

*Ten Tips  
for New DREs*



## Ten Tips for New DREs eBook

Are you new to religious education? Download this exclusive eBook with ten tips for new Directors of Religious Education or Parish Catechetical Leaders, compiled by a novice DRE.

### *Ten Tips for New DREs*

#### 1. Communication is Key

In working with parents, it is vital to maintain good communication. We must always remember that we are working as part of a team with the parents. The full and comprehensive religious education of a child is not totally our responsibility nor is it theirs; without guidance and resources from their parish community, it will be difficult for them to facilitate their child's faith journey.



#### 2. Be Invitational

Sometimes, it may be tempting to lay out the rules and ensure that all families stick to them, and while this is important, it must be balanced with a spirit of pastoral concern. We must remember that religious education is an invitational ministry. We need to reach out warmly in fellowship to the families of our parish, and invite them and their children to know and love Christ through our programming.



#### 3. Give Families Opportunities for Formation

Parents are their child's first catechists. While religious education programming is vital to the theological development and catechesis of any child, their parents hold more weight than any other party when it comes to forming them spiritually. For this reason, we must invite parents to opportunities that will encourage their own spiritual formation. No person can give what they do not have, or teach what they do not know. By inviting parents to grow in their faith, we help their children to come to know God better.

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## 4. Idea Bank

Our students' parents are involved in all facets of their lives; they have their fingers on the pulse of what is going on in their own communities. Especially for those of us who work in different communities than where we live, it is important to be open to the suggestions of parents and families for our programs. These parents are familiar with the dynamics of the area and can help us to build stronger programming.



## 5. Be Clear and Consistent

In a world where students' schedules are jam packed with sports, clubs, and extracurricular activities, time can be a challenge. For this reason, it is important that DREs and those in charge of ministries be clear and consistent with their program requirements and expectations. It is difficult for busy families to adjust their schedules to meet last minute requirements or expectations of which they were unaware. Make sure that you clearly articulate what you are asking students to participate in early in the year to make this easier for parents and keep the morale surrounding the program high.



## 6. Stay in Touch

It is vital in any ministry to stay in touch with those to whom you are minister. Get to know the families you are working with, what is going on in their lives, and who they are. Let them get to know you as well. The better rapport you can build with the children and their parents, the better your program and their experience will be. We must remember, Jesus ministered to those around him by getting to know them and investing in their lives; we are called to do the same.





## 7. Team Up

Just as in any educational setting, we must remember that we are called to work in cooperation with the parents of our students, not in opposition to them. When we run into conflict with a parent or student, we must approach it from the lens of collaboration to ensure the best for our students. If we view our jobs as opportunities to work with the parents of our students to help their children come to know the Lord better, than we will see stronger support for our ministries from the families as well!

## 8. Keep Calm

Often times, working in ministry can involve wearing many hats at the same time. On a given day, we may be responsible for overseeing multiple events, programs, and classes. This can be overwhelming but if we remain calm, it is much easier to ensure that things will run smoothly. Keeping a clear head helps us to stay organized and efficient, even when we are responsible for more things than we think we can handle.

## 9. Take Action

Don't be afraid to follow your gut! If you see things that you think need to be changed or added to the ministry, approach your pastor and propose the changes. With his support, you may be able to grow your program to reach the community better. Working in ministry requires that you take action and that can feel risky sometimes, but there is no growth in staying stagnant. Be inspired by the Gospels; Jesus was always moving!

## 10. Take Time for Prayer

It seems like it should go without saying, but working in ministry can sometimes lead us to get so busy trying to feed everyone else that we starve our own souls. Make sure to make sufficient time for your own relationship with the Lord to flourish. The closer you are to the Lord, and the better you know Him, the easier it will be for you to lead others to the same type of closeness with the Father.



