepted the handbook, a tear-off sheet, similar to the one shown below, should be required to be returned, signed by a parent.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Religious Education Program  
Parish Name

Dear Parents,

This is your copy of the Handbook for \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish Name

Religious Education Program. In order that you might better understand the catechetical vision and requirements of \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Name  
Religious Education Program, it is important that you read this handbook. Please sign

and return the following slip which indicates you have read and accept the rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Catechetical Leader's Name)

-----  
Return this portion:

I have read and discussed with my child/children and we accept the rules and regulations as printed in the Religious Education Handbook.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

How we communicate with parents is very important. Always remember that words cannot be taken back. Use them with care. Here are some expressions which have unnecessarily negative implications and more positive phrases which might be substituted.

NEGATIVE EXPRESSIONS	MORE POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS
Lazy	Can do more if they try
Troublemaker	Disturbs class
Uncooperative	Needs to learn to work with others
Stupid	Can do better work with help
Never does the right thing	Can learn to do the right thing
Impertinent	Discourteous
Stubborn	Insists on having his/her own way
Liar	Does not always tell the truth
Sloppy	Needs to do neater work
Failed	Did not meet the requirement
Mean	Has difficulty getting along with others
Time and again	Usually
Dubious	Uncertain
Poor grade of work	Working below his/her ability
Selfish	Seldom shares with others
Rude	Inconsiderate to others
Show-off	Tries to get attention
Will fail them, unless	Has a chance of passing, if

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS: SHARING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

In parishes where school and religious education share facilities, collaboration between all those who use and work in the facility will aid in the development of a spirit of openness. In an effort to improve and sustain a collaborative parish environment, the Catechetical Leader could:

## **Develop Harmonious Working Relationships**

- Develop written job descriptions of what is expected of each person in relation to others.
- Schedule regular meetings of key personnel.
- Develop common short and long-term goals.
- Develop and strengthen inter-personal relationships.
- Exchange special and unique talents.
- Provide for the sharing of all resource materials, equipment and all facilities, including costs when possible.
- Provide opportunities annually to evaluate and renew commitment to total parish awareness.
- Commission teachers of the school and catechists during the same ceremony.

## **Continually Develop and Improve Communication**

- Share and explore our common vision.
- Provide avenues for communication.
  - Encourage catechists to meet the classroom teacher.
  - Have students write a letter to the student who uses the same desk (reciprocal).
  - Write a note on the blackboard regarding something you especially like in the room (reciprocal).
- Work together to coordinate calendars.
- Exchange newsletters, notices, bulletins, etc.

## **Give Affirmation and Support**

- Support and promote each other's programs and special events.
- Recognize and affirm each person as part of the whole and develop an attitude of appreciation for the work each one does.
- Get to know each other through social activities and celebration of birthdays and feast days.
- Develop an awareness of and attention to each other's needs.

## **Develop Spiritual Growth**

- Have a retreat with both teaching staffs.
- Provide opportunities to pray together.
- Broaden an understanding of Community of Faith for the total parish encouraging joint projects; such as liturgical season bulletin boards, combining liturgical celebrations, such as First Communion, and joint service projects.

# SECTION 10

## PHYSICAL PLANT & SAFETY

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# Administrative Procedures and Responses for Crisis Management

## BASIC SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

A Catechetical Leader is:

- Responsible for the safety and well-being of all catechists, volunteers, students, and families present for Religious Education and Youth Ministry classes and events.
- The person who needs to develop an effective emergency plan. The Catechetical Leader works in conjunction with the pastor, school principal, fire and police personnel, or other designated persons in developing the plan.
- In charge of helping others understand their responsibilities in an emergency situation.

Other Responsibilities of the Catechetical Leader includes:

- Familiarity with the total building, such as the location of The Emergency Plan, all exits, fire-extinguishers, flashlights, first aid and infection control kits and location of the AED machine. At least 1 person in the building should be trained on the AED.
- Assuring all exits are clearly marked, not blocked, and free of clutter.
- Preparing procedures to follow for evacuation of their program site.
- Knowing how to operate fire alarm for fire and tornado drills.
- Reviewing procedures and maps for disaster drills each year, ensuring they are posted near exits.
- Conducting one fire drill and one tornado drill each year with the catechetical staff.
- Reviewing shelter in place procedures with catechists / volunteers.
- Familiarity with and responsible for contacting local authorities.
- Familiarity with Shelter in Place and Bomb Threat Procedures.
- Making sure each catechist and volunteer has a copy of the parish Emergency Action Plan.
- Providing attendance sheets, Student Release Log, and Students/Staff Needing Special Assistance form for catechists and volunteers to carry for use during an emergency to make sure all students have left the building safely.
- Providing annual training and information for catechists and volunteers on blood-borne pathogens.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

In conjunction with the pastor or other designated person, the Catechetical Leader establishes the parish procedures for handling accidents, illnesses and injuries involving body fluids. When establishing parish procedures, the following guidelines are simple precautions that provide a basic framework to ensure increased safety for the catechetical staff and participants in the catechetical programs.

- 1) Every parish is to have a written procedure for handling accidents, illnesses, and injuries. The procedure should indicate:
  - a) Who is to be notified if there is an accident?
  - b) Where supplies are kept.
  - c) What catechists, volunteers, and/or support staff are to do.
- 2) The following are some standard procedures:
  - a) Do not leave the individual unattended.
  - b) Body fluids should not be touched. Provide the Infection Control Kit to personnel in cleaning up blood and body fluid spills.
  - c) Open lesions on program participants and staff should be covered.
  - d) Clean soiled surfaces promptly with a bleach solution. Wear rubber gloves and eye and face protection during the process and use disposable materials such as paper towels. Exercise caution when removing gloves, turning them inside - out as they are removed.
  - e) Discard all disposable materials, including gloves and eye and face protection materials in a sealed plastic bag and place in a plastic lined garbage receptacle. Use caution with all sharp objects.
  - f) Eliminate the use of common water bottles, cups, and towels.
  - g) When possible, encourage self-treatment of injuries and illness.
  - h) Include cleaning and disinfecting of common equipment and areas in the housekeeping policies of the facilities where programs are held.
  - i) Make first aid materials available to catechists, volunteers, and staff.
- 3) Infection Control Kit Supply List and Location for handling accidents which involve blood or body fluids should be made available, i.e., disposable gloves, paper towels, plastic leak-proof bags, bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water), soap, eye and face protection. Provide facilities for washing hands and/or irrigating eyes. Infection control kits are available at your local pharmacy.
- 4) Offer an annual in-service for catechists, volunteers, and staff regarding the procedures for handling accidents.
- 5) Provides information and training on blood-borne pathogens annually.
- 6) Keep records of all accidents involving spills of blood or body fluids. You may use the Incident Report form for this purpose.

## **FIRE & TORNADO DRILL EMERGENCY ACTIONS**

To provide a safe learning environment for your program, the following procedures must be followed. These procedures are to be developed with assistance from your pastor and other pertinent people. Adapt the procedures to those suggested by your local fire and police departments to ensure the best possible outcome. Keep in mind that you need an alarm, horn, or bell that all can hear even with noisy children in a room.

It is suggested you meet with the police and fire departments every 3 years to review the safety and evacuation procedures you have implemented for the Religious Education and Youth Ministry programs.

### **FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES**

- Alarm sounds or other designated signal.
- Leave room quickly and silently. If the hallway is filled with smoke, drop down and crawl to the exit.
- Proceed to nearest exit away from the building – to a designated area.
- Line up as a class.
- Remain in silence.
- When all clear signal sounds, return to classroom.

### **Catechist's / Volunteer's Responsibility**

- Oversee procedures and practice with students.
- Ensure that all students are out of building.
- Take the Emergency Action Plan folder and attendance sheet with you. Take roll call.
- Shut classroom doors and turn off all lights.
- Shut outside doors.
- Remain with your students.
- If a student is missing, report it immediately to DRE, CRE, YM or other designated person.

### **DRE, CRE, YM or other Designated Person's Responsibility**

- Take Emergency Action Plan binder with you.
- Go out the nearest exit.
- If Catechetical Leader is out of the building, the Designated Person should inform Pastor/parish center of alarm if it isn't a drill.

## **TORNADO DRILL PROCEDURES**

- Alarm sounds or other designated signal.
- Students go to designated area in building (a protected area).
- Everyone gets down on the floor and covers his/her head.
- Catechist / Volunteer closes the door as s/he leaves the room.
- Everyone remains down until the all-clear signal is given.

### **Catechist's / Volunteer's Responsibility**

- Go over procedure and practice with students.
- See that all students are down.
- Take Emergency Action Plan folder and attendance list with you.
- Doors are closed and no student in front of doors or near windows.
- Get on floor with students – if necessary.

### **DRE, CRE, YM or other Designated Person's Responsibility**

- Comes to the corridor for his/her safety. Bring the Emergency Action Plan binder with you.

**If you meet in a non-traditional building or perhaps use several buildings, it is important to consider:**

#### **ALARM**

- Do you have an alarm and/or a P.A. system in the building(s)?
- If not, how will you let your students and catechists / volunteers know that there is a problem?
- What kind of signal will you use for FIRE, TORNADO, and ALL CLEAR?

#### **EXITS**

- What exits will each group use?
- Do you have posted exit maps in all public places?
- Are the exits easily accessible, not blocked, and free of clutter?

## **SHELTER IN PLACE EMERGENCY ACTIONS**

In order to provide a safe learning environment, the following procedures must be followed during a Shelter in Place. Adapt the procedures to those suggested by your local fire and police departments to ensure the best possible outcome.

It is suggested you meet with the police and fire departments every 3 years to review the safety and evacuation procedures you have implemented for the R/E program.

Emergency Actions for a “threatening intruder in building” are on this page, and Emergency Actions for “questionable person in area” are on the next page.

### **SHELTER in PLACE: THREATENING INTRUDER in BUILDING**

- Designated signal sounds.
- Participants are to sit or lay down on the floor out of view of a window.
- All cell phones are to be turned off. Catechist’s / Volunteer’s cell phone should be on vibrate.
- Remain in silence.

#### **Catechist’s / Volunteer’s Responsibility**

- Go over procedures with participants.
- Move all participants on to the floor.
- Lock doors, cover windows, turn off lights.
- Remain with participants until instructed by DRE, CRE, YM, other designated person or emergency personnel.

#### **DRE, CRE, YM or other Designated Person’s Responsibility**

- Go to office location, lock the door, turn off lights, and sit/lay on floor.
- Call 911 and assist emergency personnel.
- After emergency personnel deems everyone is safe, contact parents to pick up their children from designated location.

## **SHELTER in PLACE: QUESTIONABLE PERSON in area/neighborhood**

- Designated signal sounds.
- If outside, immediately return to your classroom.
- All cell phones are to be turned off. Catechist's / Volunteer's cell phone should be on vibrate.

### **Catechist's / Volunteer's Responsibility**

- Inform participants of shelter in place.
- Class is to proceed as usual, with no trips outside the classroom.
- Close classroom doors and windows.
- Blinds may be left open.
- Remain with participants until the All Clear signal has been given by the DRE, CRE, YM or other Designated Person.

### **DRE, CRE, YM or other Designated Person's Responsibility**

- Notify catechists / volunteers to implement shelter in place with questionable person in the area.
- Notify anyone outside to return to their classroom.
- No one is to leave their classroom or make trips outside the building.
- After emergency personnel deems the area is safe, the All Clear signal is given and participants are free to leave their classrooms, and parents are free to enter the building to pick up their children from designated location.

# REPORTING AN INTRUDER

## REQUESTING ASSISTANCE:

Caller's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of Parish: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Cellular Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nature of the Emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

Where should the emergency unit(s) report? (Activity Center, Parish Hall, School, etc.)

## IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS:

Race \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Hair Color \_\_\_\_\_  
Eyes Glasses \_\_\_\_\_  
Facial Hair \_\_\_\_\_  
Rt/Lt Hand \_\_\_\_\_  
Disposition \_\_\_\_\_  
Verbal Statements \_\_\_\_\_  
Clothing Description \_\_\_\_\_  
Hat \_\_\_\_\_ Shirt \_\_\_\_\_ Pants \_\_\_\_\_  
Shoes \_\_\_\_\_ Coat \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## IDENTIFYING VEHICLES:

(Remember the word **CYMBAL** when attempting to describe a vehicle)

Color \_\_\_\_\_  
Year \_\_\_\_\_  
Make \_\_\_\_\_  
Body Style \_\_\_\_\_  
And \_\_\_\_\_  
License Plate \_\_\_\_\_

## **CATECHIST / VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN REVIEW**

Every year, the Emergency Action Plan is reviewed during Catechist / Volunteer Orientation. The DRE, CRE, or YM is to cover the following items.

- Announce name of Designated Person if Catechetical Leader is unavailable.
- Review contents of Catechist's / Volunteer's Emergency Action Plan folder
- Review written procedure for handling accidents, illnesses and injuries. If possible, offer an in-service from an EMT or nurse regarding these procedures.
- Show Blood Borne pathogens YouTube, or provide downloaded PDF information and conduct training.
- On-site review to cover:
  - Fire exits; reiterate the necessity in keeping all exits cleared for accessibility.
  - Tornado relocation sites
  - Remote relocation site
  - Fire alarms and extinguishers, fire blanket if applicable
  - Location of first aid kit and infectious control kit
  - Conduct practice drills for fire, tornado, and shelter in place with the catechists and aides.

## **CONTENTS OF CATECHIST'S / VOLUNTEER'S EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

Each catechist / volunteer is to have an individual folder consisting of the following items.

- Attendance sheet stapled to front cover.
- Emergency Response Procedures
- Evacuation/Shelter in Place Decision Map
- Campus Map(s)
- Emergency Contacts Number List
- Staff Emergency Skills Inventory List
- Students and Staff needing Special Assistance
- Roster of their specific students containing emergency contact information, allergies, and special needs.
- Student Release Log
- Written procedure for handling accidents, illnesses and injuries
- Incident Report Forms

Each year – during Catechist / Volunteer Orientation – the contents of the Emergency Action Plan are reviewed with all Catechists, Volunteers and Aides.

In the event of an actual emergency, the Catechist / Volunteer grabs the folder containing this information and the attendance sheet and proceeds to Evacuate (fire), Relocate (tornado) or Shelter in Place.

# STAFF EMERGENCY SKILLS INVENTORY

DRE/CRE/YM: \_\_\_\_\_ Designated Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check any of the following in which you have expertise or training:

Emergency response:

- First Aid
- Fire Safety/firefighting
- Search and Rescue
- Law Enforcement Source
- CPR
- EMT
- AED
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME of CAT. / VOL.	GRADE	CELL PHONE NUMBER	TRAINING/CERTIFICATION

# CONTENTS OF EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

- 1) It is recommended that this Emergency Action Plan be contained in a **RED** binder for easy identification.
- 2) This binder is to be in the possession of yourself when classes are in session.
- 3) A duplicate binder is prepared for the Youth Minister if sharing the same space.
- 4) If you are using space located inside a school building, obtain a copy of the School's Safety Plan from the Principal and follow its instructions, adding any information from the following lists as needed.

## FRONT OF BINDER

- Emergency Contact Numbers list, page 117
- Campus Map(s) detailing (page 119):
  - Primary and Secondary Fire Exits
  - Tornado Safe Areas
  - Utility Room where emergency shut-off valves are located for water and gas, the fire alarm system, telephone system, and main electrical breaker panel.
  - Fire Alarms and Extinguishers, Fire Blanket (kitchen area)
  - Circuit Breaker Panels
  - Location of outdoor Knox Box, if applicable

## FIRE, TORNADO & SHELTER in PLACE

- Fire and Tornado Emergency Procedures, pages 107-108
- Shelter in Place Emergency Procedures page 109
- Emergency Response Procedures completed for your parish, pages 123-125
- Evacuation/Shelter in Place Decision Map, page 120
- Students/Staff needing Special Assistance, page 122
- Bomb Threat Checklist, page 127

## BASIC SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Written procedure for handling accidents, illnesses and injuries and implementation, page 106
- Infection Control Kit Supply List and Location, located in item 3 on page 106
- Staff Emergency Skills Inventory list, page 113
- Information on blood-borne pathogens from [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

## **ROSTERS & MEDICAL**

- Roster of Catechetical Staff, including emergency contact information
- Roster of Students, including emergency contact information, special needs, allergies and medical needs.
- OR, instead of the creating lists/rosters, you can photocopy the student registration forms and the catechist/aide application forms.
- Student Release Log, page 121

## **MEDIA**

- Crisis Team Members List, page 118

## **FORMS**

- Have several copies of the Diocese of Rockford's Incident Report (page 128) in your binder.

# Parish Crisis Emergency Action Plan Template

In conjunction with the pastor, this template is to be completed by the catechetical leader or designated person/s. The plan should meet the specific needs of your parish program, while employing the procedures suggested by your local police and fire departments. *Review Action Plan with the local police and fire department every 3 years to ensure the best possible outcomes.*

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

<u>NAME</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
General Emergency	<u>911</u>
Police/Sheriff	_____
Fire	_____
Poison Control	_____
Local Hospital	_____
DRE/CRE	_____
YM	_____
Incident Commander	_____
Pastor	_____
Principal (if using school)	_____
Business Manager (school/parish)	_____
Maintenance Department/person	_____
Alarm Company (if applicable)	_____

Other Reference Numbers pertinent to your situation:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## CRISIS TEAM MEMBERS

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Number</u>
Pastor/DRE/CRE/YM _____ (list one person's name and number, and circle their job title)		
Director of R/E and Y/M: _____	John Jelinek	815-399-4300 ext. 396
Director of Communications: _____	Penny Wiegert	815-399-4300 ext. 395

As media spokesperson, Penny Wiegert will handle all communications on behalf of the Diocese of Rockford and your parish. She will assist the parish with its responsibility for issuing public statements during an emergency. If the Director of Communications is unavailable, contact the Director of Education Services.

The Catechetical Leader or other Designated Person will relay all factual information as quickly as possible to the pastor or media spokesperson and will direct all media to the media spokesperson.

The Catechetical Leader or Designated Person, along with the Pastor, will work with the police and the Director of Communications to coordinate reports to parents and to the media.

## CAMPUS MAP(S)

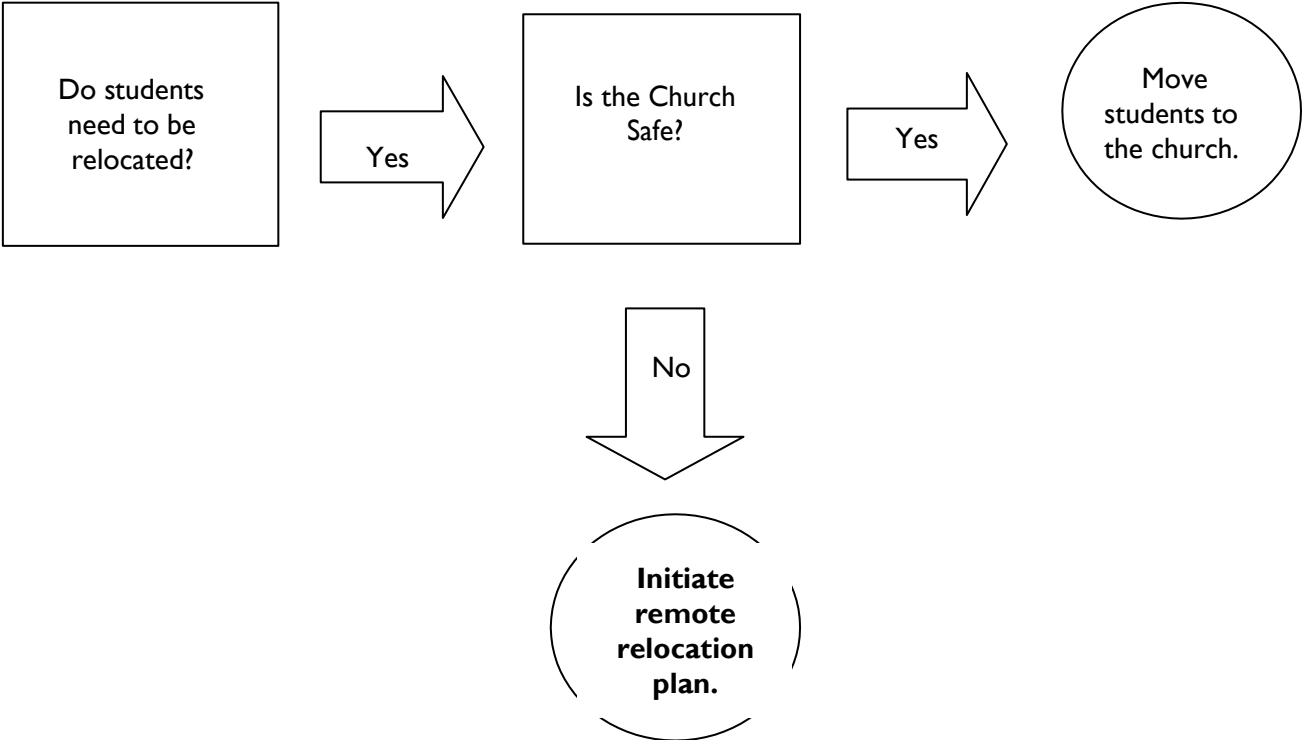
It is recommended that you consult with the head of your parish's maintenance or building/grounds committee to develop a diagram of the entire campus site or parish area. In an emergency, a diagram may be easier to read than blueprints. You can consult with your local police and fire departments on what type of maps they prefer. It would be advisable to try to have blueprints available as they may be necessary in certain fire or tactical situations.

Insert map(s) of campus/parish grounds and surrounding area. Include any of the following information that would be pertinent to your situation or area.

- 1) Primary evacuation routes
- 2) Alternate evacuation routes
- 3) Handicap evacuation areas
- 4) Utility access/shut-off for
  - a) Gas
  - b) Water
  - c) Electricity
  - d) HVAC System (Heating and Cooling Systems)
- 5) Fire alarm shut-off
- 6) Fire-fighting equipment, such as a fire blanket
- 7) Bell system shut-off
- 8) Telephone system
- 9) Intercom system location
- 10) AED equipment (Automated External Defibrillator)
- 11) Knox Box (outdoor key box accessible by emergency personnel)
- 12) Roof access door
- 13) Elevator location
- 14) Site assignments and staging areas
- 15) Hazardous material storage areas
- 16) Furnace/boilers
- 17) Room numbers
- 18) Door/window locations
- 19) Any other information deemed appropriate by your planning committee.
- 20) Primary and Alternative evacuation route maps should be posted in each room or each building in use.

# EVACUATION/SHELTER in PLACE DECISION MAP

Work with your local police and fire departments in determining the safest and most accessible remote location to use as you await the arrival of parents.





## STUDENTS/STAFF NEEDING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE IN AN EMERGENCY

This form is used for two reasons. Examples include:

- 1) Do you have a student on crutches or in a wheelchair? Someone needs to be assigned to assist that student in an emergency. Do you have a student on the autism spectrum who is frightened during loud noises coming from a siren or bell? A pair of headphones needs to be available to assist that student.
- 2) Do you have a catechist or volunteer who will need special assistance? This may be an older catechist or volunteer with mobility issues who may not be able to evacuate or relocate quickly; therefore, an aide should be assigned to assist with the children and another adult should be assigned to assist the catechist's / volunteer's evacuation.

### STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED ASSISTANCE

NAME	GRADE	DESCRIPTION OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED	PERSON(S) ASSIGNED TO ASSIST

### STAFF WHO MAY NEED ASSISTANCE

NAME	GRADE	DESCRIPTION OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED	PERSON(S) ASSIGNED TO ASSIST

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Parish Name & City \_\_\_\_\_

Date Procedures Prepared \_\_\_\_\_

Date Procedures sent to Diocesan office \_\_\_\_\_ via electronic, fax or USPS.

**Create procedures with your fire and police departments that are specific to your parish.**

**Shelter in Place Procedures: Threatening Intruder in Building**

**Signal \_\_\_\_\_**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Shelter in Place Procedures: Questionable Person in area**

**Signal \_\_\_\_\_**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Evacuation Procedures: Fire, gas leak, etc.**

**Signal** \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Reverse Evacuation Procedures: Threatening situation occurs while children are outside.**

**Signal** \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Relocate Procedures: Tornado or other threatening weather event**

**Signal** \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Drop, Cover, and Hold Procedures: Earthquake**

**Signal** \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Bomb Threat Procedures: Actual or Suspicious**

**Signal** \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**All Clear Procedure**

**Signal** \_\_\_\_\_

When the emergency subsides, an All-Clear signal will be given by the DRE/CRE/YM or Designated Person. If applicable, normal classroom activity may resume, or the catechists / volunteers will assist the Catechetical Leader in contacting parents.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLETION & COMPLIANCE

Working in conjunction with the pastor, school principal, fire and police personnel, and other designated persons, I acknowledge the Emergency Response Procedures for this parish are in compliance with the local police and fire department recommendations. These procedures will be reviewed every three (3) years to ensure continued compliance.

Catechetical Leader's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: PASTOR / DRE / CRE / YM / PRINCIPAL / OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(To submit pages 123-126 electronically, complete each page online and sign electronically. Attach all four pages to an email and send to [formationoffice@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:formationoffice@rockforddiocese.org)

If you choose not to electronically submit these pages, please scan/email, fax or mail all four pages to the Catholic Education Office at:

Email: [formationoffice@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:formationoffice@rockforddiocese.org)

Fax: 815-399-6278

Mail: Catholic Education Office

P.O. Box 7044

Rockford IL 61125

# BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

Use this form to record all information you can obtain if you receive a bomb threat.

## Questions to Ask:

When is the bomb going to explode?

Where is it right now?

What does it look like?

What kind of bomb is it?

What will cause it to explode?

Did you place the bomb?

Why?

What is your address?

What is your name:

## Exact Wording of the Threat:

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Sex of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number at which call was received: \_\_\_\_\_

## Callers Voice:

- |  |                                  |   |  |                                    |
|--|----------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm            | <input type="checkbox"/> Angry   | <input type="checkbox"/> Excited        | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow          | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid           | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud    | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter       | <input type="checkbox"/> Crying        | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stutter         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lisp    | <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ragged        | <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing Throat | <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Cracked Voice | <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised |

If voice is familiar, who did it sound like? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the caller indicate knowledge of the Parish/school? If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

## Background Sounds:

- |  |                                    |  |                                  |                                |
|--|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music         | <input type="checkbox"/> PA System | <input type="checkbox"/> Booth         | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear   | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office        | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals   | <input type="checkbox"/> Street Noises | <input type="checkbox"/> Static  | <input type="checkbox"/> Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance | <input type="checkbox"/> Cellular  | <input type="checkbox"/> Voices        | <input type="checkbox"/> Airport | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet |

Caller ID: \_\_\_\_\_

## Threat Language:

- |                               |                                |                                      |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foul | <input type="checkbox"/> Taped | <input type="checkbox"/> Well Spoken | <input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent | <input type="checkbox"/> Message Read |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

## Remarks:

Call received: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Reported to: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD INCIDENT REPORT

Names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals involved:

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Date, time, and location of incident:

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Description of incident in as much detail as possible:

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Names, addresses and phone numbers of witnesses:

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State what action(s) were taken as a result of the incident:

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Name of Person making this Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Making this Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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