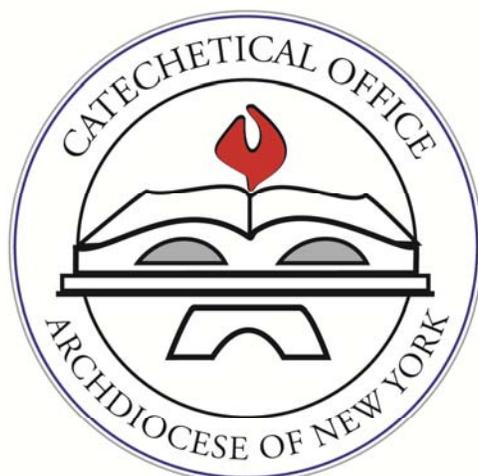


# Part One

## Program Administration and Coordination



*Handing On the Faith with Excellence*

### Handbook

**for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education**

## **Total Parish Catechesis**

*The source from which catechesis draws its message  
is the Word of God:*

*“Catechesis will always draw its content  
from the living source of the Word of God  
transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures,  
for sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up  
a single sacred deposit of the Word of God  
which is entrusted to the Church”  
(Catechesi Tradendae 27).*

*The deposit of faith is like the treasure of a householder;  
it is entrusted to the Church, the family of God,  
and she continuously draws from its things new and old.*

*All God’s children, animated by His Spirit,  
are nourished by this treasure of the Word.  
They know that the Word is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,  
and that His voice continues to resound  
in the Church and in the world  
through the Holy Spirit.*

*The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit  
has to interpret the Word continually.  
She contemplates the Word with a profound spirit of faith,  
listens to it devotedly,  
guards it with dedication  
and expounds it faithfully.  
(GDC 94)*

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## **Total Parish Catechesis**

(GDC 58 – 59)

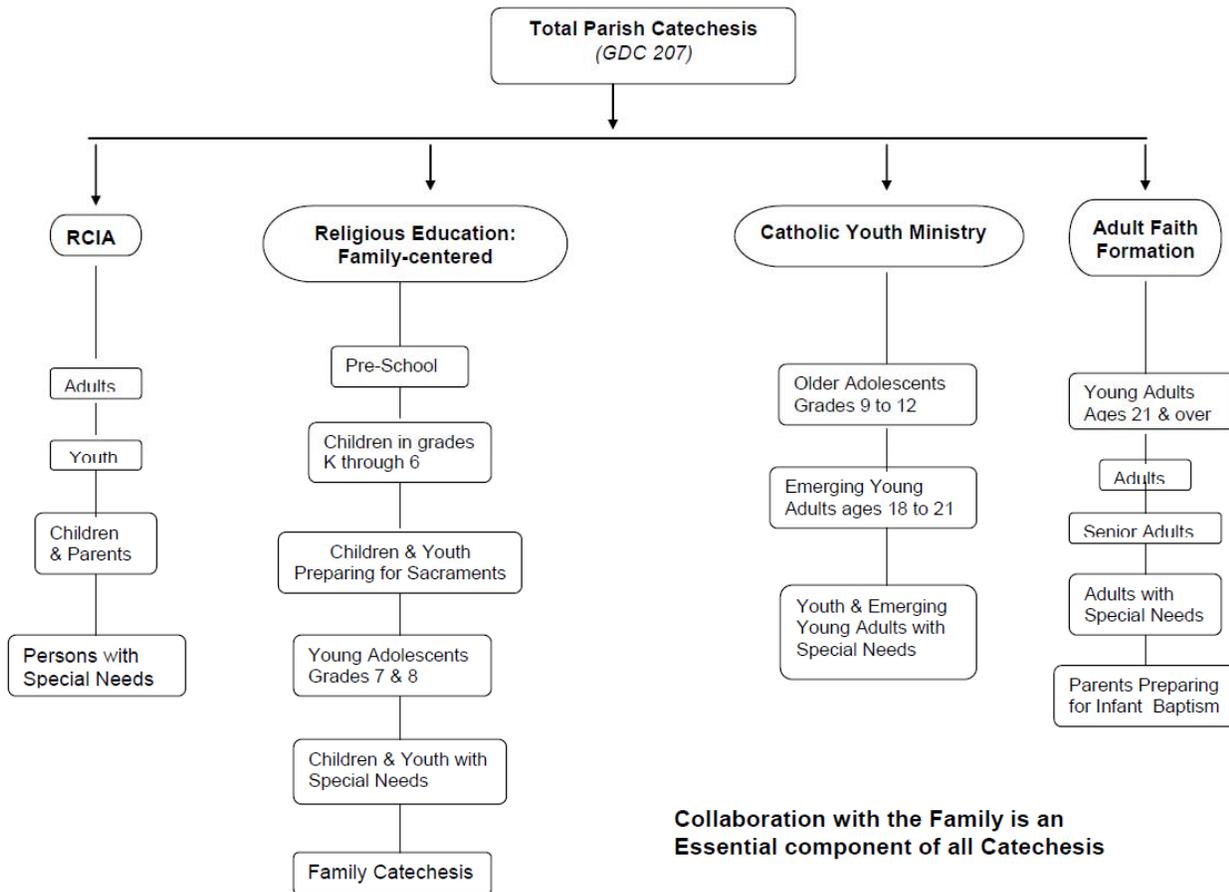
Total Parish Catechesis is the essential context for the parish Religious Education Program.

*The effectiveness of catechesis depends to a great extent on the vitality of the Christian community in which it is given [for this] is the context in which individuals undertake their journey in faith toward conversion to Christ and discipleship in his name.*

*In the parish the faithful are nurtured by the word of God and nourished by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. From the parish the faithful are sent on their apostolic mission in the world. The parish serves as an effective catechetical agent precisely to the extent that it is a clear, living and authentic sacrament of Christ. On the other hand, where a parish is lifeless and stagnant, it undermines both evangelization and catechesis. (NDC # 29 C)*

By Canon Law (Canons 519, 528, 773, 776, 777), the Pastor has the responsibility to provide faith formation to all members of the parish community at each stage of their growth and development. This is called “Total Parish Catechesis.”

The Total Parish Catechesis chart on the following page organizes all the members of the parish community according to their specific needs for faith formation.



**Collaboration with the Family is an Essential component of all Catechesis**

## **Catechetical Plan for the Whole Parish**

### **From the *National Directory for Catechesis***

*Like the diocese, every parish needs to develop a coherent catechetical plan that integrates the various components of the overall program and provides opportunities for all parishioners to hear the Gospel message, celebrate it in prayer and Liturgy and live it in their daily lives.*

*That plan should reflect the priority of adult catechesis, take into account the needs of everyone in the parish and provide special accommodation for cultural, racial and ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, the neglected and those unable to represent their own rights and interests.*

*The parish catechetical plan should be adequately financed and staffed by professionally trained catechetical leaders so that the teachings of the Church are readily accessible to all the Christian faithful in the parish. (NDC # 60 A)*

Because a single Pastor cannot adequately provide for the faith formation of all the parishioners, nor have within himself alone the vast scope of Catechetical expertise demanded, the Pastor gathers a nucleus of mature Catholic adults who are well- educated in their faith. He delegates to them catechetical responsibilities for serving the needs of the parishioners in the various sections on the Total Parish Catechesis chart such as: Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Adult Faith Formation, the Catechumenate. (*c.f. National Directory for Catechesis, # 60: The Parish*)

In order to assist the Pastor in providing excellent faith formation for all the parishioners, the Church demands that the catechetical leaders chosen by the Pastor be well-educated and trained for the ministry entrusted to them.

### **Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education**

This Handbook has been developed to serve the needs of one segment of Total Parish Catechesis: the Religious Education of children from pre-Kindergarten to the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

It is written to assist the parish Director and Coordinator of Religious Education in building and administering an excellent and effective parish Religious Education Program, Kindergarten through Eighth Grade levels, within the context of Total Parish Catechesis.

## **Essential Elements for Every Parish Religious Education Program Pre-School through Eighth Grade**

For a parish religious education program to be strong and effective, all the following essential elements are to be in place:

1. All parish Religious Education Programs for grade levels Kindergarten to Eighth are to use the title: *Religious Education Program*. Titles or terms like; “CCD”, “School of Religion” or “Faith Formation Program” are not to be used.
2. The parish Religious Education Program is to be administered according to the norms and directives found in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*
3. The parish Religious Education Program is to be offered for grade levels 1 through 8 consecutively and are to consist of a minimum of 30 sessions, ninety minutes long, held between September and June, plus a minimum of five hours of family catechesis offered between September and August. The immediate preparation for Sacraments is in addition to the regular 30 sessions of the Religious Education Program.
4. Immediate preparation for and the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and where possible, Confirmation, are to take place at the home parish.
5. Family Catechesis is to be provided by the home parish.
6. The parish Religious Education Program is to adhere to the Archdiocese of New York’s *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades Pre-K to 6 and Grades 7 & 8*.
7. The parish Religious Education Program is to take place on parish property in a site that:
  - meets the safety requirements specified by law,
  - is well maintained, comfortable and conducive to quality catechesis for the children from pre-school through the eighth grade levels,
  - can be readily supervised in all its areas throughout the duration of the program,
  - allows for the use of current technology,
  - has adequate storage space,
  - provides an office for the Director/Coordinator which is well equipped to enable the proper administration of the program,
  - is easily accessible to the families being served,
  - adequately meet the needs of children with disabilities.

In determining the best site for the Program, the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, the Archdiocesan Building Commission and the Archdiocesan Insurance Division are to be consulted.

8. The parish Religious Education Program is to have a catechetical leader who is certified as a Director/Coordinator of Religious Education by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office or who has completed the Catechetical Leadership Program or who is currently enrolled in the Catechetical Leadership Program offered by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
9. The Director/Coordinator of the parish Religious Education Program is to implement the job description as stated in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*. Adjustments may be made to the job description by the agreement of all the Pastors concerned. These adjustments are to be put in writing and must be approved by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
10. Every Lay Director/Coordinator of Religious Education is to be paid according to the Compensation Guidelines of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office established by the Cardinal and the Priest Council.
11. The budget for the parish Religious Education Program is to cover all program expenses, including the salary of the Director / Coordinator as determined by the Compensation Guidelines of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
12. In the hiring of the qualified catechetical leader the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, in collaboration with the Regional Catechetical Director, is to make recommendations to the Pastor as to those persons qualified for the position. First consideration is to be given to those who are certified as Directors/Coordinators or who have completed the Catechetical Leadership Program or who are currently enrolled in the Catechetical Leadership Program.
13. Religious Education Program catechists are to receive Level One catechist certification from the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office by the end of their fourth year of ministry with all things considered.

## ***Authority Structures for the Catechetical Ministry***

*In all the ministries and services which the Diocesan Church performs to carry out its mission of evangelization, Catechesis occupies a position of importance.*

*Catechesis is a unique service performed jointly by priests, deacons, religious and laity in communion with the Bishop. The entire Christian community should feel responsible for this service. Even if priests, deacons, religious and laity exercise catechesis in common, they do so in different ways, each according to his/her particular condition in the Church.*

*The task of the Catechist, as an educator in the faith, differs from that of others involved in the program, even though the Catechist always acts in coordination with them.*

*Others perform such indispensable work as the formation of Catechists, the production of catechetical material, organization and planning.*

*Together, all are at the service of a single Diocesan catechetical ministry. Through them all, with their differing functions, the catechetical ministry hands on the Word in a complete way and witnesses to the reality of the church.*

*(GDC 219)*

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## The Archbishop (GDC 222-223)

The Archbishop has primary responsibility for catechesis in his diocese. The Archbishop supervises the catechetical mission of the Archdiocese and is responsible for the total catechetical mission of the local church. It is one of the most important responsibilities of his office. (*Canon 756, 775; GDC 222*).

The Archbishop ensures that:

- the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and the deposit of faith is handed on completely and accurately;
- the ministry of catechesis receives competent personnel, effective means, and adequate financial resources;
- the texts and other resources used in catechesis transmit the Catholic faith completely and authentically;
- the Catechists are well-instructed in Church doctrine and in educational psychology and method;
- the Archdiocesan catechetical plan is integrated into the overall diocesan pastoral plan and coordinated with the USCCB. (*National Directory for Catechesis 54 A*)

The General Directory for Catechesis singles out the following ways in which the Archbishop exercises overall direction of catechesis:

- by insuring that effective priority be given to securing the necessary personnel, means, equipment, and financial resources;
- by directly transmitting the Gospel to the faithful;
- by being vigilant with regard to authenticity in the transmission of the faith, including the quality of texts and materials used;
- by bringing about and maintaining a real passion for catechesis, a passion flowing from a profound conviction of the importance of catechesis for the Christian life of the Archdiocese;
- by embodying this passion in an effective Catechetical organization and program which responds to the true needs of the faithful, is integrated into the diocesan pastoral plan, and is coordinated with the programs of the Episcopal Conference;
- by insuring that the Catechists are adequately prepared for their task by being well-instructed in Catholic doctrine, in human psychological development, and in educational methodology. (*GDC 223*)

## The Archdiocesan Catechetical Office

“Catechesis is so basic to the life of every particular Church that no diocese can be without its own catechetical office.” (GDC 267)

The Catechetical Office is “the means which the Bishop as head of the community and teacher of doctrine utilizes to direct and moderate all the catechetical activities of the diocese.” (GDC 265)

The *General Directory for Catechesis* singles out the following ways in which the Catechetical Office exercises its competencies:

- by analyzing the state of catechesis in the Archdiocese and identifying the catechetical needs;
- by developing and implementing an effective plan of action to address these needs;
- by providing formation for catechists and setting up centers for this purpose;
- by providing to the parishes guidelines and materials for catechesis, and ongoing assistance in the choice of catechetical texts and materials;
- by organizing, establishing, and supporting the programs, structures, and groups which cause and direct effective catechesis in the Archdiocese;
- by collaborating closely with the Archdiocesan Offices of the Liturgy and the Catechumenate. (GDC 266)

“To accomplish these responsibilities the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office should have a staff of persons who have special competence. The extent and the diversity of the problems which must be handled demand that the responsibilities be divided among a number of truly skilled people.” (GDC 267)

The Archbishop designates a highly skilled, professional Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office and commissions competent diocesan staff persons. The Catechetical Office assists the Archbishop in implementing his responsibilities such as ensuring that all who have a right to catechesis in the archdiocese have a realistic opportunity to receive it and that potential parish catechetical leaders are identified. (*National Directory for Catechesis 54 A*)

## **The Pastor**

*(National Directory for Catechesis 54 B 1)*

The Pastor has the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met. According to the norms established by the Archbishop, the Pastor ensures that:

- age appropriate catechesis is provided for adults, youth, and children with Catechesis for adults being the parish's primary catechetical mission;
- a total parish catechetical plan is implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership;
- catechesis of youth and young adults is offered as part of youth ministry within the parish;
- children and youth are prepared properly for first reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation;
- children receive ongoing catechetical formation that enriches and deepens the sacramental preparation;
- people with special needs are given appropriate catechetical formation;
- the Catechumenate is an essential process in the parish;
- catechetical formation is adapted to the various cultures within the parish;
- parish Catechists are well trained.

## **The Director/Coordinator of Religious Education**

*(National Directory for Catechesis 54 B 5)*

The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained and competent parish catechetical leader. Under the direction of the Pastor, the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education:

- provides overall direction of the parish catechetical program for adults, youth and children;
- plans, implements and evaluates the parish catechetical program;
- recruits, forms, provides ongoing development, and evaluates the Catechists;
- implements archdiocesan and parish catechetical policies and guidelines, including catechist certification and supervision, administrative policies related to negligence, sexual abuse harassment, and the safety of minors;
- collaborates with the Pastor and other parish ministers and appropriate committees, boards, and councils;
- assists in liturgical planning;
- participates in programs and spiritual and professional development.

## **Supervisory Responsibilities**

The titles “Parish Director of Religious Education” and “Parish Coordinator of Religious Education” indicate the person who is the regular, on-site supervisor of the Parish Religious Education Program. The Director/Coordinator has supervisory responsibility for the Catechists, their assistants and the children and youth in the program. The Director/Coordinator may not delegate this supervisory responsibility on a regular basis to anyone else. By the act of delegating their supervisory responsibility, they are transferring the position itself as well as the title to their delegate.

The Pastor is the immediate supervisor of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. In fulfillment of the job description, the Director/Coordinator is directly responsible to the person of the Pastor (*cf Canon 776; National Directory for Catechesis #54 B 5*). A Parish Manager or Finance Director cannot properly be the supervisor of the Director/Coordinator.

### ***Job Description of Director/Coordinator***

The basic job description for all Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education in the Archdiocese is found in the Program Administration section of this Handbook. Any person accepting the position, whether on a salaried or a volunteer basis, is responsible to fulfill this job description.

### ***Minimum Age of Director/Coordinator***

The position demands maturity of judgment, years of experience and professional education in the fields of catechesis, education and administration. Accordingly, by appointing an individual as Director/Coordinator, the Pastor is publicly vouching for the maturity and professionalism of the Director/Coordinator he has appointed.

## **Code of Ethics (GDC 137)**

The Director/Coordinator of Religious Education:

- leads a moral life, based on Jesus' example and the teachings of the Church, as witness and model for others;
- demonstrates faithfulness to the wisdom of the Church as expressed through the Scriptures, the Magisterium, and the living Tradition of the Church;
- manifests the Gospel model of leader as servant to the community;
- values and promotes the dignity and equality of all persons;
- recognizes, affirms, resources, and supports the distinct catechetical roles of parents, catechists, principals, youth ministers, deacons, priests, diocesan and national catechetical personnel, pastors, bishops;
- encourages and promotes the development of professional ministers within the catechetical community;
- communicates clearly the roles and expectations of those whom they supervise and evaluates them justly and objectively according to established criteria;
- employs justice and charity in actions and decisions regarding ministerial matters and supervisory responsibilities;
- respects the God-given freedom of all people and their freedom of conscience without compromising integrity or the values of the Gospel;
- respects and assures confidentiality in professional relationships, documents and records;
- acts in concert with national, state, local and ecclesial regulations concerning legal matters which impact the catechetical ministry and its personnel;
- plans, implements, and evaluates all aspects of catechesis in accord with the catechetical policies, regulations and guidelines which have been promulgated by the Church at the universal, national, diocesan, and parochial levels.

*Code of Ethics for Professional Catechetical Ministers, National Certification Standards*

**Coordination of Religious Education Program:  
Pre-School through Eighth Grade  
(Job Description)**

*Catechesis transmits the message of the Kingdom,  
so central to the preaching of Jesus.  
In doing so, the message is gradually deepened,  
developed in its implicit consequences,  
and thus manifests its great repercussions  
for human beings and the world.*

*The message of Jesus about God is Good News for humanity.  
Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God,  
a new and definitive intervention by God,  
with a transforming power  
equal and even superior to His creation of the world.  
In this sense, Christ proclaims salvation  
as the outstanding element and the central point of His Good News.*

*This is the great gift of God:  
not merely liberation from all those things  
by which human beings are oppressed,  
but especially liberation from sin  
and from the domination of the evil one,  
a liberation which incorporates that gladness  
enjoyed by everyone who knows God and is known by him,  
who sees God and who surrenders trustingly to Him.*

(GDC 101)

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## **The Purpose of the Parish Religious Education Program**

*At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of the Father who suffered and died for us and now, risen, is living with us forever.*

*Catechesis aims at putting people in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ. Only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.*

*Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God as the urgent and definitive intervention of God in history, and defined this proclamation as “the Good News”, i.e. “the Gospel”. To this Gospel, Jesus devoted his entire earthly life. After his Resurrection, Jesus Christ, together with the Father, sent the Holy Spirit in order that He might animate His disciples to continue His mission in the whole world.*

*To catechize is to teach others that, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the whole of God’s eternal design is revealed. (Excerpts from Catechism of Catholic Church 426 and GDC 34)*

### **The Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis**

The six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis entrusted to the Religious Education Program by the Church are:

- to promote the knowledge of the faith
- to give moral formation,
- to provide liturgical education,
- to teach to pray,
- to educate for community life,
- to initiate into the missionary dimension. (GDC 85 – 86)

The guidelines for implementing the six Fundamental Tasks are to be found in Part 2 of the Handbook in *Profiles of Catechetical Leaders*. A reflection on the meaning of the Fundamental Tasks is to be found in Part 2 of the Handbook in *General Directory for Catechesis – Key Concepts*.

The child experiences Catholic life in the home and in the parish, learning from the experiences of these two environments how to live as a faithful Catholic person.

The role of the Religious Education Program is to provide intellectual enlightenment about the Catholic life which the child is already living, and to foster the child’s faith development by accomplishing the “Fundamental Tasks” in an age-appropriate way.

Thus, the Religious Education Program helps the child and his/her family to understand, ever-more-deeply, the meaning of the Sunday Mass which the family regularly attends.

## Essential Elements for Every Parish Religious Education Program Pre-School through Eighth Grade

For a parish religious education program to be strong and effective, all the following essential elements are to be in place:

1. All parish Religious Education Programs for grade levels Kindergarten to Eighth are to use the title: *Religious Education Program*. Titles or terms like; “CCD”, “School of Religion” or “Faith Formation Program” are not to be used.
2. The parish Religious Education Program is to be administered according to the norms and directives found in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*
3. The parish Religious Education Program is to be offered for grade levels 1 through 8 consecutively and is to consist of a minimum of 30 sessions, ninety minutes long, held between September and June, plus a minimum of five hours of family catechesis offered between September and August. The immediate preparation for Sacraments is in addition to the regular 30 sessions of the Religious Education Program.
4. Immediate preparation for and the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and where possible, Confirmation, are to take place at the home parish.
5. Family Catechesis is to be provided by the home parish.
6. The parish Religious Education Program is to adhere to the Archdiocese of New York’s *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades Pre-K to 6 and Grades 7 & 8*.
7. The parish Religious Education Program is to take place on parish property in a site that:
  - meets the safety requirements specified by law,
  - is well maintained, comfortable and conducive to quality catechesis for the children from pre- school through the eighth grade levels,
  - can be readily supervised in all its areas throughout the duration of the program,
  - allows for the use of current technology,
  - has adequate storage space,
  - provides an office for the Director/Coordinator which is well equipped to enable the proper administration of the program,
  - is easily accessible to the families being served,
  - adequately meets the needs of children with disabilities.

In determining the best site for the Program, the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, the Archdiocesan Building Commission and the Archdiocesan Insurance Division are to be consulted.

8. The parish Religious Education Program is to have a catechetical leader who is certified as a Director/Coordinator of Religious Education by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office or who has completed the Catechetical Leadership Program or who is currently enrolled in the Catechetical Leadership Program offered by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
9. The Director/Coordinator of the parish Religious Education Program is to implement the job description as stated in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*. Adjustments may be made to the job description by the agreement of all the Pastors concerned. These adjustments are to be put in writing and must be approved by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
10. Every Lay Director/Coordinator of Religious Education is to be paid according to the Compensation Guidelines of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office established by the Cardinal and the Presbyteral Council.
11. The budget for the parish Religious Education Program is to cover all program expenses, including the salary of the Director / Coordinator as determined by the Compensation Guidelines of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
12. In the hiring of the qualified catechetical leader the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, in collaboration with the Regional Catechetical Director, is to make recommendations to the Pastor as to those persons qualified for the position. First consideration is to be given to those who are certified as Directors/Coordinators or who have completed the Catechetical Leadership Program or who are currently enrolled in the Catechetical Leadership Program.
13. Religious Education Program catechists are to receive Level One catechist certification from the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office by the end of their fourth year of ministry with all things considered.

**Coordination of the Religious Education Program:  
Pre-School through Eighth Grade**  
*(GDC 84 – 87)*

**Job Description of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education**

By definition, the person designated by the Pastor to be the primary, on-site supervisor of the Parish Religious Education Program is the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education and is recognized by this title in the Catechetical Office documents, communications and files.

The Director\* of Religious Education is the person who is actively present throughout the entire length of each session until each child\* has been safely entrusted back to the care of the parent\* or designated adult.

In the Religious Education Program, the purpose of supervision is to enable the ongoing formation of children as disciples of Jesus and members of the Catholic Church, a formation accomplished in an environment that consistently promotes the safety and well-being of each child.

The Director follows the policies and directives of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office by administering the Parish Religious Education Program under its guidance, working closely with the Regional Catechetical Director as well as with the Director and staff of the central office.

There are six areas of responsibility in the job description of the Director / Coordinator of Religious Education. They are:

1. Relationship with Catechists
2. Collaboration with Families
3. Program Development
4. Organization of Space for Religious Education Program
5. Program Administration
6. Management of the Budget

\*For the sake of brevity, the title “Director” is used throughout and refers to the Catechetical Administrator of the Religious Education Program, whether Director or Coordinator.

Only the word “parent” will be used throughout the Guidelines to refer to the child’s primary caretaker, whether parent or guardian.

The word “child” will be used to refer to both children and adolescents.

## **1. Relationship with Catechists**

- **Recruitment and Selection of Catechists**

- Communicate to the Parish an understanding of the role of the Catechist in the life and mission of the parish and the esteemed place Catechists hold in the tradition of the Church. (*GDC 163–164*)
- Recruit and select Catechist and catechist substitutes according to the guidelines in the Handbook section *Personnel Guidelines*.
- Secure Pastor's approval for the choice of each Catechist before final selection is made.

- **Formation of Catechists and Catechist Substitutes**

- Require participation in the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program, levels 1 and 2 according to Handbook section *Catechist Formation* to be completed within 5 years.
- Encourage Catechists who have completed Level 1 and 2 to enroll in the *N.Y. Catholic Bible School* which provides Levels 3 and 4 of Catechist Formation.
- Schedule the *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum* as a regular part of the year's program, and provide for the Catechists' attendance.
- Publish a Catechist Handbook, based on the Archdiocesan model and secure the approval of the Pastor before publication.
- Prepare a yearly calendar for the program, including those Archdiocesan regional and parish catechetical meetings and events in which Catechists are expected to participate. Secure the approval of the Pastor before finalizing it.
- Instruct the Catechists and Catechist substitutes and supervise them regularly in the fulfillment of their responsibilities for the safety and well-being of the students according to Handbook section *Safe Environment*

- **Personnel Management**

- Implement carefully all requirements listed in Handbook section *Personnel Guidelines*.
- Consult the Pastor in all personnel issues that are conflictual or have potential legal implications, recognizing that he is the ultimate authority of the parish.

- **Ongoing Formation of Catechists and Catechist Substitutes (GDC 156)**
  - Regularly observe each Catechist teaching, following the directives in Handbook section *Personnel Guidelines for Catechists: "Elements of Ongoing Supervision and Formation of Catechists"*
  - Meet with the individual Catechists at least once a semester.
  - Provide ongoing training in the use of *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis* and in the Catechist's manual of the basal textbook series used in the program.
  - Provide ongoing training in the management of the learning environment as needed by individual Catechists and Catechist substitutes.
  - Help Catechists to become effective leaders of prayer, able to use a variety of prayer styles; ensure that they include a prayer experience in each session.
  - Organize and conduct Catechist meetings approximately every six weeks.
  - Review at Catechist meetings the six fundamental tasks of catechesis --
    - to promote the knowledge of the faith,
    - to give moral formation,
    - to provide liturgical education,
    - to teach to pray,
    - to educate for community life,
    - to initiate into the missionary dimension (*GDC 85 – 86*),
  - Discuss ways to effectively accomplish the six fundamental tasks and invite the Pastor to participate in these discussions.
- **Development of Faith-community among Catechists and Staff (GDC158).**
  - Seek ways in which Pastor can participate in building faith-community with Catechists.
  - Organize a day or part of a day dedicated to reflecting and praying together at least once a year; include the celebration of a special Mass with the Catechists by the Pastor.
  - Provide for regular prayer together as a catechetical community before or after the program sessions.
  - Foster supportive relationships among the Catechists by such simple means as having refreshments available before and after religious education sessions.
  - Arrange appropriate celebrations and expressions of gratitude throughout the year and highlight the Pastor's expression of gratitude whenever possible.

## **2. Collaboration with Families**

- Work with the Pastor to create among Catechists, staff, parents, children, and families, a community of faith, centered on Jesus and united in His Holy Spirit so that faith formation takes place by experience as well as by teaching
- **Communication with Parents**
  - Establish clear channels through which Catechists may communicate with the parents of the children in their session, either as a whole group or individually.
    - All written communication with parents should be copied to the Director.
    - All notifications and letters sent by Catechist to parents must be pre-approved by the Director.
    - Catechists must follow the directives for use of social media found in the on-line section of the Handbook *Use of Internet and Social Media for Catechesis*
  - Advertise the Religious Education Program for several weeks prior to registration, using both public and parish means of communication.
  - Develop with the Pastor a program of parish outreach to find children not currently attending the Religious Education Program and give the identified families a personal invitation into the program.
  - Publish a Parent Handbook using the model handbook provided by Archdiocesan Catechetical Office; secure the approval of the Pastor before publication.
  - Send to all parents a calendar for the year which clearly identifies dates and times for Religious Education sessions, holidays, parent meetings, and special events of the program such as the celebration of First Eucharist and Confirmation.
  - Organize meetings for parents, such as an introductory evening when parents meet the Pastor and the Religious Education Program personnel and receive an overview of the year's program.
  - Incorporate a variety of prayer forms into the parent meetings such that each meeting includes praying with the parents.
  - Develop and maintain an evaluation system to communicate to Parents the progress of their children in the understanding of the faith.
  - Write letters to all parents as appropriate; encourage the Pastor to do so also.
  - Contact individual families when the needs of their children call for it.

- Be available to confer with parents, offering help and information, and, in collaboration with the Pastor, seeking appropriate assistance to problems that go beyond the Religious Education program.
- **Support for Multi-Cultural Catechesis** (*GDC 109, 202-206*)
  - Identify the racial, linguistic and ethnic groups in the Religious Education program.
  - Work with Pastor and Catechists to foster genuine appreciation and a sense of belonging for each culture represented in the program.
  - Affirm authentic values expressed in family traditions, social customs and religious devotions, and help people to discern those elements in their culture which impede their human and Christian development (*GDC21*).
  - Seek to understand, for the various racial and ethnic groups in the program, their present sense of identity with the Church and make this a starting point for Catechesis.
  - Build on the religious experiences of the group by incorporating into the Religious Education program the language, symbols and traditional values of the cultures of the participants (*GDC 110*).
  - Ensure that the various racial, linguistic and ethnic groups in the Religious Education Program take part as appropriate in the planning of Religious Education programs and events.
  - Be aware of the socio-economic and family circumstances of the families and plan programs that in actuality meet their needs and address their situations (*GDC 192*).
  - Be careful to address language requirements of children and youth in the program and their parents, who do not understand the language used by the parish majority.

### **3. Program Development**

- Ensure that the Religious Education Program is offered every year for grade levels K or 1 through 8 according to the Archdiocesan mandate. A Sacrament-only Parish Religious Education Program is not acceptable.
- Provide preschool and kindergarten programs giving preference to the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* (see Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis, Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Six*) (GDC 177-180).
- Provide sacramental catechesis for reception of First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation according to Handbook section *Sacrament Programs*.
- Provide catechetical formation for the children of the parish who have special learning needs (see Catechetical Office book: *Recognizing the Gift: A Parish Resource Guide for Welcoming Children with Disabilities*).
- Ensure that unbaptized children in grades 2 through 8 are enrolled in the Children's Catechumenate. (Note: They return to Religious Education after Baptism.)
- Provide Family Catechesis for all in the program according to the Catechetical Office norms in Handbook section *Family Catechesis*.
- Select a single textbook series, grades 1 through 6, in accordance with the Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis, Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Six*, the needs of the children of the parish, and the capabilities of the Catechists (GDC 119).
- Select materials/program for effective seventh and eighth grade catechesis in accordance with the Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grade 7 & Grade 8*.
- Ensure that the textbooks and teaching materials used in the program are in conformity with the *United States Catholic Conference of Bishops* (USCCB) list of approved textbooks.
- Collaborate with parish and archdiocesan leadership to encourage youth to continue their faith formation through youth ministry Programs and high school catechesis.
- Develop enrichment opportunities such as Summer Bible School and days of prayer.
- Discuss program development with the Pastor regularly and submit all major changes and innovations to him for approval.
- Encourage and direct Catechists to enhance their presentations by the use of media; facilitate access to the appropriate technological equipment.

- Organize liturgical celebrations of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance for all children at least once a year,
- Evaluate annually the various dimensions of the Religious Education Program. Plan and carry forward the evaluation with the Pastor; involve Catechists as appropriate.

#### **4. Organization of Space for Religious Education Program**

- Request from the Pastor the provision of adequate space to meet the needs outlined here and ensure that it is properly maintained and kept in good order.
- Set up a Religious Education office which includes desk and office furniture as needed, telephone, computer with internet access and the appropriate software, a printer and a copier to serve the copying needs of the Catechists.
- Ensure that the Religious Education office has adequate filing cabinets so that all records of children, youth, and Catechists can be kept securely in locked files.  
Note: These records should not be maintained off parish property or stored in unsecured places on parish property.
- Ensure that throughout every session of the Religious Education Program, the Director has access to a system for alerting all Catechists and children immediately (*e.g. a public address system; a bell system*).
- Organize a gathering place sufficiently large for the Catechists to meet and which includes individual space for each Catechist's teaching materials.
- Set up Religious Education Office files according to the template provided in this section and entitled "Essential Contents of Religious Education Office File".
- Provide a resource library/media center for the spiritual, scriptural and professional development of the Catechists, including Catechists' manuals from major textbook series, CDs, DVDs, periodicals, and books, and access to the internet, along with guidance in locating the most helpful sites.
- Provide for the program learning spaces that are comfortable and conducive to learning, with good lighting and safe physical features.
- Work with the Pastor to secure the custodial services necessary to provide a clean and safe environment for all the sessions, offerings and services of the Religious Education Program.

## **5. Program Administration**

- Ensure that all the requirements outlined in the Handbook section *Safe Environment* are fulfilled.
- Administer the Religious Education program in full accord with the Handbook section: *Program Requirements*.
- **Management of the Program**
  - Develop written program policies to be approved by the Pastor and made available as appropriate to parish leadership, Religious Education staff, and the families of children in the program; these policies are drawn from the Archdiocesan Handbook and adapted to the local parish situation. (*GDC 165*).
  - Work with the Pastor to provide secretarial assistance for the Program.
  - Ensure that the program name does not include the word “school”, a word which has connotations that are inappropriate and even incorrect for a parish Religious Education program.
  - Hold registration in the spring, keeping in mind the over-riding importance of doing all possible to accommodate families.
  - Handle late registrations with flexibility and compassion, doing all possible to provide for the religious education needs of each family.
  - Organize the program registration so that class lists and necessary instructional materials are available to the Catechists well before their first session with the children.
  - Plan at least 30 Religious Education sessions per year to take place between September 1 and June 30 in fulfillment of the Archdiocesan mandate.
  - Ensure that each session lasts at least 90 minutes in fulfillment of the Archdiocesan mandate.
  - Plan formal Family Catechesis sessions each year from September through August according to the approved Archdiocesan models. Plan a sufficient number of these sessions to ensure that each family with children in the program can attend 5 hours of Family Catechesis every year.
  - Organize non-graded sessions for children whose needs cannot be accommodated in the regular graded sessions.

- Structure ways to make up course material missed by children/youth who have registered late, have missed the material through absence, or have not sufficiently grasped the lessons taught.
- Implement carefully all contained in the Handbook section *Program Requirements*; keep the Pastor informed on any significant difficulties in this implementation.
- Develop and implement a Crisis Management plan according to the directives in Handbook section *Emergencies and Crisis Management*.
- Organize and hold fire drills, a shelter-in-place drill and a lock-down drill at least once a semester carefully following the instructions in the Handbook section *Emergencies and Crisis Management*.
- Become knowledgeable of the directives for accidents, illness and emergencies found in the Handbook section *Emergencies and Crisis Management* and *Program Requirements* in order to be ready to follow them at a moment's notice.
- Remain available before and after the Religious Education sessions each week to serve the needs of children and youth, parents, and Catechists.

## **6. Management of the Budget**

Every Director of Religious Education makes and follows a budget for the program.

- Begin the budgeting process in the spring by discussing with the Pastor how the Religious Education budget expresses the high priority given to this central parish mission by the documents of the Church. (See *Budget Worksheet* in this section of Handbook)
- Prepare the draft of the budget recognizing the important role the budget plays in accomplishing the purpose and goals of parish Religious Education.
- Submit the draft budget to the Pastor whose responsibility it is to make the final budgetary decisions and to give the final acceptance of the budget.
- Arrive at a clear articulation of the Religious Education Program goals for the coming fiscal year as reflected in the budget and as mutually agreed upon between Pastor and Director of Religious Education.
- Understand that the Pastor may seek advice on the draft budget from the Parish Financial Manager. Upon receiving advice from the Financial Manager, the Pastor brings the budget back to the Director of Religious Education and together they work through the advice given. Or, preferably, the Director of Religious Education also attends the Pastor's meeting with the Parish Financial Manager. It is the Pastor who gives final approval to the Religious Education Budget.
- Work with the families who cannot or do not pay the registration fee in order that no child is refused participation in the Parish Religious Education Program for this reason. Seek the guidance of the Pastor throughout this process.
- Provide information and advice to the Pastor on recommendations from IPF which affect the parish Religious Education Program.
- Make all decisions in administering the Program in fidelity to the approved budget.
- Manage the program's weekly expenses according to the approved budget.
- Account accurately to the Pastor on the collection and disbursement of all Religious Education funds in accordance with Archdiocesan directives.

**Worksheet for Religious Education Program Budget: 20\_\_ 20\_\_**

**Parish Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Receipts (Income)**

**Budget**

**Actual**

Registration Fees	_____	_____
Fundraising	_____	_____
Sacrament Fees	_____	_____
Gifts	_____	_____
Sale of Textbooks & Workbooks	_____	_____
Additional Fees	_____	_____
Transportation (e.g. bus hire):	_____	_____
Parish Support	_____	_____
<b>Total Income</b>	_____	_____

**Disbursements (Expenses) (Totals from second page)**

Salaries & Benefits	_____	_____
Professional Education for Director/Coordinator	_____	_____
Catechist Formation	_____	_____
Catechesis of Children & Youth	_____	_____
Program Administration	_____	_____
Maintenance	_____	_____
<b>Total Expenses</b>	_____	_____

Submitted to Pastor:

Director/Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approval by Pastor:

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

**Detailed Descriptions**

**Budget**

**Actual**

**Salaries & Benefits**

Director/Coordinator	_____	_____
Secretary/Secretarial Help	_____	_____
Benefits ( <i>Medical</i> )	_____	_____
Pension Plan	_____	_____
FICA ( <i>Lay</i> )	_____	_____
Unemployment Insurance ( <i>Lay</i> )	_____	_____
Disability Insurance ( <i>Lay</i> )	_____	_____
Workers' Compensation ( <i>Lay</i> )	_____	_____
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	_____	_____

**Professional Education for Director/Coordinator**

Professional Inservice: Workshops, Courses	_____	_____
Meetings (incl. Travel)	_____	_____
<b>Total Education for Director/Coordinator</b>	_____	_____

**Catechist Formation**

Catechist Training & Enrichment	_____	_____
Catechetical Forum	_____	_____
Travel	_____	_____
Catechist Meetings ( <i>incl. food</i> )	_____	_____
Celebrations	_____	_____
Books & Subscriptions	_____	_____
<b>Total Catechist Formation</b>	_____	_____

**Catechesis for Children/Youth**

Textbooks/Workbooks	_____	_____
Instructional Supplies	_____	_____
Technology Costs	_____	_____
Parent Meetings ( <i>incl. refreshments</i> )	_____	_____
Family Catechesis	_____	_____
Guest Speakers	_____	_____
Transportation ( <i>e.g. bus hire</i> )	_____	_____
Field Trips	_____	_____
<b>Total Catechesis for Children/Youth</b>	_____	_____

**Program Administration**

Office Supplies	_____	_____
Computer/Copier Costs	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____
Services Rendered/Gifts	_____	_____
Sacramental Expenses	_____	_____
Certificates/Forms/Record Cards	_____	_____
Postage	_____	_____
<b>Total Program Administration</b>	_____	_____

**Maintenance**

Office Equipment ( <i>e.g. furniture</i> )	_____	_____
Instructional Equipment ( <i>desks, tables</i> )	_____	_____
Utilities (fair % of usage cost)	_____	_____
Repairs	_____	_____
Custodial Services	_____	_____
Facility Rental	_____	_____
<b>Total Maintenance</b>	_____	_____

## Essential Contents of Religious Education Office File

### ***Children and Family Files which are always kept locked***

Permanent record card

*(This file is to be kept for 60 years.)*

Child information record containing emergency information

*(The record for each child is continuously updated as needed and kept on file for as long as child is in program.)*

Signature Card signed by parent/guardian on receipt of Program Handbook

Child Progress Report

*(These reports are to be kept for 2 years after child leaves program.)*

Attendance registers

*(These registers are to be kept for 6 years.) However, each child's attendance is also recorded on Permanent Record Card.)*

Additional Information on absences

*(This information is to be kept for 1 year after end of academic year.)*

Accident Reports

*(These reports are to be kept for 4 years or, if it involves a child, until the person turns 22)*

Parental permission for trips

*(These permission slips are to be kept for 1 year after end of academic year unless there is an incident or accident on the trip requiring a longer retention period.)*

Documentation of unacceptable behavior, communication with parents regarding it, and decisions reached.

*(These files are strictly confidential and should not be transferred to any other parish or individual.)*

Safe Environment Parent Opt-Out Form *(if applicable)*

## ***Catechist Files which are always kept locked***

Catechist Application and references, including a written record of the date the reference was checked and by whom, and a careful summary of what was said.

Authorization & Disclosure for Background Check

*(The parish may decide to entrust this file to an office other than Religious Education.)*

Catechist Formation/Certification Record

Observation/Evaluation done during Catechist's first year & on a regular basis thereafter

Ongoing Formation Record

Catechist's Emergency Medical Information, if any, in a sealed envelope,

Documentation of undesirable behavior and communication regarding it:

*When Catechist leaves parish program, this file is placed in inactive file & kept at least 7 years. However, if Catechist is dismissed for extremely poor teaching or misconduct, file should be kept "in perpetuity." This file contains only statements regarding the situation that are signed by both Director and Catechist. Director's personal notes about the situation are kept in Director's own, separate confidential file.*

## ***Administration Files***

Annual Report for each year

*(This should be kept always in Religious Education Program archives.)*

Current year's Safe Environment Roster

Program Budget

Floor plans of all areas where Religious Education sessions are held .

*(These should also be posted.)*

Emergency procedures including Crises Management Plan

Record of each drill: fire, lock-down, shelter-in-place

Record of any emergency evacuation.

*Note: The Building inspection report is kept in the parish file but the Director refers to it in deciding where Religious Education sessions will be held.*

## **Summary of Supervisory Responsibilities of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education for each Weekly Session**

*This summary is drawn from the Job Description*

- Assisted by a team of competent adults, supervise all children and youth in the program at every moment to ensure that no child/youth is ever in a potentially compromising or dangerous situation.  
*e.g. a catechist alone with a child behind a closed and windowless door, a younger child bullied by an older child in a bathroom, closet or hallway, adolescent(s) in an unsupervised situation.*
- Maintain constant supervision of Catechists and other adults to ensure that their management of the children is according to state and archdiocesan norms.
- Supervise the Catechists as they teach their sessions, and correct any inappropriate teachings.
- Handle appropriately children who disrupt a session and need to be sent by the Catechist to the Director/Coordinator; work appropriately with the parents of this child.
- Maintain a fool-proof substitute system in case a Catechist cannot come to a session or becomes sick during a session.
- Monitor access to location where religious education is taking place to ensure that unauthorized persons report directly to the Director/Coordinator and are not in areas where there are children.
- Develop and follow proper dismissal routines which ensure that each child is dismissed into the care of the parent.
- Guard against the dismissal of a child to a non-custodial parent.
- Develop a procedure for parent notification of the absence of their child on a given week; maintain constant vigilance so that the parent is immediately notified if a child believed to be in religious education is in fact absent.
- Ensure that the rigorous Safe Environment requirements are followed, including background checks and training of all Catechists and adults working with the program.

- Remain alert to signs of child abuse or neglect taking place in a situation outside the religious education program; if such signs become apparent, follow the directives of the Safe Environment Office.
- Secure and maintain for each child, the medical records and written parental directives needed in case of a medical emergency, and follow these to the letter  
*e.g. allergic reaction to bee sting or food allergy, bodily harm to a child during Religious Education session.*
- Develop and follow the state-required emergency procedures:
  - fire drills and actual fire emergencies,
  - crisis management plan and actual management of such emergencies as a lock down or shelter-in-place,
  - response to an unauthorized person in the building while classes are in session,
  - weather-related emergencies requiring immediate dismissal
- Conduct in a compassionate and professional manner interactions with parents and develop and oversee a clearly defined procedure for parent interaction with the Catechist.
- Ensure that the location for each grade-level is appropriate, safe and basically comfortable, including:
  - easy exit in case of fire, with all fire doors in working condition,
  - appropriate heat and ventilation,
  - each session visible from a corridor to supervising adult,
  - appropriate chairs and desks/tables for all children,
  - healthy space (e.g. no mold issues),
  - low noise level so teaching can be heard.
- Ensure that the Internet with its social media opportunities is used by Catechists and all adults in the program according to the norms of the Safe Environment Office.

## **Monthly Calendar of Responsibilities of the Director/Coordinator** (GDC 211)

### ***August***

- Meet with Pastor on plans for coming academic year.
- Mail parents: program calendar, parent handbook with signature card, Sacrament Programs calendar and instructions, any additional information for the coming academic year.
- Mail Catechists:
  - o program calendar,
  - o Catechist Formation Schedule,
  - o dates for Catechist meetings and events,
  - o Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum information and registration,
  - o agenda for September Catechist meeting.
- Prepare class lists; make provision for students with special needs.
- Prepare *Crisis Management Plan*.
- Note catechists' birthdays by month in order to give personal acknowledgements.

### ***September***

- Hold Catechist meeting to provide orientation for the new academic year.
- Have training sessions for new Catechists.
- Plan with Catechists how they will attend the Catechist Formation classes.
- Conduct Catechist Commissioning at Mass on Catechetical Sunday.
- Begin program no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September in order to complete the required 30 sessions by the end of June.
- Register Catechists for Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum if this has not yet been done.
- Mail out/request records of students moving to/coming from another parish.
- Send in *Crisis Management Plan* to Regional Catechetical Office by October 1.

## **October**

- Have Parent open-house.
- Bring all Catechists to *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum*.
- Hold first fire-drill, lock-down drill, and shelter-in-place drill.
- For pastoral reasons, allow for late registration throughout the fall.
- Update *Safe Environment Roster* and return to Regional Catechetical Office by October 24.
- Complete *Annual Report* on-line by November 1.

## **November**

- Hold Catechist Meeting.
- Begin formal class observations for Catechists to be certified as well as for a number of other Catechists so that within 2 years (3 for larger program) all will have been formally observed.
- Throughout the year follow a regimen of informal observation visiting 5 to 6 classes in an hour – listening and watching in the halls and going into the back of classrooms for a few minutes to get a sense of the teaching/learning situation.
- During the week of Thanksgiving, insure that the Pastor expresses public gratitude to the Director and Catechists of the Religious Education Program (e.g. in Parish Bulletin, from pulpit).
- Plan how Advent will be observed in the program.

## **December**

- Hold staff Christmas celebration. Give each Catechist a meaningful gift to thank them in the name of the parish for all they do to bring the Good News into the lives of the children and families through the Religious Education Program.

### ***January***

- Hold Catechist meeting.
- Plan with Catechists how they will attend Catechist Formation classes.
- Begin individual meetings with Catechists to discuss their growth and development in catechetical skills as well as the progress of their class, and to share results of on-going supervision.
- Conduct Safe Environment educational sessions with all children/youth.
- Mail student evaluations to parents.
- Plan how Lent will be observed in the program.
- 

### ***February***

- Meet with Pastor for updating and evaluating the progress of the Religious Education Program.
- Work personally with Archdiocesan Compensation Guidelines to ascertain place on compensation scale; seek help from Regional Director as needed.

### ***March***

- Hold Catechist meeting.
- Begin advertising the spring registration for next year's catechetical program.
- Prepare and negotiate budget for coming year using *Worksheet for Religious Education Program Budget*.
- Hold fire drill, lock-down drill, and shelter-in-place drill.
- Make arrangements to obtain a Bishop for Confirmation for the following academic year.
- In first half of month, submit a letter of intent to the Pastor as defined in the timeline for negotiations regarding the Agreement of Employment.
- In second half of month, meet with Pastor for negotiations regarding the Agreement of Employment.

## ***April***

- Update Safe Environment Roster and send to Regional Catechetical Office by April 10.
- Complete Safe Environment Yearly Report of total number of children/youth on each grade level who received safe environment instructions. Send to Regional Catechetical Office by May 1.
- Hold program registration of children/youth for coming academic year.
- By April 15<sup>th</sup> both Pastor and Director/Coordinator sign Agreement of Employment.
- Plan summer sessions of Religious Education program (e.g. Vacation Bible School).

## ***May***

- Hold Catechist meeting.
- Mail children's evaluations to parents.
- Request evaluation of year's program from each Catechist.
- Discuss with each Catechist their experience of the year, their recommitment to teach the following year including the grade level, and any recommendations or conditions for their return or their termination if necessary.
- After last session, collect *Guidelines for Catechesis* and the Catechist's Manual from those not returning.

## ***June***

- Send in Early Bird Registration for *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum*.
- Meet with Pastor to evaluate year.
- Have an end-of-year celebration with Catechists and Pastor.
- Record First Communion and Confirmation information in parish book, unless this is done by parish secretary.
- Send notice of Confirmation to parish where each newly confirmed was baptized.
- Submit to Regional Office applications of those to be certified. Send names of Catechists who should receive Medal of Honor to Archdiocesan Director of Catechist Formation.

## **Summer**

- Administer summer sessions (e.g. Bible School, Vacation Program).
- Formulate plans for coming year.
- Interview and select new Catechists.
- Review and update Catechists Handbook.
- Review and update Parent Handbook.
- Update files especially essential Religious Education Office files.
- Order books and purchase materials for coming academic year, including certificates for sacramental programs (First Communion, First Penance, Confirmation).
- Plan program calendar for coming academic year, including dates of all classes, holidays, snow days, parent & catechist meetings, Sacrament meetings, *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum*.
- Submit to Pastor the final budget report on the actual Religious Education Program expenses.

### ***Additional Responsibilities to be Scheduled into this Monthly Calendar:***

- Attend Regional Catechetical Meetings.
- Attend ongoing formation opportunities offered by the Archdiocese.
- Plan for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation.

*The planning sessions should include as appropriate, the Pastor, the Catechists involved in preparing the children for Sacraments, and where there is a school, the Principal.*

*Dates pertinent to sacramental preparation, such as the additional sacramental preparation sessions for children, parent sessions, ceremonies, days of prayer, interviews, should be included in the calendars that parents and catechists receive in September.*

*The Bishop for the Confirmation Ceremony should be invited at least six months before.*

- Plan opportunities for spiritual renewal for Catechists on the local level (day or evening of prayer together), and take advantage of those offered on the regional and Archdiocesan levels.
- Attend regular meetings of Pastor with parish staff.
- Attend parish council meetings regularly.

## **Coordination of Sacrament Programs**

*Catechesis is an essentially ecclesial act.  
The true subject of catechesis is the Church  
which, continuing the mission of Jesus the Master,  
and therefore animated by the Holy Spirit,  
is sent to be the teacher of the faith.*

*The Church imitates the Mother of the Lord  
in treasuring the Gospel in her heart.  
She proclaims it, celebrates it, lives it,  
and she transmits it in catechesis  
to all those who have decided to follow Jesus.*

*In transmitting faith and new life,  
the Church acts as a mother who begets children  
conceived by the power of the Spirit and born of God.*

*Precisely because she is mother,  
she is also the educator of our faith;  
she is at the same time mother and teacher.  
Through catechesis she feeds her children with her own faith  
and she incorporates them as members into the ecclesial family.  
(GDC 78 & 79)*

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## **Context for Sacramental Preparation: Religious Education Program, K through 8**

### **Archdiocesan Mandate for Parish Religious Education Programs**

The full Religious Education Program, Kindergarten through eighth grade, is the context for the sacramental preparation programs. Preparation for the reception of the sacraments begins in pre-school and continues annually through the eighth grade level. (*GDC 65 – 68*). In order to insure this, the following must be done:

- Recognize that the entire Religious Education Program is the context and primary catechesis for sacramental preparation.
- Select for the entire Religious Education Program a basal textbook series that presents a good catechesis of the sacraments and is included in the listing of textbooks found to be conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (USCCB)*
- Insure that at each grade level the sacraments are taught effectively and in accordance with the Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis*.
- Require that, as a minimum of formal catechetical instruction before receiving a sacrament, the child has completed one full year and is currently enrolled in the second year of the regular Religious Education Program.
- If a child is transferring from another Religious Education Program and requests reception of a sacrament in the same year as the transfer, request a transcript as proof of completion of the required two-year participation for reception of a sacrament.

Parish programs that offer only immediate Sacramental Preparation do not fulfill the Archdiocesan mandate which states:

The parish Religious Education Program is to be offered for grade levels 1 through 8 consecutively and are to consist of a minimum of 30 sessions, ninety minutes long, held between September and June, plus a minimum of five hours of family catechesis offered between September and August. The immediate preparation for Sacraments is in addition to the regular 30 sessions of the Religious Education Program.

**Immediate Catechesis for Sacramental Programs:  
First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation (GDC 85)**

- Insure that the immediate preparation for, and the first reception of, the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and, where possible, Confirmation, take place in the home parish.
- Organize a program of immediate preparation which takes place outside the regular sessions of the Parish Religious Education Program & the Catholic School.
- The immediate preparation program for each sacrament enriches the catechesis given in the regular Religious Education sessions by considering the ways the sacrament nurtures the life of discipleship to Jesus, deepens the relationship with His Church, and enables the daily living of the Gospel. This can be done through such means as:
  - o involvement of parent and family as well as child,
  - o communal prayer experiences,
  - o day of prayer,
  - o focus on various symbols of the sacrament such as bread or oil,
  - o focus on various actions in the sacrament such as forgiveness or anointing,
  - o discussions of the sacrament's implications for Christian living,
  - o experiences of community service.
- Select for the immediate preparation sessions a book or materials which are additional to the regular weekly Religious Education Program. These materials never supplant the program's basal text.
- Collaborate closely with the Principal where there is a Catholic school, developing a unified parish-based preparation program for each sacrament.

- Involve in the catechetical planning, as appropriate, the Catechists who are preparing the children/youth for the sacrament.
- Organize at least two meetings per sacrament for parents of children preparing to receive the sacrament and insure that each meeting contains:
  - o an affirmation that the parents have the primary responsibility for the formation of their children to receive the sacraments,
  - o the theological content of the sacrament with its pastoral implications,
  - o an explanation of the content and materials presented to the children in the program,
  - o suggestions for how the parents will continue this preparation in the home.
- Meet with the Pastor, the Catholic School Principal, the music director, and other appropriate people to plan the parish liturgical celebration of the sacrament.
- The liturgical celebration is always done in accordance with current liturgical principles and the rites of the Church. First Eucharist and Confirmation should not be celebrated during the Lenten season.

## **Administrative Aspects of Sacramental Programs**

Keep the parish as a whole aware of, and involved in, the sacramental preparation through pulpit and bulletin announcements, requests for prayers, and other appropriate means.

Hold necessary rehearsals for the reception of the sacraments at a time apart from the immediate preparation sessions.

Provide each family in late August with a calendar of dates for parent meetings, immediate preparation sessions, days of prayer, interviews, rehearsals and ceremonies. Provide to parents regular reminders of these meetings and events according to established protocols (e.g. e-mail, bulletin announcement, phone calls).

Include in the parent handbook written explanations and directives for participation in the sacramental preparation programs.

Recognize that someone who has not received Baptism cannot be validly admitted to the other sacraments. The Pastor or the Religious Education Director must see the person's baptismal certificate before any other sacrament is given.

Require that each child's baptismal certificate be presented at the time of initial registration into the program. The Baptism information is recorded on the permanent record card and a photocopy of the baptismal certificate is filed so that the address of the Parish will be readily available at the time of the child's Confirmation. Return the original certificate promptly to the parent.

Insure that the appropriate record keeping is done immediately after the child's reception of each sacrament.

## Legal Concerns Regarding a Child's Reception of a Sacrament

When the parents disagree on the question of whether a child should receive First Penance, First Eucharist or Confirmation, the Pastor must become involved in the discussions. He is the ultimate parish authority. However, the final decision belongs to the parent(s).

If the parents can come to an agreement between themselves, the Pastor should write down the agreement, have both parents sign it, and the Director/Coordinator keeps it in the child's file.

***In a mixed marriage***, the faith in which the child is to be raised is agreed upon at the time of marriage.

The following guidelines apply in situations of **divorce** when one parent wants the child to receive a sacrament and the other parent does not.

- ***If the divorce is not yet final*** and the couple cannot come to an agreement, the question has to be handled by the family court.
- ***If the couple has joint custody*** and they are at odds regarding the issue, the Director may call upon the parents to respond to the question in a mature manner. They may be reminded that the reception of a sacrament is for the sake of the child and should be a happy occasion for the child. The couple may be urged not to make the child a pawn in their relational problems.
- ***If the divorce is final***, the question should have been handled by the court that granted the divorce and should be specified in the divorce settlement. In the unusual case that it was not dealt with in the divorce settlement, the couple may have to go back to court and have the settlement modified, unless of course they can come to an agreement between themselves.

Sometimes in the divorce agreement, the custodial parent is not the parent with the decision-making authority for the child's religious education.

## Preparation for First Penance

### ***Summary of Knowledge Required for Reconciliation Preparation which is presented in the regular Religious Education Program:***

- Canon Law requires that children be given suitable catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance (*Canon 777*). However, it does not specify the content of this catechesis. By tradition, the candidate for first reception of the sacrament must:
  - have reached the age of reason, i.e. be able to distinguish right from wrong,
  - have a basic understanding of the concept of sin and the difference between mortal and venial sin,
  - recognize that the Sacrament offers God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
  - Be aware of the Church's directive to confess grave sins at least once a year (*Canon 989*)
- According to the *National Directory for Catechesis* (#36, 2) the child should be taught:
  - that God's love for us is unconditional,
  - that we need to turn to Christ and the Church for sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation,
  - that good & evil are present in the world and every person has the capacity for both,
  - that forgiveness is needed, not only from parents and others close to them, but also from God,
  - the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers and scriptures for the Sacrament,
  - the way to go to confession and to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation,
  - that sacramental confession is a means offered by the Church to obtain pardon for sin; it is necessary if one has committed serious sin.
- In addition, the child should be taught:
  - the conditions for approaching the sacrament worthily: an attitude of sincere contrition, a firm purpose of amendment, and the willingness to do penance,

- that frequent reception of the sacrament continues Baptism's grace of conversion and forgiveness; it enables the individual to form his/ her conscience and grow in grace,
- the importance of confessing venial sin regularly (*Canon 988*) which helps to form one's conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let oneself be healed by Christ, and progress in the life of the Spirit (*CCC 1498*),

### ***Administrative Aspects of Preparation for First Penance***

Affirm that the candidate for First Penance is baptized and has reached the age of reason (*Canon 842*).

Plan that, as a minimum of formal religious education, the child has completed one full year and is currently enrolled in the second year of the regular Religious Education Program.

Insure that the catechesis for, and the first reception of, the Sacrament of Penance precedes and is separate from the catechesis for, and first reception of, the Sacrament of the Eucharist (*Canon 914*).

Hold the immediate preparation for First Penance, including the two parent meetings, in the first semester, with the Sacrament taking place no later than the end of January.

Insure that, immediately following the reception of the Sacrament, the months, year, and place of the catechesis given are recorded on the child's permanent record card. The actual date of the reception of the Sacrament is not recorded. Nothing is entered into the Parish Registry.

# Preparation for the First Reception of the Holy Eucharist

## ***Summary of Knowledge Required for First Communion Preparation***

This knowledge is presented throughout the regular Religious Education Program.

The candidate must have sufficient knowledge to understand the mystery of Christ according to his/her capacity so as to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion (*Canon 913 # 1*)

The *National Directory for Catechesis* (#36, 3a) states that the child preparing for First Communion should be taught the following:

- The love of God the Father for each one, our life as disciples of Jesus Christ, and the gift to us of the Holy Spirit,
- the Eucharist is the commemoration of Jesus' last meal with His disciples,
- in the Eucharist we participate in the saving mystery of our faith: Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of us all,
- how to participate reverently, actively and consciously in the Mass,
- the difference between the Holy Eucharist, which is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine and ordinary bread and wine,
- the Eucharist (the Body of Christ) nourishes the Christian community and from First Communion on, the child is a member of Christ's Body and can share fully in the Mass and reception of the Eucharist.

The child is also taught:

- the forms of reception of Holy Communion: in the hand, on the tongue, under both species,
- the conditions for receiving Holy Communion worthily: in the state of grace and at least once a year during the Easter season
- the requirements of the Eucharistic fast: no food or drink, except water or medicine, for one hour before receiving Holy Communion.

### ***Administrative Aspects of Preparation for First Communion***

Affirm that the candidate for First Communion is baptized and has reached the age of reason (*Canon 842*).

Plan that, as a minimum of formal religious education, the child has completed one full year and is currently enrolled in the second year of the regular Religious Education Program.

Insure that the catechesis for, and the first reception of, the Sacrament of the Eucharist follows and is separate from the catechesis for, and first reception of, the Sacrament of Penance (*Canon 914*).

Hold the immediate preparation for the first reception of the Eucharist, including the two parent meetings, in the second semester.

Insure that, immediately following the child's reception of the Sacrament, the person's name and the date of the first reception of Holy Eucharist is recorded in the Parish Registry and on the child's permanent record card.

## Preparation for Confirmation

Confirmation is the right of every baptized person. As a Sacrament of Initiation, Confirmation is intimately related to Baptism and the Eucharist. It renews and strengthens the Christian's baptismal commitment to bear witness to Christ before the world and to work eagerly for the building up of the "Body of Christ" in this world.

### ***Requirements for a Child Candidate for Confirmation (Canon 889 # 2; 890)***

The Candidate:

- is baptized,
- is in the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
*(According to the N.Y. Archdiocesan norm, the child must be in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade of school, but also according to N.Y. Archdiocesan norm, the child must have completed the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades),*
- has been suitably instructed,
- gives sufficient evidence of readiness,
- gives indication of a proper disposition,
- participates actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church,
- completes the parish preparation for the reception of the sacrament,
- demonstrates an adequate grasp of the content of the Catholic faith according to the age level of the candidate,
- demonstrates an understanding that the commitment inherent in choosing to receive the Sacrament involves a way of life based on the values and morality of the Catholic Church,
- understands that faith-development is an ongoing process and is furthered by participation in the life of the parish through comprehensive youth ministry and ongoing adult faith formation.

It must always be remembered that it is the grace of the Sacrament which enables the person to mature as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### ***The Role of the Parents of the Child to be Confirmed***

The Church calls upon the parents to:

- Serve as models and teachers for their son or daughter by growing in their own personal relationship with God and living as committed Catholics, actively participating in the Sacraments and the life of the parish,
- Share their own faith with their son or daughter, both in word and in action, and thus form and develop a spirit of faith in the child with the help of the Religious Education Program and the Parish,
- Present their child for Confirmation instruction at the proper time (*Canon 890*),
- Attend parent programs conducted to deepen their awareness of the meaning of Confirmation for Christian living, and to assist them as they help their son or daughter to come to freely request the Sacrament,
- Participate with their son or daughter in the special liturgies and events of the preparation program,
- Assist and encourage their son or daughter to understand and assimilate what is being presented during the preparation period,
- Encourage their newly-confirmed son or daughter to continue to be actively involved in the Church, especially in their own parish.

## ***Requirements for the Sponsor of the Child to be Confirmed***

*(GDC 9; Canons 874, 892, 893, 894)*

There is one sponsor for the person being confirmed. The sponsor represents the faith community, guides the confirmed person in acting as a true witness to Christ, and oversees the confirmand's faithful fulfillment of the obligations connected with this Sacrament.

The sponsor:

is, when possible and beneficial, the baptismal godparent because the responsibilities undertaken by the sponsor at Confirmation are a continuation and development of the godparent's promises made at the candidate's Baptism,

If the sponsor cannot, or should not, be the baptismal godparent, the choice of sponsor is made according to the following requirements. The sponsor:

- must be designated by the one being confirmed, by the parents, or in their absence, by the Pastor,
- must have completed his/her 14<sup>th</sup> year of life,  
*(Canon Law suggests age 16 but defers to the Bishop of the Diocese. New York allows 14 years of age.)*
- need not be of the same gender as the candidate,
- must not be the father or mother of the person to be confirmed,
- should be sufficiently mature in his/her faith commitment and be actively expressing it in daily living,
- must be fully initiated into the Catholic Church, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and be a participating member of his/her parish,
- participates as requested in preparation program and is present at Confirmation.

The role of the sponsor is to:

- help the candidate grow in a faith-relationship with Jesus by sharing faith with the candidate and by modeling the life of the mature Catholic,
- assist and encourage the candidate in the study and practice of the Catholic faith.

### ***Immediate Preparation for Confirmation***

Develop an immediate preparation program outside the regular Religious Education Program. The immediate preparation program may include:

- parent involvement: take great care to instruct the families of those preparing to receive Confirmation on the true nature of the Sacrament,
- letter of request to Bishop or Pastor,
- interview of each candidate for Confirmation by the Pastor or Pastor-delegate,
- a day or evening of prayer (see in this section *Administrative Aspects of Preparation for Confirmation: Organizing the Day/Evening of Prayer*),
- the requirement for service: if this is included in the immediate preparation, it should be for the purpose of teaching the candidates that service is an indispensable and lifelong obligation for the Christian life into which the candidate is being “confirmed”.

Inform Catechists, candidates, and families that the Baptismal name may be used for the Confirmation name if it is the name of a saint.

- In Baptism, the Christian receives his name in the Church. This should be the name of a saint who provides a model of charity and who is then looked upon as an intercessor in heaven. The baptismal name can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue (*Catechism of Catholic Church 2156*).
- The name received at Baptism is a name for eternity (*CCC 2159*). No new saint name need be taken at Confirmation. However, if a name other than a saint name was given at Baptism, a Confirmation name may be chosen.

### ***Administrative Aspects of Preparation for Confirmation***

- Ensure that, immediately prior to the year in which Confirmation is to be received, the child/youth has at least completed one year in the regular Religious Education Program and is in the second consecutive year.
- During the celebration of the Sacrament, stoles are not to be worn by the Confirmation candidates. The stole is the symbol of Ordination to the Priesthood not of the Sacrament of Confirmation. (*Archdiocesan Liturgical Office*)
- Insure that, immediately following the reception of Confirmation, the person's name and the date of Confirmation are recorded:
  - o on the child's permanent record card,
  - o in the parish Confirmation registry,
  - o in the parish Baptismal registry (*Canon 535*).
- Send a notice of Confirmation to the church of Baptism for each person baptized in another parish.
- Consider the following in organizing a day/evening of prayer:
  - o Overnight events are not recommended for junior-high-aged youth.
  - o Several adult chaperones in addition to the Catechists and Director should be present throughout the entire experience.
  - o If the day of prayer is to be scheduled for a school day, the Religious Education Director negotiates the date with the public school principal early in the year to avoid conflict with important school activities. (In some school districts, participating in the day of prayer could prevent a student from earning perfect attendance.)
  - o At the time of the event, the school principal should be given the names of participating students.
  - o Prior to the event, the students should notify the appropriate teachers of their pending absence.

**Day of Prayer in Preparation for Confirmation**  
**Sample Letter for Student's Public School Teachers**

*This letter is given by the student to each of his/her public school teachers at least a week before the scheduled day of prayer.*

To: *(teacher name)* \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Area \_\_\_\_\_

From: *(student name)* \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

As part of the Confirmation program at *(name of parish)* \_\_\_\_\_

I am required to attend a day of prayer on *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_.  
As a result, I will not be present for any classes on that day.

May I please have the day's assignments and direction as to how I might make up the material presented in class? I will do my best to complete the classwork and the homework.

If a test has been scheduled for that day, I formally request that I be allowed to be tested at another time when it is possible for me and convenient for you.

Thank you for your understanding.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*student's signature*

As the parent of *(student's name)* \_\_\_\_\_.

I thank you for your cooperation in this matter. I have instructed my child to present this notice to you one week before the absence. I promise that I will see to it that my child completes the tasks which you have assigned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*parent's signature*

**Day of Prayer in Preparation for Confirmation  
Sample Letter for Public School Authority**

*This letter is given to the principal, homeroom teacher, or person responsible for the attendance register at least a full week before the scheduled day of prayer.*

My child, \_\_\_\_\_ is currently enrolled in the  
*(student's name)*

Confirmation Preparation Program at \_\_\_\_\_ Parish.

A required part of this program is the day of prayer scheduled for *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_.  
Therefore, my child will be unable to attend school that day.

I request that any tests or exams scheduled for this date be rescheduled at a time possible for my child and convenient for the teacher or, at least, that my child be allowed to take the test at another time. I will do my best to have my child make up the class work and complete the assignments by the teacher for this day.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(signature of parent)*

## **Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age**

### ***Meeting the Needs of Children of Catechetical Age (7 to 13) within the Parish Religious Education Program***

***The child of catechetical age who is not baptized Catholic:*** is sent to the parish Director of the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*. Within the RCIA process the child will be prepared for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist).

In order to provide ongoing religious education for this child, the parish can choose one of the following two alternatives:

- Once the child has completed the RCIA process and has received the Sacraments of Initiation, he/she is enrolled in the parish Religious Education Program.
- At the same time that the child is preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation within the RCIA process, he/she may also be enrolled in the regular parish Religious Education Program. However, the child does not take part in the immediate sacramental preparation of the Religious Education program because he/she is already following the RCIA process for sacramental preparation.

No matter which alternative is followed, the child is prepared to receive First Penance at an appropriate time by following the immediate preparation for First Penance offered in the regular Religious Education Program.

***The child who is baptized Catholic but has never been taught or formed in the faith:*** is placed in the regular Parish Religious Education Program. The child receives the Sacrament of the Eucharist when he/she has demonstrated sufficient understanding of Sacrament. For Confirmation, the child follows the immediate preparation program for the Sacrament offered by the Religious Education Program, and is confirmed with his/her peers.

***The child who is baptized in another Christian tradition:*** will be in one of several possible situations with regard to the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation. Therefore, the Director of Religious Education should call the Director of the RCIA in the Catechetical Office for guidance in offering the approach to sacramental preparation required for this child.

## Clarification of Liturgical Categories

### ***The Baptism of Infants (Birth to 6 years old)***

According to the liturgical categories of the Church, “infants” are children from birth to 6 years old (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, 1).

The *Rite of Christian Initiation for Children* is used for infants. This rite is also called the “*Rite of Baptism for Children*.” It should not be used for children once they have reached catechetical age.

For infants, their Baptism is based entirely upon the commitment of their parents. It is the parents who must make the faith choices, such as the choice to be baptized and the choice to be baptized a Catholic.

### ***The Baptism of Children of Catechetical Age ( 7 to 13 years old)***

According to the liturgical categories of the Church, “catechetical age” is usually between 7 and 13 years old. Pastoral judgment may be exercised in individual circumstances. If a child is mature enough to participate in a preparation program for the first reception of the Eucharist, the child is considered to be “of catechetical age.”

These children cannot yet be treated as adults because, at this stage of their lives, they are dependent on their parents or guardians and are still strongly influenced by their companions and their social surroundings.

However, they are able to hear and understand the call of Christ, and to respond with faith at their own age level. They are able to seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or on their own initiative with parental permission.

To be baptized, the child of catechetical age must give evidence of personal conversion but parental permission and support are also required.

In the preparation for receiving the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), children of catechetical age follow the general pattern of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. After a sufficient preparation, they receive the Sacraments of Initiation (*RCIA National Statutes*, 18).

### ***The Baptism of Adults (Age 14 - 17)***

At the age of 14, according to church law, the candidate for Baptism is considered an adult and follows the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

In Canon Law, the youth aged 14 to 17 years does not need parental permission to decide to be baptized or to become a Catholic. However, according to U.S. law, parental permission is required.

Also, because of the normal immaturity of youth at this age, it is very important that any youth who comes forward to receive the sacraments has the support of parent or guardian.

Complete directives for the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults can be found in the *Guidelines for the RCIA in the Archdiocese of New York (February 2014)*

## **Excerpts from Code of Canon Law (1983) Regarding the Sacraments**

### ***For Sacraments of Initiation***

Canon 842:

1. One who has not received Baptism cannot be validly admitted to other sacraments.
2. The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Most Holy Eucharist are so interrelated that they are required for full Christian Initiation.

Canon 843:

1. The sacred ministers cannot refuse the sacraments to those who ask for them at appropriate times, are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.
2. Pastors of souls and the rest of the Christian faithful according to their ecclesial function, have the duty to see that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by the necessary evangelization and catechetical formation, taking into account the norms published by the competent authority.

Canon 777:

In accord with the norms established by the diocesan bishop, the Pastor is to make particular provision:

1. that suitable catechesis is given for the celebration of the sacraments;
2. that children are properly prepared for the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Most Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confirmation by means of a catechetical formation given over an appropriate period of time;
3. that children are more fruitfully and deeply instructed through catechetical formation after the reception of First Communion;
4. that catechetical formation also be given to those handicapped in body or mind insofar as their condition permits;
5. that the faith of young people and adults be fortified, enlightened and developed through various means and endeavors.

### ***For the First Reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist***

Canon 913 #1:

For the administration of the most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

Canon 914:

It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents and those who take the place of parents, as well as of the Pastor, to see that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and are nourished by the divine food as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession. It is also for the Pastor to be vigilant lest any children come to the holy Banquet who have not reached the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed.

### ***For the Catechesis for First Reception of the Sacrament of Penance***

Canon 914 states that sacramental confession precedes the first reception of the Eucharist.

### ***For the Parish Registries***

Canon 895:

The names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and the date of the conferral of confirmation, are to be noted in the Confirmation Registry - a book kept in the parish archive.

Canon 535 # 2:

The Pastor must notify the Pastor of the parish where the person was baptized about the conferral of Confirmation so that notation may be made in the Baptism registry.

## ***For Confirmation Sponsors***

Canon 892:

The sponsor's responsibility is to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with the sacrament.

Canon 893, #2

It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor for the person at Baptism also be the person's sponsor for Confirmation.

Canon 874:

For both Baptism and Confirmation, to be admitted to the role of sponsor a person must:

1. be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the one who takes their place, or, in their absence, by the Pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role;
2. have completed the sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the Pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause;
3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken (893 # 1);
4. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

Canon 874:

A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic church may not be a sponsor, but may be admitted to the liturgical celebration as a witness to Baptism together with a Catholic sponsor.

Canon 892:

As far as possible the sponsor should be present at the Confirmation liturgy.

## **Family-Centered Catechesis**

*The family is defined as a “domestic Church,” that is, in every Christian family the different aspects and functions of the life of the entire Church may be reflected: mission, catechesis, witness, prayer, etc. Indeed in the same way as the Church, the family is a place in which the Gospel is transmitted and from which it extends.*

*Parents are the primary educators in the faith. Together with them, all members of the family play an active part in the education of the younger members.*

*The family as a locus of catechesis has an unique privilege: to transmit the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values. Rooted in the family experience, the child’s Christian initiation consists in:*

*the awakening of the sense of God;  
the first steps in prayer;  
education of the moral conscience;  
formation in the Christian sense of human love,  
understood as a reflection of the love of God the  
Father, the Creator.*

*It is, indeed, a Christian education more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured into periods. In this family catechesis, the role of grandparents is of growing importance. Their wisdom and sense of the religious is often decisive in creating a true Christian climate.*

*(GDC 255)*

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## Orientation to Family-Centered Catechesis

### ***Family Catechesis Precedes, Accompanies, and Enriches All Forms of Catechesis.***

*The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect. Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that this first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life. This childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable. It is consolidated when, on the occasion of certain family events and festivities, care is taken to explain in the home the Christian or religious content of these events. It is deepened all the more when parents comment on the more methodical catechesis which their children later receive in the Christian community and help them to appropriate it. (GDC 226)*

### **Characteristics of Family-Centered Catechesis (GDC 227)**

- Parent-Guided

It is provided primarily by the adults in the family who share faith with one another and with the younger members and who set an example of faith lived.

*Education in faith by parents, which should begin from the children's most tender age, is already being given when the members of a family help each other to grow in faith through the witness of their Christian lives, a witness that is often without words, but which perseveres throughout a day to day life in accordance with the Gospel. (CT 68)*

- Life Giving

The religious awakening of the child takes place in the family. It is there that the child first experiences and practices the faith. Those who give life to the child bring the child through Baptism to Life in the Kingdom of God and continually nurture that life. (GDC 177-178)

- Life-Long

As the children grow and mature, the witness and teaching of the parents continue to profoundly affect their lives. The scope of family catechesis is life-long. As the family membership broadens, neither age nor role dictate who is learner and who is teacher. Each member of the family becomes teacher and learner by virtue of a sincere attempt to hear the message of the Gospel and to respond to it in worship and service (GDC 227).

- Missionary

By making Gospel values the foundation for their way of life, parents prepare their children to bring these values into the environments where they will study, work and socialize. Family members recognize and live the Christian call to serve neighbors, friends, parish community and the broader communities of Church and world. By the witness of its life together, the family evangelizes the wider communities of which it is a part (GDC 211).

*The Christian family also builds up the Kingdom of God in history through the everyday realities that concern and distinguish its state of life. It is thus in the love between the husband and wife and between the members of the family – a love lived out in all its extraordinary richness of values and demands: totality, oneness, fidelity and fruitfulness – that the family participation in the prophetic, priestly and kingly mission of Jesus Christ and his Church finds realization. Therefore, love and life constitute the nucleus of the saving mission of the Christian Family in the Church and for the Church. (Familiaris Consortio 50)*

- Implicit and Explicit

Implicit catechesis is experienced through the atmosphere that permeates the home where children perceive and joyously live the closeness to God in Jesus made manifest by their parents. Explicit catechesis is experienced through the parents' articulation of their faith through such means as teaching, prayer and moral guidance (GDC 226).

## Parish Approaches to Family-Centered Catechesis (GDC 227)

The various approaches to Family-Centered Catechesis are different but complementary. Some combination of the following approaches is essential for the parish community:

- Parish-wide efforts to help families understand themselves as the “Domestic Church” and to live out of this understanding. These efforts include, but are not limited to, education in:
  - scriptural and theological foundations of faith,
  - spirituality (e.g. focus on the holiness inherent in family living),
  - psychology (e.g. parenting skills, stages of human development, family systems),
  - catechetics (e.g. focus on teachable moments in the home),
  - social justice (e.g. ways to reach out as a family to the poor and marginalized);
- Liturgical celebrations and prayer opportunities for families such as:
  - Heightened focus on events in family life in the Sunday liturgies (e.g. Baptisms, First Reception of Holy Communion, Mothers’ Day, Father’s Day).
  - Family retreat opportunities (e.g. Reconciliation evening for families)
  - Advent wreath-making for families,
  - Mass of celebration for all graduates of the parish and their families,
  - Welcome Mass for new families;
- Meetings on single topics such as:
  - celebrating and ritualizing faith in the context of family life,
  - celebrating liturgical seasons in the home,
  - family attendance at the Eucharistic celebration,
  - ways of praying together as a family,
  - celebrating human experiences in the family such as birth, new beginnings, transitions, death,
  - Individual moral issues that particularly challenge families,
  - pro-life in the family context
  - dealing with addictive behavior,
  - divorce, separation, annulment questions and their impact on children and youth;
- Marriage preparation programs (Go to Marriage section on Archdiocesan Family Life/Respect Life website ([www.nyfamilylife.org](http://www.nyfamilylife.org)))
- Prenatal and pre-infant baptismal catechesis to help parents prepare for the religious upbringing of their children;
- Parish network of support for families, offering counseling, referral capabilities, peer group support.

## ***Role of Religious Education Program in Family-Centered Catechesis***

The Religious Education Program complements the foundational education in faith already given by the parents. It furthers the child's growth in faith by giving specific religious instruction which builds upon and reinforces the positive faith development fostered by the parents. On entering the parish religious education program the child begins to study in a community much wider than the family.

For those children who lack adequate religious formation in the home, the parish community can play an especially important role. The parish does so by assisting parents to grow in their understanding of the faith, by helping parents return to the regular practice of the faith, and by providing children with initiatory experiences and explanation of their faith. (*GDC 179-180*).

The Sacramental Life of the child begun at Baptism continues with the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation, a process prepared for by the parents and the Religious Education Program working together.

As the child matures, the faith witness of Christians in the wider community becomes increasingly important. The Religious Education Program provides the necessary experience of belonging to and interacting in church community. This prepares the way for participation in liturgy and parish life.

The pre-kindergarten through eighth grade program gives the student the opportunity for a systematic presentation of the faith and at the same time the benefit of a variety of personality and teaching styles through the different Catechists they encounter.

In older adolescence when the influence of the peer group increases greatly, youth ministry within the parish provides a faith-centered experience, a safe place to search for authenticity as a believer and a forum for facing the moral challenges of today's society.

# **Approved Models for Formal Family Catechesis in Parish Religious Education Programs**

## ***Archdiocesan Mandate for Family Catechesis***

Students in Grades K – 8 are to participate in five hours of Family Catechesis every year. Family Catechesis opportunities can be offered any time from September through August. Family catechesis can be done through any combination model or method listed below.

The Parish Director of Religious Education should appoint a Family Catechesis team leader and team members. The Parish Director of Religious Education, the Pastor and the team choose the model to be followed for the family catechesis event but the implementation of the model is delegated to the team leader.

## ***Goals / Mission for Family Catechesis in Parish Religious Education***

- To help families learn how to pray and to discuss their faith together
- To help parents better understand their role as primary catechists
- To bring families together in order to share and deepen their Catholic faith
- To strengthen the relationship between the family and the Church
- To establish ongoing Catholic faith practices within the family life
- To integrate the family into the parish community

## ***Nine Models of Family Catechesis***

### **1.) Intergenerational Whole Community Family Catechesis**

The program lasts for 2.5 hours and parents stay together with their children for the entire time  
The Program design has 6 steps:

- Step 1: Hospitality / Meal
- Step 2: Opening Prayer
- Step 3: Introduction of Theme to Whole Group
- Step 4: In-Depth Learning (Whole Group or Activity Stations)
- Step 5: Shared Learning Summary, Explain Home Kit
- Step 6: Closing Prayer

### **2.) Intergenerational Whole Community Family Catechesis (Modified)**

Parents are separated from children for Step #4 (in-depth learning).  
The Parish Director and the Team leader may select from among the 6 Design Steps listed in model 1 those which they will use for this program.

### **3.) Multi-Media Family Catechesis**

Families watch a movie that offers a Catholic moral / theological teaching and that is age-appropriate. A short clip or portion of the movie is shown, one at a time. After each clip, the families engage in discussion on reflection questions provided.

### **4.) Family Prayer Celebration**

Families participate together in a Catholic devotion or other Catholic prayer service e.g. rosary, stations of the cross, Eucharistic adoration.

Some direction is offered before the ritual / prayer experience and after the ritual, the families engage in discussion on reflection questions. Then, they are given an activity / review sheet to be brought home.

### **5.) Activity – Centered Family Catechesis**

Families participate in an arts & craft activity together that offers a Catholic moral / theological teaching and/or practice. They start with some or all of the following: hospitality / prayer / introduction to theme. Reflection questions are then given to the families for discussion either at the parish or at home.

### **6.) Family Christian Service Project**

Families participate in a Christian Service project accomplished together at the parish or outside the parish. The families are offered reflection questions for discussion after the service project is done. After the service project is complete, the families are given an activity review sheet to be brought home

### **7.) Family Christian Holiday Celebration**

Families participate in a Christian Holiday meal or tradition together at the parish. This is followed by a discussion on reflection questions. At the conclusion of the experience, the families are given an activity / review sheet to be brought home.

### **8.) Family Pilgrimage**

Families participate in a pilgrimage together, visiting a holy / sacred site. After the pilgrimage, the families are offered reflection questions for family discussion. After the pilgrimage and discussion, the families are given an activity / review sheet to be brought home.

### **9.) Family Retreat Day**

Families participate in a retreat experience together. The retreat day offers time for prayer, reflection, discussion, and community building.

## **Informal Family-Centered Catechesis in the Religious Education Program**

The parish Religious Education Program continuously provides for the strong involvement of all the parents of its children by offering:

- Opportunities for direct service such as:
  - Catechist for those who are called to, and gifted for, this ministry,
  - Catechist assistant in classroom, office, areas to be supervised,
  - Parental participant throughout the year in outreach projects such as Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas donations, visits to nursing homes, provision of food for the needy,
  - Member of parent advisory committee, Religious Education development committee, or other groups working for the Religious Education Program;
- Regular opportunity for parent observation of religious education sessions;
- Meetings throughout the year to consult parents, to evaluate appropriate aspects of the program, to assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children, to insure that the parents are knowledgeable about all aspects of the program;
- Parent meetings held annually on topics such as: education of the child in human sexuality, parent-child communication, influence of media and technology on the young;
- Frequent communication, formal as well as informal, with parents of children and youth in program;

Sensitivity to the needs and desires of families must permeate all the dimensions of the parish Religious Education Program and indeed of all parish life. *The care of the family always remains central, since it is the primary agent of an incarnate transmission of the faith.* (GDC 207)

## Home Schooling in Religious Education

A home-schooling Religious Education program is one in which the children of the family are instructed in the faith at home by their own parents.

Parents ask the Church for their child to be baptized. The Church blesses their request with the prayer: that “. . . they will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. May they be also the best teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do.” Parents who take this blessing to heart understand that they begin, support and maintain religious education within the family, “the domestic church”. Parents teach their children to pray and, to begin to live a good Christian life. Thus, children are first educated in faith through spirituality shared and morality modeled.

In addition to the formation they experience in the home, children need to learn to articulate their faith. Responding to this need, the Church provides parish-based religious education, offered by Catechists trained to teach the faith in age-appropriate ways. Gathering for religious education in a parish setting helps children to experience the importance of the Christian community and provides a setting in which they learn to express their faith outside the home. Parents support this effort by making sure that the lived experience of their child corresponds with what they learn.

### ***The Request by Parents to Home-School their Children in the Catholic Faith***

The Pastor is responsible for the catechetical ministry of the parish assuring that its educational and formational elements present faithfully the Gospel and the Catholic faith tradition (*Canons 773, 776 and 777*). Therefore, any request for a home-school program that replaces attendance at the parish Religious Education Program must be for a serious reason and for a limited time. The request is carefully discerned by the Pastor and the Director of Religious Education, with the final permission given by the Pastor.

All home schooling is conducted under the Pastor’s authority. It is overseen either by the Pastor himself or by the Parish Director delegated by the Pastor (*Canon 774*).

Home schooling in the faith does not exempt the families from participation in the Archdiocesan Family Catechesis mandate of a minimum of 5 hours of formal family catechesis provided for each child every year and offered any time between September and August.

## ***Norms for Home-Schooling in Religious Education***

The Director works closely with the parents to help them understand the responsibilities they incur if they opt to replace the role of the Parish Religious Education Program.

- The textbook and teaching materials used must be approved by the parish Director of Religious Education.
- The *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis* must be carefully followed and their content taught in its entirety.
- Parents conducting home schooling sessions must participate in and complete the *Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program*.
- Parents in their teaching receive regular direction and guidance from the Parish Director of Religious Education.

Several times a year, the parish Director meets with those children who are learning their faith through home schooling to assess their progress by means of an objective evaluation tool. The Director informs the Pastor of the results of each child's assessment and submits to him a judgment as to the objective effectiveness of the home-schooling process for each individual child.

- The support of the parish faith community is crucial to the child's understanding of the Church, of Liturgy, and of the Gospel Life. Therefore, the home school should include a parish component in which participants gather regularly with other children of their age for information, faith sharing, community building and service opportunities. Home schooling should also take advantage of appropriate Religious Education events and activities of the parish.

## ***Preparation for the First Reception of Sacraments for Families doing Home Schooling***

The Pastor has the responsibility to ensure that the sacramental preparation of those in his parish is both adequate and in conformity with Catholic teaching (*Canon 843 and 890*).

Catechesis for Sacraments is an essentially ecclesial act (GDC 78) and therefore not an action which can be realized in the community on a private basis or by purely personal initiative (GDC 219b). Catechesis for Sacraments always takes place in a parish-based program.

Therefore, the sacramental preparation for children being educated by home schooling must follow the guidelines and directives given in the chapter of the Handbook entitled *Coordination of Sacrament Programs*. It must be overseen by the parish Director of Religious Education under the authority of the Pastor.

In addition, these children as well as their parents, must participate in the parish-based program of immediate preparation for the reception of a Sacrament according to the Handbook chapter on Sacrament Programs.

The readiness of the child for the reception of the Sacrament will be mutually determined by the parents and the pastor (*Canon 914*).

The Sacraments are to be celebrated in the family's parish of registration where they worship regularly.

Parents who home-school children who are not yet baptized but are of catechetical age and have attained the use of reason, are to enroll their children in the parish catechumenate program. These children/youth are to receive Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist in that order in one single ceremony preferably at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens. (*RCIA National Statutes 18*)

## ***Catechesis for Children and Youth with Disabilities***

*At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus proclaimed  
that He had been sent to announce a joyful message to the poor,  
making it plain and confirming by His Life  
that the Kingdom of God is for all human beings,  
beginning with those who are most disadvantaged.*

*Indeed He made Himself a catechist of the Kingdom of God  
for all categories of persons,  
great and small,  
rich and poor,  
healthy and sick,  
near and far,  
Jews and pagans,  
men and women,  
righteous and sinners,  
rulers and subjects,  
individuals and groups.*

*He is available to all.*

*He is interested in the needs of every person, body and soul.  
He heals and forgives, corrects and encourages, with words and deeds.*

*Jesus concluded His earthly life  
by sending His disciples to do the same,  
to preach the Gospel to every creature on earth.  
(GDC 163)*

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## **Guidelines for Meeting the Catechetical Needs of Children\* and Youth with Disabilities (GDC 189)**

The universality of Jesus' mandate to teach all peoples includes those who are marginalized because of their disabilities. The Church's responsibility is to nourish the faith of every baptized person to the full extent of the individual's capability.

Special Religious Education is a ministry that responds to the religious and spiritual needs of persons with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities which might impair their functioning in a regular Religious Education session. Because of that disability a child may require small group or individualized instruction or may be mainstreamed into the regular Religious Education Program with individual assistance provided.

The Church continuously reaffirms the sacredness of all human life. It places special emphasis on the respect due to those who are fragile in mind, spirit and body. Religious Education Programs reflect the love and concern of Jesus and of the Church for persons with disabilities.

### ***Leadership***

The Special Religious Education Program of the parish, with all its children and sessions, is under the authority and supervision of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education.

The Catechetical Office's Director of Special Religious Education assists parish Directors/Coordinators in developing the Special Religious Education Program by such means as:

- assessment of the special needs of students,
- recommendations on curriculum and resources,
- on-site consultations,
- ongoing Catechist formation in special religious education.

The Catechetical Office's Director also assists parishes by providing spiritual support to parents and guardians of children with special needs.

The Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program in Level I introduces the Catechist to Special Religious Education and in Level II gives an eight-hour training course.

Parents, above all, have the responsibility for their child's faith formation. They must be consulted regularly about the child's participation and progress.

In the Archdiocese of New York, Special Religious Education in all the Parish Religious Education Programs is guided by the Catechetical Office book: *Recognizing the Gift: a Parish Resourced Guide for Welcoming Children with Disabilities*.

- \* For the sake of the brevity, only the word "child" will be used throughout the Guidelines but the intent is to refer to both the child and the young adolescent.

## **Categories of Disability**

In order to meet the needs of children with disabilities it is necessary to have at least a general understanding of the kinds of disabilities. The following definitions are broad. Within each category of disability there are wide ranges of ability, of acceptance of the disability, and of a willingness to learn.

### ***Children Who are Developmentally Disabled***

Intellectual disability refers to significantly sub-average intellectual functioning which interferes with the children's ability to grasp concepts, make judgments and apply information to their own experience.

The impaired ability requires simplification and repetition of content through activity-oriented lessons.

### ***Children Who Are Learning Disabled***

Learning disabled children have average, or above average, intellectual ability but experience difficulty in the process of acquiring, integrating, recalling or expressing information. The impairment may be a difficulty in listening, thinking, speaking, reading or writing, or in fine or gross motor body movements.

Children with learning disabilities can, for the most part, be mainstreamed into the regular Religious Education Program. Mainstreaming can be accomplished:

- if extra assistance is provided,
- if the Catechist uses a multi-sensory approach,
- if the Catechist uses a variety of teaching styles,
- if the necessary adjustments are made in the quantity and kind of material learned.

### ***Children Who Are Behaviorally Disturbed***

Behaviorally disturbed children exhibit one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree:

- an inability to build and maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or adults,
- inappropriate types of behavior or feelings in normal circumstances,
- a general or pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression,
- withdrawal: lack of interest and involvement with people and with the environment.

Catechists of children with behavioral disabilities should:

- be competent in the general principles of behavior management,
- have knowledge of the pressures, abuses, and family situations which may affect these students,
- discuss with the parish Director/Coordinator the situation of any child whose behavior frequently disrupts a session. Some children with behavioral problems may need to be placed in a one-on-one or small group situation.

### ***Children Who Are Physically Challenged***

Children with physical disabilities may or may not need special religious education, depending on the nature and complexity of the disability. Where there is no intellectual impairment, every effort should be made to mainstream the physically disabled child.

Visually impaired children, children who are hearing impaired or deaf, and orthopedically impaired children can be mainstreamed if special materials, resources, and Catechist Assistants are utilized, and if parish buildings are accessible.

Although physically challenged children are often eligible for mainstreaming, conflict in special bus scheduling often necessitates that special sessions be arranged for these children.

## Catechist Selection and Formation

Catechists are recruited and selected by the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education according to the section of the Handbook entitled *Personnel Guidelines for Catechists and Other Staff Members*.

- To be successful in special religious education a background in special education is helpful but not necessary.
- The Catechist in special religious education should have an abiding sense of God's presence in all persons, a desire to work with children with special needs, patience, a sense of humor and enthusiasm.
- Catechists of special religious education are required to participate in the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program, Levels I and II, and to receive Archdiocesan Catechist Certification. As part of this formation program, they take the Level II course in special religious education.
- Older teenagers are often excellent Catechist Assistants for children with special needs, provided that they receive Catechist training and continual supervision and support from the adult Catechists.
- The Director/Coordinator of Religious Education provides formation and supervision for the Catechists following, as appropriate, the sections of the Handbook entitled *Personnel Guidelines for Catechists and Other Staff Members* and *Catechist Formation*.
- Parents of children with special needs are indispensable resources for Catechists on the most effective ways to work with and teach their child.

## **Program Development and Administration**

The Special Religious Education Program of the parish is developed and administered within the context of the section of the Handbook entitled *Coordination of the Religious Education Program, Pre-School Through Eighth Grade*.

### ***Identifying Children***

Repeated efforts are often necessary to locate children with special needs. Many parents of children with disabilities need to be informed of their child's right to, and need for, religious education.

Some effective ways to inform parents about the existence of the parish special religious program are:

- parish bulletin announcements,
- parish website,
- announcements in local newspapers,
- announcements on neighborhood bulletin boards,
- invitations from the pulpit,
- reliance on parents of children with special needs to inform one another,
- home visitations,
- identification of parish children attending special education classes in the public school or private special education schools,
- identification of parish children in events such as Special Olympics.

Consultation with the child's school teacher can provide valuable information on what approaches are most successful in working with that child. Parental permission is necessary for this consultation.

Once a parent seeks to register a child with special needs in the parish program, they complete the form found in *Recognizing the Gift*, pages 37 to 40. This form will enable the Religious Education Director & the Catechist to instruct the child more effectively.

## ***Budget***

Each parish is expected to provide Special Religious Education. If a parish does not have a program, the pastor should make arrangements to share in the program of a neighboring parish. When children from other parishes participate in the parish Special Religious Education Program, the sending parish should make an adequate contribution to the program as specified by the Pastor after consulting the Director/Coordinator.

Because children with disabilities often require a multi-sensory approach and materials of a less abstract nature, sufficient funding must be made available for religious education curriculum and supplies.

## ***Environment***

As with all children in the parish program, Religious Education sessions for children with special needs should be held in rooms that are attractive, comfortable and adequately furnished.

Whenever possible these sessions should be held at the same time and in the same location as the regular sessions of the Religious Education Program so that the special education children do not feel isolated from the rest of the children.

## ***Curriculum Resources***

Modified development curricula are available for the child whose disability precludes the use of a religion textbook.

The Catechetical Office maintains updated information on special religious education materials and the Catechetical Office Director of Special Religious Education is available to assist the parish Director/Coordinator in choosing appropriate curricula.

Resources for assisting blind or visually impaired children are available from the Xavier Society for the Blind. With sufficient notice, religion textbooks can be converted into Braille or enlarged printed editions.

The Archdiocesan Catholic Deaf Center will provide resource materials, sign language interpreters and Catechists for children who are deaf.

### ***Sacramental Catechesis for First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation***

In *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, the U.S. Bishops provide the norms for bringing persons with disabilities into the sacramental life of the Church.

In the case of severe disability, the decision as to whether or not a child may receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance should be made according to these guidelines.

Simplified lesson plans to prepare for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation are available from the Catechetical Office.

## **Personnel Guidelines for Catechists and Other Staff Members**

*The Lord Jesus invites men and women to follow Him --  
The Teacher and Formator of disciples.  
This personal call by Jesus and one's relationship with Him  
are the moving forces of all true catechetical activity.  
From this loving knowledge of Christ  
springs the desire to proclaim Him,  
to evangelize,  
and to lead others to the "yes" of faith in Jesus Christ.*

*The Church discerns this divine vocation  
and confers the mission to catechize.  
(GDC 231)*

*May patience and trust abide in the spirituality of the Catechists  
since it is God Himself who sows, gives growth  
and brings to fruition the seed of His Word,  
planted in good soil and tended with love.  
(GDC 289)*

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## **Selection of Potential Catechetical Personnel** (GDC 231-232)

Essential to handing on the gift of faith are selective recruitment and appropriate preparation of those to whom we entrust our children and youth. In reaching a decision on whether or not to accept each Catechist applicant, the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education must carefully consider the person's qualifications. Before inviting a person to be a Catechist in the program, the Director/Coordinator must consult the Pastor and all potential Catechists must be approved by him.

Catechetical leaders, Catechists, and Catechist Assistants, whether salaried or volunteer, are ministers of the Church when they officially carry out their responsibilities. Therefore, proper screening of catechetical personnel is vitally important to the children and youth of the parish.

### ***Recruitment***

Catechists should never be solicited by means of public announcements. Rather, the Director/Coordinator should invite them personally after considering trustworthy recommendations from those who know them.

Religious Education personnel who will not be working directly with the children may be solicited by means of pulpit and parish bulletin announcements as well as personal invitation.

The Director/Coordinator lays the groundwork for recruitment in such ways as:

- sharing the vision, goal and objectives of Parish Religious Education by means of oral presentations to parish groups;
- keeping the parish abreast of Religious Education programs and events by means of the parish bulletin, a newsletter, pulpit announcements;
- inviting all parishioners to Religious Education activities and involving them in the program, e.g. by praying for students preparing to receive a sacrament;
- publicizing the names and good work of the Religious Education personnel;
- attending parish functions and meetings and becoming acquainted with many parishioners.

## ***Basic Requirements for Acceptance as Catechist or Catechist Assistant (GDC 16)***

The ministry of Catechist is affirmed by St. Paul (*1 Cor. 12: 28*) as being a primary ministry in the Church, one that is based upon a call from God. In selecting Catechists and Catechist Assistants, the Director/Coordinator prays for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to discern in persons seeking the position, which individuals are responding to a call from the Lord.

The Parish Religious Education Program endeavors to bring the Gospel message to all the Catholic families in the Parish whose children attend public schools. The program represents the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and it is antithetical to its belief and mission to discriminate against a person because of age, race, color, national origin, gender, marital status (except as it affects one's status as a practicing Catholic), or disability. The Religious Education Program does reserve the right to act on the basis of its religious principles in all situations, including the admission to service of volunteers and other like activities relating to their supervision.

The applicant for the position of Catechist or Catechist Assistant must:

- be 18 years of age or older;
- have received the Sacrament of Confirmation and be a practicing Catholic who is committed to the Eucharist and faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- exhibit a vital Catholic faith based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ;
- give evidence of love for children and youth as well as the qualities of compassion, kindness, common sense, sense of humor;
- demonstrate the ability to manage children and youth and facilitate their learning;
- be in full compliance with the Archdiocesan Safe Environment requirements;
- agree to fulfill the *Catechist Ministry Responsibilities* as listed in this section;
- agree to be compliant to the legitimate authority of the Pastor and the Parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education in carrying out the ministry of Catechist;
- agree to abide by all the directives in the *Catechist Handbook*;
- agree to participate in the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation program and complete levels 1 and 2 within the Catechist's first 5 years in the ministry;
- give evidence of a sense of one's own self-worth along with security and fulfillment in one's own life.

### ***Basic Requirements for a Person Under the Age of 18 Who Assists the Catechist***

No one under 18 years of age may be a Catechist.

Youth of 16 or 17 years of age who assist in the classroom may be in regular contact with children, only if:

- they have completed a Catechist Formation high school training course approved by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office;
- they have received the certificate of course completion from the Catechetical Office;
- they are directly supervised in each Religious Education session by an adult who is in full compliance with the Safe Environment requirements;
- they are in full compliance with the Archdiocesan Safe Environment requirements for youth under 18 years of age.

Youth, 15 years of age or younger, may only be in the catechetical session when acting as a helper to the adult Catechist. They fall under the category of those whom the Catechist must supervise.

### ***Process for Selection of Catechists***

Applicants for the role of Catechist are selected by the Director/Coordinator and must be finally approved by the Pastor by means of his written approval and signature on their Catechist application.

For all personnel in the Parish Religious Education Program, whether working as a parish employee or as a volunteer, an application must be completed and kept on file.

The application is completed prior to the applicant's interview with the Director/Coordinator. When a person is accepted into the Religious Education Program ministry, the application is kept in the Parish Religious Education office file as long as the person is serving in the program. Each year the Director/Coordinator updates this application as needed. When the Catechist leaves the program, the application is placed in the inactive file.

The Pastor and the Regional Catechetical Director, as well as the parish Director/Coordinator, are to have a regularly updated list of all those engaged in the ministry of Parish Religious Education.

## **Catechist Ministry Responsibilities**

Spend several hours each week in preparing the Religious Education session, guided by the Catechist's manual of the basal series selected by the parish program and by the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis* for your grade level, in order to be well-prepared for your session.

Submit a weekly lesson plan to the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education, using the lesson plan format provided.

Be present and on time for every Religious Education session you are scheduled to teach throughout the year.

Never dismiss the children/youth in your sessions before the scheduled time.

Present all the catechetical lessons effectively.

Manage the children's behavior in such a way as to ensure maximum participation in the catechetical lessons.

Follow all the Religious Education Program directives and procedures as given by the Religious Education Director/Coordinator

Read and follow the parish *Catechist Handbook* and all other guidelines and policies of the Pastor and the Religious Education Director/Coordinator.

Fulfill Archdiocesan policies and directives regarding Catechists, which are usually communicated to you by the Regional Catechetical Director working with the Parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education.

Attend all Catechist meetings organized by the Parish Director/Coordinator.

Interact with the parents of the children/youth you teach, in the ways determined by the parish Religious Education Director/Coordinator, including parent meetings scheduled for the Religious Education Program.

Participate in the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Classes to complete your certification for Levels 1 and 2.

Attend the annual Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum.

## Interview with Prospective Catechists

The screening and interviewing of applicants for the ministry of Catechesis is a vitally important responsibility of the Director/Coordinator.

### ***Interview Guidelines*** (GDC 24-25; 203)

Explain basic vocation of the Catechist & overall vision of the Religious Education Program.

Question the applicant on each of the *Basic Requirements for Acceptance as a Catechist* found in this section.

Engage the applicant in dialogue about information submitted on application form.

Explain Safe Environment screening and training requirements.

Give the applicant a copy of the Catechist ministry responsibilities and go through them.

Determine the religious formation and training the applicant has had as an adult and discern whether he/she will be able and willing to continue growing in the understanding of the faith.

Explore the applicant's ability to relate well with the designated age group. The person's manner of relating to the student is as adult-to-youth, not friend-to-friend.

Explore with the applicant how and where his/her talents and gifts might best be used in the program.

**Questions that an Employer Can and Cannot Legally Ask a Candidate  
Guidelines for Both Written and Oral Inquiries**

**Topic: Family Status**

*Do not ask:*

“Are you married?” “What is your maiden name?” “What is your spouse’s name?”  
“Do you have any children?” “Are you pregnant?”

*Ask:*

“Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the attendance requirements of the job for which you are applying?”

**Topic: Age**

*Do not ask:*

“How old are you?” “What is your date of birth?”  
“What were your dates of college attendance?”

*Ask:*

“Are you able to furnish a work permit after employment begins?”  
“How many years did you attend X college? Did you receive a degree?”

**Topic: Citizenship & Nationality**

*Do not ask:*

“Are you a U.S. citizen? If not, do you have a current work permit?”  
“What language do you most commonly speak/speak at home?”

*Ask:*

“Are you legally eligible to work in the U.S.? (Verification will be required upon hire.)”  
“The job for which you are applying requires fluency in speaking and writing English. Can you meet this requirement?” (This can only be asked if fluency is, in fact, a bona-fide requirement, e.g. for a teacher, a secretary.)

**Topic: Criminal Record (Arrests & Convictions)**

*Do not ask:*

“Have you ever been arrested?”

*Ask:*

“A background check is required for this position. Are you willing to fulfill this requirement?”

**Topic: Disability**

*Do not ask:*

“Are you disabled?” “What is the nature or severity of your disability?”

“Do you have a disability that would interfere with your ability to perform the job for which you are applying?”

“How many days were you absent from work last year?”

“Have you ever been injured on the job?”

“Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?”

“Have you ever seen a counselor?”

“What prescription drugs are you currently taking?”

*Ask:*

“Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without a reasonable accommodation?”

### ***Guidelines for Checking References of Current Catechists & Staff***

References should be requested from the supervisors of the applicant's last two places of employment or of volunteer work.

It is critically important that the references given on the application be contacted.

A written record of the date the reference was checked, by whom, and a careful summary of what was said should be kept in the Catechist's file with the application.

If the applicant has been a catechist in a previous parish, the Director/Coordinator contacts that parish to request a statement regarding the applicant's ministry there. This statement also is kept in the Catechist's file with the application.

### ***Guidelines for Providing References for Former Catechists, Catechist Assistants, or Religious Education Office Staff***

References should be given orally rather than in writing.

Secure the Catechist's written permission to give a reference before doing so.

Ask if the communication is being recorded.

Be careful to provide only facts that can be demonstrated such as title in parish, dates of service, salary/stipend, grade(s) taught, completion of Catechist Formation Program.

Share only information that can be easily documented e.g. by attendance records, performance evaluations.

Do not volunteer extra information, opinions, judgments, or go into detail.

Do not underestimate the power of saying "no comment".

Remember that you have an obligation to signal serious problems for the sake of the children and youth in another parish. If you have concerns about how to address these issues, contact the Safe Environment Office or the Office of Legal Affairs.

Document all information that you give and keep on file.

## **Supervision (GDC 147)**

### ***Catechist Supervision***

Catechists are required to participate in the Catechist Formation Program, Levels I And 2. The program provides basic training in spirituality, theology and educational methods. Catechist Formation Levels 3 and 4 (the New York Catholic Bible School Program) are highly encouraged but not required. The entire program is outlined in *Formation for Parish Catechetical Leaders and Catechists* published by the Catechetical Office.

This training is augmented by regular ongoing supervision/observation of the teaching/learning situation by the Director/Coordinator done both formally and informally. Advice and directives will be given in writing as a follow-up to the supervision/observation and the Catechist is expected to put them into practice.

The Catechist is also assisted by the *Catechist Handbook* provided by the Parish Director/Coordinator and is expected to follow its directives in their entirety.

Substitute Catechists should also participate in the Catechist Formation Program, and receive ongoing supervision and training from the Director/Coordinator.

### ***Supervision of Other Catechetical Staff***

The Director/Coordinator of Religious Education is also responsible for the ongoing supervision of all other catechetical personnel in the program. Justice and charity should be the hallmark of all actions and decisions carried out in the supervisory capacity.

The Director/Coordinator respects and assures confidentiality in professional relationships, documents and records.

## ***Elements of On-Going Supervision and Formation of Catechists***

Primary responsibilities of the Director/Coordinator are on-going supervision and formation of the Catechists. These weekly responsibilities make it impossible for the Director/Coordinator to regularly teach a catechetical session. Supervision is the first part of the on-going formation process for Catechists as the Director/Coordinator helps the Catechist grow and develop in teaching skills, catechetical competencies, and group management. The ultimate goal is always that the faith be handed on with excellence to every child and youth in the parish Religious Education Program.

On-going supervision also gives the Director/Coordinator an immediate understanding of the abilities and struggles of the children and youth being taught in order to be of greater assistance to the families in the program.

On-going supervision and formation consists of:

- short visits to each Catechist's session, if possible, every two weeks, quietly observing the teaching/learning interaction from an unobtrusive place in the room;
- walking outside the rooms where Religious Education is taking place, to listen and learn what is taking place;
- taking notes on each Catechist's strengths, challenges, techniques, knowledge of the subject matter, abilities in working with the children/youth;
- meeting with each Catechist at least once a semester to discuss their professional development and provide means for growth and improvement;
- handling serious needs in the Religious Education sessions immediately to prevent these from causing deterioration of the teaching/learning situation;
- insuring that each Catechist is using the textbook series' Catechist manual and the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis* and is spending several hours each week to prepare the lesson;
- requiring a weekly lesson plan from each Catechist, (see Lesson Plan in *Catechist Formation* Chapter of Handbook) and using the lesson plans as a teaching tool in the ongoing formation process;

- organizing a meeting every 2 or 3 years in which the representative of the textbook company provides in-service on the series being used in the Religious Education Program;
- creating opportunities for Catechists to observe other Catechists teaching, either in the home-parish program, or in a neighboring Parish;
- providing time in the Catechist meetings for Catechists to share problems, suggestions, and ideas to improve lesson planning and group management;
- discerning the talents of each Catechist in order to place the person at the grade level most conducive to his or her abilities.

## Contents of Catechist File

The Director/Coordinator has a file for each Catechist in which are kept:

- completed Catechist Application Form along with the record of all personal references (A written record of the date the reference was checked, by whom, and a careful summary of what was said should be kept with the application.),
- 
- Authorization & Disclosure for Background Check (unless parish entrusts these to someone other than Director)
- Catechist's emergency medical information, if any, in a sealed envelope,
- Catechist Formation records, including sessions attended and the completed observation form,
- all supervision reports,
- written evaluations signed by both Director/Coordinator and Catechist,
- objective documentation of positive contributions and problem behavior

When a Catechist leaves the Parish Religious Education Program, the file is placed in an inactive file and kept for at least 7 years or longer if it is reasonably possible that the person might return to active ministry as a Catechist.

However, if the Catechist is dismissed for extremely poor teaching or for inappropriate behavior, the file should be kept "in perpetuity".

Catechists are allowed access to their official files.

## **Appropriate Behavior of Catechetical Personnel**

Whether working on a volunteer or on a compensated basis, Catechists and other staff members by their appearance and all of their actions should reflect their role as religious educators entrusted with the sacred task of handing on the faith. This should be clearly stated in the Catechist Handbook.

The parish Catechist Handbook specifies what time the Catechist is expected to arrive before the session and how long after the session the Catechist remains. However, a minimum of 10 minutes before and after each session is advisable for adequate supervision and preparation of the learning environment.

The Catechist Handbook provides a calendar indicating all program sessions, Catechist/staff meetings, the Catechetical Forum, and any other events that Catechists are expected to attend. It states that excessive absence and failure to attend required meetings could result in dismissal.

### ***Dress and Appearance***

Catechists, Classroom Assistants and Apprentice Catechists are expected to wear modest, professional clothing appropriate for the Religious Education Program sessions. Appearance and dress during the Religious Education Program are an unspoken means of conveying the dignity of the role of Handing on the Faith.

Catechists who must monitor the student's dress code (see *Programs Requirements* chapter of Handbook) certainly cannot violate it in their own attire. It is the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education who has the final authority in determining inappropriateness of clothing and appearance in question.

### ***Unsatisfactory Behavior or Performance of Catechetical Personnel***

The Director/Coordinator advises a Catechist or staff member of any behavior that is inappropriate or unacceptable.

The Catechist is also advised if the evaluations of the Catechist's performance indicate an unsatisfactory teaching/learning situation. The Director/Coordinator gives suggestions for improvement.

If the unsatisfactory behavior or performance persists, the Director/Coordinator advises the Pastor of the situation.

In either of these cases (unsatisfactory behavior or performance), a written account of the notification is made (including dates, times, circumstances and other pertinent information) and put in the Catechist's file. This account should be specific, behaviorally oriented and verifiable. It should not contain a character judgment.

The Director/Coordinator specifies in writing the behavioral changes that are necessary. When possible, this includes a time line. This is given to the Catechist and a copy put in the Catechist's file.

If there is no improvement, the Catechist is warned that failure to change the behavior will result in a change of area of service or even dismissal as the situation warrants.

The Director/Coordinator specifies in writing the possible consequences to the Catechist and keeps a copy of this in the Catechist's file.

If the behavior/performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the Director/Coordinator should change the Catechist's assigned teaching level or ministry responsibilities to others more in keeping with his/her abilities, or to dismiss the Catechist.

## ***Dismissal of Catechist***

Volunteers can be dismissed as well as paid employees. The procedure is the same for both categories. Some reasons for considering the dismissal of a Catechist are:

- consistently demonstrated failure to maintain control of the group in the Religious Education session,
- inability to adequately teach children or youth,
- consistent failure to follow the Archdiocesan Guidelines or the designated curriculum,
- consistent resistance to the leadership, directives and guidance of the Director/Coordinator,
- excessive absence from the program (the *Catechist Handbook* more specifically defines “excessive”),
- behavior that fosters divisiveness and a spirit of negativity among the other Catechists and staff,
- physical or mental incompetency in carrying out the supervisory and educational responsibilities of the Catechist,

The Director/Coordinator recommends the dismissal to the Pastor, who must make the final decision.

In terminating the services of any employee/volunteer, the employer is not obliged to give reasons, and in some cases it may be preferable not to do so. If reasons are given, they should be behaviorally specific and not judgmental. They should be based on observations and evaluations which have been documented in writing and shared with the employee/volunteer throughout the year.

Regrettably, the Catechist may be hurt or angered by the dismissal, but the Director/Coordinator must remember that the formation in faith of the children and youth is more important than the feelings of the Catechist.

If the Director/Coordinator finds it necessary to dismiss the Catechist, it is pastorally important, when possible, to help the Catechist find aspects of the wider parish life where his/her gifts and talents can be more effectively used.

Allegations of child abuse or molestation must result in immediate suspension. Any allegation of child abuse or molestation must be immediately reported to the Director/Coordinator who will follow the procedure delineated in the Handbook Chapter *Administration for a Safe Environment*.



*Handing On the Faith with Excellence*

### **Application to be Catechist or Assistant Catechist**

\_\_\_\_\_ *For Catechist* Parish: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ *For Assistant Catechist* Deanery: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Business \_\_\_\_\_

Present Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Catholic in good standing? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, explain:

Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation: Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Parish where Confirmation was received \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a member of this parish? \_\_\_\_\_

If less than a year, give name and address of former parish:

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you 18 years of age or older? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Why are you applying to be a Catechist in this parish? *(Answer on back.)*

## Catechetical Background

Number of years as a Catechist? \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Levels Taught \_\_\_\_\_

Last parish where you served as a Catechist:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Your former parish will be asked for a statement regarding your ministry.*

Are you certified in Catechist Formation Level 1? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes: Year \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese \_\_\_\_\_

Are you certified in Catechist Formation Level 2? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If yes: Year \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese \_\_\_\_\_

List any volunteer projects you have taken part in during the past five years.

List special skills and talents you have (e.g. musical, artistic, clerical):

## Religious Educational Background

*Check ( ✓ ) where you received your religious education.*

Elementary School: Catholic School \_\_\_\_\_ Religious Ed. Program \_\_\_\_\_

High School: Catholic School \_\_\_\_\_ Religious Ed. Program \_\_\_\_\_

College: Catholic School \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Theology Credits \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Studies Catholic Institution \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Theology Credits \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Religious Education Courses, Workshops, Seminars attended:

Topic	Number of Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Educational Background**

Completed Elementary School: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Completed High School: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Graduated from College: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Major \_\_\_\_\_ Name of College \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Attended College but did not graduate. Number of years attended \_\_\_\_\_

List other Programs of Study completed and their length (e.g.number of months/years) :

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

**References**

Give two character references from people, preferably an employer, or supervisor, who have known you for 2 or more years.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note: these persons will be contacted by the Parish.*

**The Director/ Coordinator will provide to applicant a copy of the Catechist Job Description and the Catechist Handbook.**

## Safe Environment

If the answers to any of the following questions are “yes”, please explain on the *Termination Information Form*:

Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had your volunteer or paid services terminated at the initiative of any parish, school or agency? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, give explanation on *Termination Information*.

Has a civil or criminal complaint ever been filed against you alleging child neglect or abuse of any kind?\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been terminated or disciplined in your employment for reasons relating to allegations of physical abuse or sexual misconduct by you?\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been accused of or investigated for an act of sexual abuse or harassment of any kind?\_\_\_\_\_

*I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this application and any attached documents, is complete, true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I also agree that if any event occurs that would change the answers given above, I will report that immediately to my supervisor.*

*I understand that it is my responsibility to comply fully with the Safe Environment Requirements of the Archdiocese of New York within 45 days of commencing my service with an Archdiocesan institution. I understand that these requirements include submitting to a background check and completing the appropriate Safe Environment Training Program.*

*I also understand that full compliance with these requirements is a condition of any volunteer service or employment with an Archdiocesan institution that involves regular contact with minors, and that failure to comply will result in my being barred from any contact with minors in any Archdiocesan institution.*

*I further acknowledge that I have received the Summary of the Archdiocese of New York’s Policy on Sexual Misconduct and the Code of Conduct. I understand their meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accordance with their terms. I acknowledge that the policy is not intended to create any contractual obligations, express or implied, on the part of the Archdiocese of New York or its affiliated entities.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Applicant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

**Termination Information** (Application for Catechist & Assistant Catechist)  
**Confidential Information**

Parish\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of previous services termination:

Explanation of conviction for criminal offense:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Applicant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Pastor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## Catechist's Emergency Medical Information

*Confidential Information to be kept in Catechist file in sealed envelope and opened ONLY in case of emergency*

Name of Catechist \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person to be contacted in emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

2 phone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Physician to be contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Chronic conditions that might affect treatment (e.g. diabetes)

Are you on medication that might affect treatment? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, name medications and give dosage.

Specify any allergies to medications or other

Is there anything else an EMT or physician would need to know about you?



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## Solicitud para el Catequista y Asistente a Catequista

\_\_\_\_\_ Para Catequista *Parroquia:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Para Asistente a Catequista *Deanery:* \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección \_\_\_\_\_

Ciudad \_\_\_\_\_ Estado \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Numeros de Teléfono:

Casa \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Oficina \_\_\_\_\_

En donde está Usted empleado actualmente? \_\_\_\_\_

Es Usted un buen Católico? \_\_\_\_\_ Si \_\_\_\_\_ No

Si no, por favor explique

Recepción del Sacramento de Confirmación: Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

Parroquia en donde lo recibió \_\_\_\_\_

Hace cuantos años es usted miembro de ésta parroquia? \_\_\_\_\_

Si es menos de un año, por favor complete las lineas siguientes:

Parroquia Anterior \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección \_\_\_\_\_

Tiene 18 años de edad or más? \_\_\_\_\_ Si \_\_\_\_\_ No

Porqué está usted aplicando al ministerio catequético?

## Antecedentes Catequéticos

Por cuántos años ha sido Usted Catequista? \_\_\_\_\_

Grados que enseñó \_\_\_\_\_

Última parroquia en donde enseñó

Nombre \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección \_\_\_\_\_

*Nota: A su ultima parroquia se le pedirá referencia a cerca de su ministerio.*

Tiene usted un certificación en Formación para Catequistas nivel 1? \_\_\_\_ Si \_\_\_\_ No

Año de Certificación \_\_\_\_\_ Diócesis \_\_\_\_\_

Tiene usted un certificación en Formación para Catequistas nivel? \_\_\_\_ Si \_\_\_\_ No

Año de Certificación \_\_\_\_\_ Diócesis \_\_\_\_\_

Favor de anotar los trabajos en los cuáles ha participado como voluntario durante los últimos cinco años:

Favor de anotar sus habilidades y talentos. Por ejemplo: musical, artístico, de oficina

## Antecedentes De Educacion Religiosa

Por favor marque ( ✓ ) en donde recibio Usted su Educacion Religiosa.

Primaria Escuela Católica \_\_\_\_\_ Programa de Estudios Religiosos \_\_\_\_\_

Secundaria: Escuela Católica \_\_\_\_\_ Programa de Estudios Religiosos \_\_\_\_\_

Universidad: Institución Católica \_\_\_\_\_ Número de Créditos en teología \_\_\_\_\_

Estudio Graduados: Institución Católica \_\_\_\_\_ Número de Créditos en teología \_\_\_\_\_

Educación Religiosa para Adultos: cursos, talleres, seminarios a los cuáles asistió:

Tópico	Número de Horas
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Antecedentes Educativos

\_\_\_\_\_ Cuándo completó su Primaria?

\_\_\_\_\_ Cuándo completó su Secundaria?

Cuándo se graduó de la Universidad:

Especialidad \_\_\_\_\_ Nombre de la Universidad \_\_\_\_\_

## Otros Estudios y la Cantidad de Tiempo Dedicado a Ellos

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## Referencias

Favor de anotar dos referencias personales, preferiblemente de un jefe o supervisor, que lo conoce a Usted por 2 años or más.

**Nombre** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relación** \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Nombre** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relación** \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Nota: estas personas seran contactada por la parroquia.*

*Nota: El Director/Coordinador proporcionarán al solicitante una copia de la Guía de Catequista y las responsabilidades.*

**Si las respuestas a cualquiera de las preguntas siguientes son "sí", explica por favor en la Forma de Información de Terminación:**

¿Jamás ha sido condenado usted de alguna ofensa criminal? Sí \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

le Tiene jamás tuvo a su voluntario o los servicios pagados terminaron en la iniciativa de cualquier parroquia, la escuela o la agencia? Sí \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Si sí, da explicación en la *Información de Terminación*.

Tiene un reclamo civil o criminal jamás fue archivado contra usted alegando que descuido de niño o abusa de cualquier tipo? \_\_\_\_\_

le Tiene jamás fue terminado o disciplinado en su empleo para razones que relacionan a alegaciones de abuso físico o mala conducta sexual por usted? \_\_\_\_\_

le Tiene jamás fue acusada de, o investigado para, un acto de abuso o acoso sexuales de cualquier tipo? \_\_\_\_\_

*Yo por la presente certifico que la información que he proporcionado en Esta aplicación y algún documento conectado, son completo, verdadero y correcto según mi leal saber y entender. Yo también concuerdo que si cualquier acontecimiento ocurre que cambiaría las respuestas dadas arriba, yo informaré que inmediatamente a mi supervisor.*

*Comprendo que es mi responsabilidad de obedecer completamente con los Requisitos Seguros de Ambiente de la Archidiócesis de Nueva York dentro de 45 días de comenzar mi servicio con una institución Archidiocesana. Comprendo que estos requisitos incluyen someterse a un cheque del fondo y completar el Programa de capacitación Seguro apropiado de Ambiente.*

*Yo también comprendo que conformidad llena con estos requisitos es una condición de algún servicio o el empleo de voluntarios con una institución Archidiocesana que implica contacto regular con menores, y con que fracaso para obedecer tendrá como resultado mi ser impedido de cualquier contacto con menores en cualquier institución Archidiocesana.*

*Reconozco aún más que he recibido el Resumen de la Archidiócesis de la Política de Nueva York en la mala conducta Sexual y el Código de Conducto. Comprendo su significado, y concuerdo en realizarme de acuerdo con sus términos. Reconozco que la política no es pensada crear ninguna obligación contractual, el expreso ni implícito, en la parte de la Archidiócesis de Nueva York ni sus entidades afiliadas.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de Solicitante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

**Información de Terminación** (Solicitud para el Catequista y Asistente a Catequista)  
**Información Confidencial**

Parroquia \_\_\_\_\_

Candidato (a) \_\_\_\_\_

Razón por la cuál alguno de sus servicios anteriores fueron terminados:

Razón por la cuál alguna vez ha sido convicto por ofensa criminal:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Firma de Candidato(a)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Fecha*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Firma del Pastor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Fecha*

## Información Para Urgencias Médicas del Catequista

*Información Confidencial que se debe mantener en el archivo de Catequista en un sobre cerrado y solo ser abierta en caso de emergencia*

Nombre del Catequista \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre de la Persona que se puede llamar en caso de emergencia: \_\_\_\_\_

2 números de teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Doctor que se puede llamar: \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono del Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Condiciones Crónicas que puedan afectar el tratamiento (ejemplo diabetes)

Está tomando medicinas que pueden afectar el tratamiento? \_\_\_\_\_ Sí \_\_\_\_\_ No

Si sí, qué es el nombre de la medicina y el dosis?

Favor de especificar si es alérgico a alguna medicina o a otra cosa.

Hay algo más que el doctor o el personal de emergencia debe saber sobre usted?  
Por favor especifique.

## **Catechists' Weekly Preparation**

### ***The same day as the previous religious education session has been conducted.***

Read the lesson in the Catechist manual for the following week. Also read the section of the Archdiocesan Guidelines which you will be teaching. This gives you time to mull over the contents yourself and also to seek help in whatever areas you are unclear about. It gives time for ideas on presentation to germinate.

Look up and read prayerfully the Scripture passages suggested in the guidelines and in the manual. Deepen and broaden your understanding of these passages with the help of scripture resources. Allow them to soak into your own heart before you attempt to present them to the students.

### ***At least 3 days prior to the session:***

Study the lesson in the manual.

Decide if and where you need to change the manual's approach in order to better meet the needs of your students. Be very clear as to the reason for this change.

Prepare your written lesson plan, writing down exactly what you will do.

Have the lesson content and plan so well in your mind that you will not be riveted to the manual, but rather able to follow it while at the same time being attentive to the needs of the students and the action of the Holy Spirit.

Plan so that every minute of time in the session is well used in some way.

Plan to have a variety of learning activities to meet the various learning styles of the children/youth. Plan to keep the children's attention and interest.

### ***Immediately Before the Religious Education Session:***

Arrive at least 15 minutes before the session begins in order to prepare the learning space and to be in control of it when the children arrive.

Get all materials – books, media, art supplies, etc. – ready to be used so that no time is lost during the session.

Be sure you have a way of remembering each child's name (e.g. seating chart).

### ***After the Religious Education Session:***

Stay at least 10 minutes in order to see any student/parent who wishes to see you.

## Lesson Plan for Religious Education Session

*(Use Reference Pages in Planning)*

Name of Catechist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level Taught \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Aim/Objective of Religious Education Session:

---

Catechist Manual : chapter and pages: \_\_\_\_\_

Archdiocesan Guidelines Concept(s):	Page Number(s):
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Scripture References	New Vocabulary
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Prayer Experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Methods: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Materials: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Homework: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Reference Pages To Be Used in Planning the Religious Education Session

### ***Life Experience***

- Which of the children's life experiences will I draw upon to evoke their enthusiasm and explain the content of this session?
- Should I use the life experience given in the textbook?
- 

### ***Catechesis (Faith Development)***

- What is the Basic Teaching in the Archdiocesan Guidelines for this lesson?
- What is the Catechesis (Faith Development) in the Catechist's Manual?
- In my own words, describe the catechesis (i.e. church doctrine, Scripture, tradition, church law, etc.) that I will teach.

### ***Sacred Scripture***

- What are the Scripture references in the Archdiocesan Guidelines for this session?
- What are the Scripture references from the Catechist's Manual for this session?
- Do I wish to use any other Bible references? Why?

### ***Prayer and Worship***

- What is the suggestion for Prayer and Worship in the Archdiocesan Guidelines for this session?
- What is the Catechist's Manual suggestion for Prayer and Worship?
- What prayer experience will I share with the children/youth in my session?
- What special intentions should we remember to pray for?
- Should I include reference to any Holyday or Church season?
- What specific prayer do I want to review or teach?
- 

### ***Faith Response (Christian Living):***

- What is Christian Living Response in Archdiocesan Guidelines for this session?
- What is the Faith Response encouraged in Catechist's Manual for this session?
- What Faith Response do I expect from the children and how will I encourage it?

### ***Teaching Methods:***

Which teaching methods will I use and how will I use these methods?

___ Bible reading and reflection	___ demonstration	___ memorization	___ project
___ examining a basic conception	___ activity	___ drama	___ game
___ reading of the textbook	___ story telling	___ art	___ music
___ discussion			
___ other:	_____		

## Teaching Materials

Which teaching materials will I use?

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ textbook           | _____ DVD/Video         |
| _____ Bible              | _____ CD                |
| _____ activity book      | _____ PowerPoint/slides |
| _____ information sheets | _____ pictures          |
| _____ worksheets         | _____ audiotape         |
| _____ chalkboard         | _____ posters           |
| _____ other: _____       |                         |

How will I use them: \_\_\_\_\_

## Homework

- What homework assignment will help my students better understand and live Christ's message:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Something to think about: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Something to write about: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Something to do: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Something to review: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is there something in the assignment that will draw in and involve the student's parents in some way? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Catechist's Personal Evaluation (to be done after teaching the session):

- *How did the children/youth respond to this session?*
- *What should I review from the session for next week?*
- *How do I feel about this session?*
- *Would I do anything different next time?*
- *List at least two good things you or the children experienced from this session.*

**Plan de Lección para una Sesión de Catequesis**  
*(Paginas de referencia de uso en la planificación)*

Nombre de Catequista \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha de la Clase \_\_\_\_\_

Nivel de Grado enseñado \_\_\_\_\_ Periodo de Sesiones \_\_\_\_\_

Revisar: \_\_\_\_\_

Objetivo de la Catequesis de Sesión:

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

Manual de Catequista: páginas y capítulo \_\_\_\_\_

Concepto(s) de Directrices:

Número de la(s) Página(s):

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

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

Referencias de las Escrituras:

Vocabulario Nuevo:

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

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

Experiencia de Oración: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Método de Enseñanza: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materiales de Enseñanza

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

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

Deberes/Tarea: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Paginas de Consulta para ser utilizado en la planificación de la Sesión de Educación Religiosa**

### ***Experiencia de Vida***

- ¿Cuál de las experiencias de vida de los niños voy a aprovechar para provocar su entusiasmo y explicar el contenido de sus sesiones?
- ¿Debo usar la experiencia de vida del libro de texto?

### ***Catequesis (Desarrollo de la Fe)***

- ¿Cuál es la enseñanza básica en las Directrices de la Arquidiócesis de esta lección?
- ¿Cuál es la catequesis (desarrollo de la fe) en el manual del Catequista?
- En mis propias palabras, describa la catequesis (es decir: doctrina de la iglesia, la Escritura, la tradición, la ley de la iglesia, etc.) que voy a enseñar.

### ***La Sagrada Escritura***

- ¿Cuáles son las referencias bíblicas en las Directrices de la Arquidiócesis para esta sesión?
- ¿Cuáles son las referencias bíblicas del Manual del Catequista para esta sesión?
- ¿Qué otra referencia bíblica usaría? ¿Por qué?

### ***Oración y Adoración***

- ¿Cuál es la sugerencia de oración y adoración in las Directrices de la Arquidiócesis para esta sesión?
- ¿Cuál es la sugerencia del manual del Catequista de oración y adoración?
- ¿Qué experiencia de oración voy a compartir con los niños?
- ¿Qué intenciones especiales nos recordamos de orar?
- ¿Debo incluir la referencia a cualquier día santo o la temporada en la Iglesia?
- ¿Qué medidas concretas de oración es lo que quiero para revisar o enseñar?

### ***Respuesta de Fe (Vida Cristiana)***

- ¿Cuál es la respuesta Cristiana de Vida en las Directrices de la Arquidiócesis para esta sesión?
- ¿Cuál es la respuesta de fe que anima en el manual del Catequista para esta sesión?
- ¿Qué respuesta de fe es lo que espero de mis estudiantes y cómo voy a animar a esta respuesta?

### ***Métodos de Enseñanza***

¿Qué métodos de enseñanza voy a usar y como se utilizan estos métodos?

_____ Lectura de la Biblia y la reflexión	_____ Demostración	_____ Arte
_____ El examen de un concepto básico	_____ Actividad	_____ Discusión
_____ Memorización	_____ Proyecto	_____ Música
_____ Narración de cuentos	_____ Juego	_____ Drama
_____ La lectura del libro de texto	Otros: _____	

## Materiales de Enseñanza

¿Cuál material didáctico voy a usar?

_____ Libro de texto	_____ DVD/Video
_____ Biblia	_____ CD
_____ Libro de actividades	_____ Imágenes
_____ Fichas de información	_____ Diapositivas
_____ Hojas de cálculo	_____ Cinta de audio
_____ Pizarra	_____ Registro
_____ Otros: _____	

¿Cómo se usan?

### Tarea:

¿Qué tareas le ayudara a los niños a comprender mejor y vivir el mensaje de Cristo?

- Algo para meditar: \_\_\_\_\_
- Algo para escribir sobre: \_\_\_\_\_
- Algo que hacer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Algo para examinar: \_\_\_\_\_

¿Hay algo en la tarea que involucra a los padres de los niños de alguna manera?

### Evaluación Personal del Catequista *(para hacer después de la enseñanza de la sesión)*

- ¿Cómo responden los niños con esta sesión?
- ¿Qué debo hacer para revisar de la sesión para la próxima semana?
- ¿Cómo me siento acerca de esta sesión?
- ¿Haría algo diferente la próxima vez?
- Haga un listado mínimo de dos cosas buenas que usted o los niños experimentaron en esta sección.

## **Program Requirements**

*Beginning school means, for the child, entering a society wider than the family, with the possibility of greater development of intellectual, affective and behavioral capacities.*

*In this process, the Religious Education Program provides the dimension of the child's religious instruction. This requires that the Religious Education Director and the Catechists work cooperatively with parents and school teachers.*

*Pastors should help parents and Catechists to fulfill their mission well, realizing that it is the Church itself which is being built up. (GDC # 179 adapted)*

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## Introduction

The following guidelines promote the safety and well-being of the children\* in Parish Religious Education Programs of the Archdiocese of New York (*GDC 18-21*).

These guidelines are not, in themselves, policy statements. They are written to assist the Pastor, working with the Director of Religious Education, to make policies which fit the needs of the parish situation. The content of these guidelines has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate Archdiocesan Offices such as *Legal Affairs*, *Insurance*, *Safe Environment*, so that parish Directors of Religious Education\* can confidently make use of their directives and language.

Within these guidelines reference is made to handbooks for Catechists and for parents\*. The *Catechist* and the *Parent Handbooks*, written by the Catechetical Office, contain policies and procedures which reflect the content of these guidelines.

The *Regional Catechetical Office* provides to the parish Directors of the region the templates for the *Catechist* and the *Parent Handbooks*. Each parish Director adapts the *Catechist* and the *Parent Handbooks* to the situation and needs of the local parish. These handbooks must be approved by the Pastor. An annual review and updating of the parish handbooks is advisable.

When the *Catechist* and the *Parent Handbooks* are distributed, they should be accompanied by a signature card. When signed and filed with the Director of Religious Education, this card serves as the written agreement of Catechist or of parent that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the policies and procedures specified in the handbook.

The *Archdiocesan Catechetical Office* takes an active role in advising Directors on the development of their handbooks and on the implementation at the parish level of both these guidelines and the handbooks.

The Pastor is ultimately responsible to ensure that the provisions set forth in these guidelines and articulated in the parish handbooks are carried out in the parish. The Pastor delegates authority to the parish Director of Religious Education for their implementation in the Religious Education Program.

- For the sake of the brevity:

only the word “parent” will be used throughout the Guidelines but the intent is to refer to the child’s primary caretaker, whether parent or guardian;

the title “Director” is used throughout and refers to the Catechetical Administrator of the Religious Education Program, whether Director or Coordinator;

the words “child” and “children” are used to indicate all children and young people up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level.

## Location of Religious Education Sessions

Religious Education sessions should always be held on parish property for the following reasons:

- A formal, professional supervision structure must be in place whenever the parish gathers children. For each group of children, the presence of more than one adult program representative is necessary for the protection of the Catechist as well as the children.
- Children can engage in inappropriate behavior resulting in fights, accidents or the need for emergency services. The parish program environment is equipped and the personnel are trained to handle these occurrences.
- The dismissal time of the Religious Education session is a time of particular vulnerability for the child and must be carefully supervised by a program representative. The dismissal procedures specified at registration in the written *Child Information Record* must be followed.
- Because a home environment is not supervised by Archdiocesan personnel, there is no way to control and oversee all those who would have access to the children, and to ensure that they are in compliance with *Archdiocesan Safe Environment* requirements.
- In classes held in a family home, the Catechist is put in a compromised position. If the Catechist is accused of inappropriate behavior, the formal supervisory structure of the parish setting, which is meant to protect the Catechist as well as the child, is not in place.
- The parish is put in legal jeopardy by holding classes in the home because the parish is allowing and even encouraging a situation which the parish has been warned not to allow by the appropriate Archdiocesan offices.
- The home is subject to many hazards such as kitchen knives, food to which a child may be allergic, propane flames on stove, tripping hazards, unsafe staircases, icy sidewalks.
- The parish property is inspected and insured by the Archdiocesan carrier. Should an accident occur in the family home, the family's insurances will be used first.

An exception may be made for a child whose disabilities prevent him/her from attending Religious Education sessions on parish property. In this situation, the parent may request that a Catechist be sent to the child's home to provide Religious Education but the parent must always be present throughout the Religious Education sessions.

## ***Plant Safety***

An inspection of the parish premises for fire hazards and general safety should be made regularly by a qualified inspector chosen by the parish. The record of the inspection results should be kept on file in the parish office.

Additionally, the parish is inspected on a periodic basis by its insurance carrier. These inspection reports contain loss prevention/control recommendations pertaining to parish premises and are kept on file both in the parish and in the Archdiocesan insurance office. When there are concerns about safety and the suitability of certain areas of the parish facility for use in religious education sessions, inspections can be arranged by contacting the Archdiocesan Insurance Office.

These inspections are not the responsibility of the Director but it is advisable for the Director to consult the reports when choosing and maintaining the spaces where Religious Education sessions are held. The Director should be alert to basic safety requirements such as clearly marked exits and doors that open readily from the inside.

## ***Floor Plan***

The Religious Education Program has a floor plan which indicates the precise location of each session, as well as the day and time each session is held. This plan is posted in a prominent place so that, in an emergency, individuals and groups can be located without delay.

## ***Visitors***

Exterior doors to the building are kept locked while the Religious Education Program is in session. No unauthorized persons are allowed in the area where the Religious Education sessions are taking place. Parents and other visitors go directly to the Religious Education office or designated reception area. The Director appoints an adult whose responsibility it is to monitor all visitors and to insure that they remain only in the designated places.

## ***Use of Lighted Candles Prohibited***

No lighted candles may be used in the Religious Education sessions even for prayer, such as the lighting of the Advent wreath. It is against the regulations of the Fire Department. The battery-operated "candles" may be substituted.

### ***Drills for Fire, Lock-Down, Shelter-in-Place***

At least once a semester, in early fall and in the spring, Fire Drills, Lock-Down Drills and Shelter-in-Place Drills are held for each session of the Religious Education Program. The drills should make use, insofar as possible, of the procedures known to the children from their public school drills.

See the *Emergencies and Crisis Management* section of the Handbook for instructions on the plan and management of these drills.

## Supervision

### ***Regular Supervision as Essential to the Position of Director/Coordinator***

The person ultimately responsible for the supervision of all the children throughout the entire duration of the weekly Religious Education Program is the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education. This supervisory responsibility includes the supervision of the Catechists and staff in their interaction with the children. On-site supervision throughout each session of Religious Education is so central to the role of the Director/Coordinator that whoever is actually entrusted with this responsibility is, by that fact, the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education.

When a Director of Religious Education has Coordinators of Religious Education, the Director may delegate the regular supervision of the program to the Coordinator.

The Director appoints responsible adults (18 years or older) for supervisory roles under the authority of the Director. These supervisory roles are delegated for such positions as Catechist, Catechist Assistant, Hall Monitor, Bathroom Monitor, Arrival and Dismissal monitor, Door Monitor.

### ***Requirement of Constant Supervision for Each Child***

No child is left unsupervised during the Religious Education Program, during any activities sponsored by the program, or while going to and from locations of sessions, Parish Church, lavatories, and other destinations on the parish premises.

Supervision is a mental as well as a physical act. Therefore, the supervisor must be attentive to those in her/his care as well as being physically present with them. The younger the child -- physically, emotionally or mentally -- the more supervisory attention is needed.

Supervision is also necessary upon the children's arrival at and departure from the program. The *Parent Handbook* must clearly specify the time limits within which supervision is provided. before and after the Religious Education Program.

Even in an emergency (e.g. an accident or sudden illness), a Catechist must never leave a group unsupervised. If there is no other adult in the area to replace the Catechist, the Catechist must bring the children to the classroom of another Catechist or to the Director.

All supervision must create a safe environment for the children and be practiced in the context of the policies and practices of the *Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office*. These policies and practices are presented and explained on the *Safe Environment Office* web page ([archny.org/safe-environment-program](http://archny.org/safe-environment-program)) See especially *Child Protection Policies: Codes of Conduct*. They are also found in the *Safe Environment Office Resource Manual*.

The *Catechist Handbook* reiterates the supervisory information found in this chapter and refers the Catechist to the *Safe Environment Office* web page. The *Catechist Handbook* also specifies any supervisory responsibilities which are unique to the particular parish situation.

## ***Dismissal***

Unscheduled early dismissals should never occur.

The *Parent Handbook* should state that at the end of the Religious Education session children are dismissed to the care of the parent or parent substitute. The parent substitute must be the person designated in writing at registration on the *Child Information Record*. If someone other than the parent or parent substitute is to pick up the child on a given day, this change must be given in writing to the Director prior to the session in question.

- A child should not be released to anyone under age 18. Exceptions to this requirement are often sought by the parent, but exceptions should not be given.
- A child should not be released to someone who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Staff of the Religious Education Program should not drive children home.

The recommended method of dismissal is to have the parent come to the room where the children are waiting under the care of the Catechist.

The *Parent Handbook* specifies that no child may remain on the parish premises after the Religious Education Program ends because supervision is not provided beyond the specified time of dismissal from the program.

Following dismissal the Director should check the premises to make sure all children have been picked up.

The *Parent Handbook* tells parents to instruct their children to report to the Director in the unforeseen event of not being picked up. The children will then remain with the Director and another adult until the parent arrives.

The *Parent Handbook* stipulates that if an individual child needs to be dismissed early, the request should be given in writing by the parent to the Director and presented prior to the scheduled session. This request should include:

- the name of the person picking up the child,
- the designated date and time,
- the reason,
- the signature of the parent.

## ***Custodial Rights of Parents***

The Director should be informed in writing by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent as these pertain to the child's participation in the program as well as to the child's release from the program. A copy of the appropriate section of the custody papers should be attached to the written statement.

## ***Absences***

The *Parent Handbook* indicates the manner in which the parent is to report the absence of a child from the Religious Education session. This procedure must include advance written notification from the parent or, if this is impossible, notification by phone or email before the Religious Education program begins.

It is the responsibility of the Catechist to take attendance at the beginning of the session and the responsibility of the Director to have the attendance lists collected and checked in order to immediately contact the parent of an unreported absence.

In the *Parent Handbook* is the procedure to be followed by the Director for alerting the parent when a child is absent and no notification has been given by the parent. This is especially important when the child is not regularly brought to the program by the parent.

The *Parent Handbook* specifies the number of absences (and late arrivals) which will be accepted before the child/youth is required to make up the material missed. How these sessions or their catechetical content are to be made up must be clearly stated in the *Parent Handbook*.

## Management of Children

### ***Discipline***

The *Catechist Handbook* gives basic instruction for maintaining good discipline and group management.

When interacting with any child, the Catechist's attitudes and actions should imitate the respect and loving care that the Lord Jesus has for the child.

Physical contact with a child is discouraged. However, in the event that touch is necessary for the child's well-being, the Catechist should follow the simple guideline of *P.A.N.*: Keep the contact public, appropriate and nonsexual.

Physical contact, however minimal, should not be used as a form of discipline or child management. However, there may be circumstances which require physical intervention, e.g. breaking up a fight, preventing an injury.

Humiliation or abusive language must never be used as a form of discipline.

A child may receive scheduled, individual instruction or counseling from a Catechist or other staff member only with the written consent of the child's parent and with the knowledge of the Director.

For a Catechist to be allowed to keep a child after the session for reasons such as misbehavior, lateness or additional instruction, this must be stated as program policy in the *Parent Handbook*. The procedure for carrying this out should also be stated in the *Parent Handbook*. This procedure should include the manner in which advance notice will be given to the parent.

All meetings between parent and Catechist regarding the faith formation or behavior of a child are approved by the Director of Religious Education prior to the meeting.

A Catechist should never meet alone with a child in an area that cannot be supervised. If the meeting is behind a closed door, the door must have a glass window such that the Catechist and the child can be clearly seen from outside the room.

A Catechist must not become so emotionally involved with a child that objectivity and fairness are compromised. If a relationship with one child keeps a Catechist from responding to the needs of other children on a regular basis, the appropriateness of this relationship should be examined.

The *Parent Handbook* states that the Catechetical Program reserves the right to remove a child from the group session:

- if it is believed that the child would benefit significantly from an individual or smaller group situation;
- if the child's behavior is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group;
- if temporary removal is used as a disciplinary measure for serious and persistent disruptive behavior.

Such action should be preceded by a consultation involving the child, the family, the Catechist, the Director and the Pastor.

If, in an extreme case, the Director finds it necessary to remove a child from the program entirely, the final decision must be approved by the Pastor. Private Religious instruction for the child would then be arranged by Director and parent.

### ***Dress and Appearance***

Children are expected to wear modest clothing which reflects the dignity of the Religious Education Program in which they are participating. With the approval of the Pastor, the Director has the final authority to determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the clothing worn. If a child violates the policy, the child is removed from the session and the parents are immediately called. The parents must bring alternative clothes for the child to change into so that he/she may return to the Religious Education session.

### ***Homework***

If homework is to be given, this should be stated in the *Parent Handbook* as a requirement for participation in the Religious Education Program. The handbook should also state the consequences when a child does not complete the required homework.

### ***Retention of a Child***

Retention means that the child must repeat the grade level or the year's curriculum. The *Parent Handbook* should clearly state the grounds for retention. These grounds usually are excessive absence or poor performance when tested on the content of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Guidelines. The program policy and procedures for addressing this situation should be clearly stated, including alternatives to repeating the grade level.

## **Confidentiality**

### ***Communication with Parent***

The contact information given by the parent to the Director of Religious Education is privileged information. It is solely for the purpose of communicating with the parent regarding their child's religious education. It may not be shared with any other group within or without the parish unless the parent as well as the Pastor gives permission.

Procedures by which parents, Catechists and Director contact each other should be clearly described in the *Parent* and the *Catechist Handbook*. Communications with the parents should be written, emailed or mailed unless they can be handed directly to the parent by a staff member.

### ***Confidentiality in the Use of Technology***

The Director and the Catechists may have no private, direct communication with a child in the program by such means as a personal email, a text message, or a social networking site. This type of communication must be done through the parent or on an official archdiocesan or parish networking page.

For the norms governing the appropriate and professional use of technology by Director and Catechists with children, youth, and families in the Religious Education Program, see the chapter in this handbook entitled *Use of Technology*. See also the *Safe Environment Office* web page, especially the section: *Facebook and Child Protection*.

### ***Confidentiality***

Being a role model and trustworthy adult for children and youth is an important dimension of the Catechist's responsibility. This may result in a young person's seeking advice and counsel from the Catechist. The *Catechist Handbook* should make clear that before any confidences are received, the Catechist will tell the young person that he/she will respect the person's confidence except when there is a danger to life, health, or safety. The Catechist has an obligation to reveal to proper authorities any knowledge received which would result in harm to someone, even if a promise of confidentiality has been given.

The *Catechist Handbook* explains that the assignment of keeping a journal carries with it serious risks. Therefore, that assignment should never be given in the Religious Education Program.

## **Medical Concerns**

### ***Food during Religious Education Program***

The Religious Education Program should not serve food during the sessions because some children have medical restrictions or allergies to certain foods or ingredients.

### ***Medical Condition of Child***

The Catechist should be informed about any child who has special medication needs, a medical condition which could flare up in the session, or a medical condition which could affect the teaching/learning environment (e.g. allergies, asthma, auditory or visual impairment, possibility of seizures, learning disability, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder). The Catechist should be reminded that this information is strictly confidential and is to be used with the utmost discretion.

### ***Medical Emergency Information***

In the case of any medical emergency, 911 will immediately be called without exception.

A *Child Information Record* along with appropriate Medical Forms must be kept on file in the Parish Religious Education Office for every child. *The Medical Emergency Form* must be reviewed every year and be corrected as needed. Any changes to the record are made in writing and signed by the parent. These forms can be found in this section under the topic *Sample Forms*.

## ***Medication Including Epi-Pen***

No medications of any kind, whether prescription or over-the-counter, should be administered to, or taken by, the child during the Religious Education Program.

Other than administering emergency medication or medical treatment, no Director / Coordinator of Religious Education or Catechist is permitted to administer or provide medication or medical treatment to a child. The administration of medication or use of a special medical device will only occur when there is an imminent threat to a child's life or well-being (e.g. severe allergic reactions, serious chronic medical condition). Without exception, when emergency medical treatment has been provided, 911 will be called.

In the event that a child has a condition for which emergency medication may be necessary, the parent must provide a written request and directives to the Religious Education Director.

Any emergency medication/medical device to be administered during the program according to the above directives must be brought by the parent to the Religious Education Office and ideally is administered there.

The medication/medical device must be administered by someone accepted as competent and approved by both parent and Director.

In cases of children with potentially severe allergic reactions, the medication (e.g. epi-pen) may need to be administered immediately wherever the child is located. How this is to be done must be put in writing at the beginning of the academic year in the *Child Information Record* and the *Agreement to be Used in Case of Child with Severe Medical Condition*. These forms are in this section under *Sample Forms*.

- In cases where a child may carry and/or self-administer the epi-pen, the child should keep the device (ideally two) with him/her at all times. It is the responsibility of the parent to replace the medication (e.g. epi-pen) when it expires.
- For any child who cannot administer the epi-pen to him/herself, the parent, or adult designated by the parent, must stay in the area of the session each week throughout the child's entire time in the program.
- No Director/Coordinator of Religious Education or Catechist is to accept responsibility for administering the epi-pen.

In light of these directives, the Director will decide on an appropriate course of action and put this in writing using the form *Agreement to be Used in Case of Child with Severe Medical Condition*. It should be signed by both Director and parent.

The decision must be approved by the Pastor.

Within the context of the parish policy regarding the epi-pen or any other medical device or medication, the application of the policy should be done by means of one-on-one conferences with the parents to assure that the family's individual needs might be served as much as possible.

Whenever emergency medication (including epi-pen) is administered , 911 will be called immediately. The child's parent or parent substitute as designated in the *Child Information Record* will also be called. After the situation has been resolved, the Director fills out an *Epinephrine (Epi-Pen) Report*.

Regarding the administration of the epi-pen, the parents have the primary responsibility for the care of their child. However, there may be Religious Education Programs where the Pastor, in consultation with the Director of Religious Education, prefers an option other than the presence of the parent or parent delegate in each session. The Pastor has the right to follow the lead of the NY public schools and provide for the presence of a person trained in the administration of the epi-pen who would be on-site during every program session in which there is a child who cannot self-administer life-saving emergency medication.

## Transportation

### ***Field Trips***

Great care must be taken to ensure the safety of the children during the entire course of the trip, especially by the provision of excellent supervision.

The form *Parental Permission for Child's Participation in Parish-Sponsored Trip* must be completed by the parent of every minor who will participate in a field trip sponsored by the Religious Education Program. Before the trip is taken, the Director compares the parent signature on the permission form with the signature on the *Child Information Record*. Telephone calls may not be accepted in lieu of written permission forms. For insurance purposes, the Permission forms are kept on file for one year after trip.

A copy of the *Child Information Record* must be brought along on the trip for each child participating.

For transporting the children on field trips, the Director uses only hired buses or vans which provide a Service Contract and Certificate of Insurance as required by *Catholic Mutual Group*, the Archdiocesan insurance provider.. The list of approved bus companies and instructions for the required *Service Contract* and the *Certificate of Insurance* are found in the *Sample Record* section of this chapter.

When volunteers use their own automobiles to transport children for various Religious Education Program activities, the automobile insurance policy of the volunteer responds first in the case of any accident. The insurance covers the car not the driver so if the car is driven by someone other than the owner and there is an accident, the owner's insurance is liable.

If for any reason, the Director must solicit a volunteer to transport children to any location, the following 3 items must be required from the driver:

- a copy of their valid driver's license,
- a written assurance that the driver has not had a moving violation in the last year,
- proof of insurance for the vehicle.

## Released Time Classes

For children attending Religious Education programs during the regular school day, released time cards entitled *Registration for Released Time Religious Instruction* must be used. The Director obtains these cards from the *Regional Catechetical Office*. After the parent signs the card, the Director signs it and submits it to the public school principal.

The student is usually dismissed from the public school for the last hour of the school day. Once dismissed from the public school, the child is in the care of the parent or the parent agent, who, in this situation, is the Director of Religious Education.

Therefore, if bus transportation is provided, it is the Director who is responsible to provide the necessary supervision on the bus.

After the Religious Education session the children may be returned to the public school to go home on the public school buses, or the Religious Education program may arrange to have the parent pick up his/her child at the parish. The latter is preferable because it gives the Religious Education Program more flexibility and allows the children to have the full required session time of 90 minutes.

Released time classes usually take place every week that the public school is in session. For New York City students, an “interfaith calendar” is published annually, specifying the dates on which the religious instruction sessions are to be held. In other parts of the Archdiocese, the calendar of the individual school district is followed.

A directive of the New York City schools chancellor and a commentary on the New York State law prohibit substantial new academic matter being taught in the public school class when released time students are at religious instruction. The *Supreme Court (Zorach) Decision* says that public schools can adjust schedules to facilitate released time.

The “no new matter” provision breaks down in middle, junior high and high schools because of departmental schedules. A school cannot cut back on one-fifth of a major course, nor can teachers be idled because of released time classes. Perhaps an increased registration would strengthen the appeal of the parish Director for changes in a departmental schedule to allow for released time classes. However, usually the parish will have to make other provisions for the religious instruction of students in a departmental public school.

### ***Transportation for Released Time Classes***

The parish can assist the parents by providing transportation from the public school to the Religious Education Program. If such is the case, at the time of registration the parents must request this service using the form: *Parental Permission for Child's Transportation to Parish Religious Instruction*.

If bus transportation is to be provided, the parish makes the arrangement. The cost is usually paid by the parish; however, it may be shared by the parents. Only licensed public carriers may be used by parishes for transportation of children from public schools to Religious Education Programs. The parish must enter into a formal service contract with the transportation company and obtain a *Certificate of Insurance*. (See *Instructions and Forms for Field Trips and for Use of Buses* in the last part of this chapter.)

Appropriate supervision must be provided on the bus. For this reason, an adult supervisor appointed by the Director of the Religious Education Program should be on the bus in addition to the bus driver.

If the public school is within walking distance of the Religious Education Program, adults should be appointed by the Director to bring the children from the public school to the program site. Local police should be asked to provide crossing guards.

## **Administration**

### ***Schedule of Classes***

The Religious Education Program has 30 sessions per academic year, each session running for 90 minutes. The 30 sessions are scheduled between Sept. 1 and June 30. In addition, the Program offers a minimum of 5 hours of formal family catechesis given according to the models and methods approved by the *Catechetical Office*.

### ***Calendar***

At the beginning of each academic year, a calendar is provided to the parents, listing the dates when the program will be held, the dates for holidays, the make-up days for snow cancellations. The times that the sessions will begin and end are also specified. A copy of this calendar is sent to the *Regional Catechetical Office*.

Cancellations are made only for significant reasons such as dangerous weather conditions. The manner in which parents, bus drivers, crossing guards, school principals and all other concerned persons will be informed of the cancellation of sessions is stated in the *Parent Handbook*.

### ***Copyrighted Materials***

The *Catechist Handbook* makes clear that any printed materials which are copyrighted may not be duplicated without permission from the holder of the copyright. The following exceptions may be made:

- A Catechist may duplicate a single copy to use in preparing or in teaching the class.
- A Catechist may duplicate a short printed item for each of the children but the distribution must be limited to that particular session, and the copies must include the notice of copyright.

Music for use in class or program liturgies may not be reproduced without securing the permission of the holder of the copyright. Multi-media materials which are protected by copyright laws may not be copied for use in the Religious Education session without permission.

## ***Admission Policy***

*The Code of Canon Law* states that all the Christian faithful have the right to be educated in the faith (Canon 217) and that it is a primary responsibility of the Pastor to provide Catechetical Formation for all the adults, young people and children in his parish. (Canons 528, 773, 776, 777). Therefore, every family in the parish who wishes to register in the Religious Education Program should be enabled to do so. When a family is unable to fulfill a requirement for registration, the Director of Religious Education, under the authority and with the guidance of the Pastor, works to find the manner and means to provide Religious Education for the family.

The *Parent Handbook* should include a statement that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, disability conditions, family background and situation.

## Records

### ***Attendance Register***

An attendance register is maintained for each session by the Catechist. It must always be legible and updated, and include each child's record of both absences and tardiness.

If a child's name is in the attendance register, the Catechist is accountable for that child.

The attendance register is never taken from the parish premises. At the end of the year, the information is transferred to the permanent record card of each child.

The register may become a legally significant document and therefore must be kept on file for a minimum of 6 years.

### ***Permanent Record Card***

A single *Permanent Record Card* is kept in the Religious Education Office for each child. The pertinent information is recorded on it each year that the child is in the program.

When the child first registers, a Baptismal record should be shown and the information recorded on the *Permanent Record Card*. The original Baptismal certificate is then returned to the parent. The parish is legally bound to keep the *Permanent Record Card* on file for 60 years because the card can become a legally significant document.

When a child transfers to another program, the Director of the receiving program should request a copy of the *Permanent Record Card* before the child is placed in the new Religious Education program. The sending program retains the original *Permanent Record Card*.

Electronic record-keeping does not replace the requirement to maintain the hard copies.

### ***Child Information Record***

This is completed by the parent at the child's first registration in the program and updated annually. Changes to this record should be provided in writing by the parent.

### ***Discipline Records***

A child's discipline records should never be placed in a child's cumulative folder, but should be retained in a separate file. Discipline records should be viewed as internal documents to which only parents and appropriate Religious Education officials have access. They should not be sent when a child transfers to another program or when transcripts are requested.

### ***Access to Child's Records***

Parents have the right to inspect any and all of their child's records. All other persons, except appropriate parish program authorities, should be denied access without written parental permission or a court order.

## Sample Forms

## Permanent Record Card for Religious Education

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Check Current Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Entrance into Program \_\_\_\_\_

Pre K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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

Father \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child/Youth \_\_\_\_\_

School(s) Attended 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

	Date	Parish	Address	Certificate Seen By
<b>Birth</b>		<b>Place</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Baptism</b>				
<b>First Communion</b>				
<b>Catechesis: Penance</b>	<b>Year only</b>			N/A
<b>Confirmation</b>				

**Attendance**

Grade	Year	Textbook Series	ABS	PRS	Comments	Catechist
Pre-K						
K						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Transferred to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Record Sent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Original should be kept in parish of origin. A copy of card is sent to parish to which child transferred.)

**Child Information Record, Page 1**  
**(Yearly Registration Form)**

Child's Full Name as on Baptismal Certificate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
Was Child baptized? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Copy of Baptismal Certificate Attached \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_  
Mother's Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Religion \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Child resides with: \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. Mother & Father, Mother, Father, Other – Specify)

Is there an order to limit access to the non-custodial parent? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
If yes, provide name of non-custodial parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent or parent substitute who will transport child/youth to and from Program:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Does child have special learning needs or learning problem?

Is there any additional information we should know about your child?

**Child Information Record, page 2, for \_\_\_\_\_**  
*(Child's Name)*

**In Case of Emergency**

**Persons to Contact If Parent/Legal Guardian Cannot Be Reached:  
(Give contact information specific to time of Religious Education Session.)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

Doctor for Emergency: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_:

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

**Special Medical Conditions:**

Procedures to be followed if this condition becomes an emergency:

I understand that in case of an emergency, "911" will be called and an ambulance may be called by the Director of Religious Education or his/her designate.

In case of accident or illness, I request that the representative of the parish catechetical program contact me. If I am unable to be reached, I hereby authorize this representative to call the physician indicated and to follow the physician's instructions. If it is impossible to contact this physician, the representative of the parish catechetical program may make whatever arrangements seem necessary. I agree to assume the financial responsibility for any diagnosis, treatment and/or medication deemed necessary.

To the best of my knowledge all information given is accurate and complete. I hereby consent to, and authorize the necessary procedures that have been stated above.

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

**Child Information Record, page 3 for \_\_\_\_\_**  
(child's name)

**Agreement to be Used in Case of a Child with Allergies**

Does Child have allergies? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

List allergies:

Course of action to be followed if allergy presents an emergency condition:

**Parent and Director of Religious Education agree on the following course of action:**

What medication will be administered? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will administer medication?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
( Role of Person)

Where will this medication be kept so as to be readily available?

What other actions will be taken?

By Whom? \_\_\_\_\_

**Whenever emergency medication is administered, "911" will be called without exception.**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Director of Religious Education Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of Any other person involved: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Información Sobre el Niño, *Página 1***  
**Registración Anual**

Nombre completo como aparece en el Certificado de Bautismo: \_\_\_\_\_

Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teléfono de la Casa: \_\_\_\_\_ Celular: \_\_\_\_\_  
Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha de Nacimiento: \_\_\_\_\_ Género: \_\_\_\_\_  
¿Fue bautizado el niño? Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Copia del Certificado de Bautismo añadido: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre de la Madre: \_\_\_\_\_ Religión: \_\_\_\_\_  
Apellido de Soltera de la Madre: \_\_\_\_\_  
Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono del Trabajo: \_\_\_\_\_  
Celular: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono de la Casa: \_\_\_\_\_  
Domicilio: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Padre: \_\_\_\_\_ Religión: \_\_\_\_\_  
Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono del Trabajo: \_\_\_\_\_  
Celular: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono de la Casa: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Tutor legal: \_\_\_\_\_ Religión: \_\_\_\_\_  
Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono del Trabajo: \_\_\_\_\_  
Celular: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono de la Casa: \_\_\_\_\_  
Domicilio: \_\_\_\_\_

El niño reside con: \_\_\_\_\_  
(p.ej. *Padre y Madre, Padre, Madre, otro – especificar*)

¿Existe una orden judicial que limite el acceso a uno de los padres sin custodia?  
\_\_\_\_ Si \_\_\_\_ No En caso afirmativo, indique el nombre del Padre o Madre sin custodia:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Padre, Madre o Sustituto que traerá y recogerá a el niño del Programa:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Celular: \_\_\_\_\_

¿Tiene el niño necesidades especiales de aprendizaje o problemas de aprendizaje?

¿Hay alguna información adicional que debemos saber sobre su niño?

**Información Sobre el Niño, página 2, para** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Nombre del Niño)

**En Caso de Emergencia:**

Si los padres o tutor no pueden ser localizados, comunicarse con la siguiente persona:  
(Proveer la información específica del contacto durante el período de la sesión de Educación Religiosa)

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Relación: \_\_\_\_\_

Celular: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono de la Casa: \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono del Trabajo: \_\_\_\_\_ Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_

Domicilio: \_\_\_\_\_

Médico in caso de emergencia: \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono de la Oficina: \_\_\_\_\_ Celular: \_\_\_\_\_

Consultorio Médico: \_\_\_\_\_

Condiciones Médicas Especiales:

Procedimientos que deben ser seguidos si la anterior condición presenta una emergencia:

Yo entiendo que en caso de una emergencia el "911" será llamado y tal vez una ambulancia sea llamada por el Director de Educación Religiosa o por su designado.

En caso de un accidente o enfermedad, solicito que el representante del Programa de Educación Religiosa se ponga en contacto conmigo. Si no puedo ser localizado(a), por este medio, autorizo a la persona indicada arriba a llamar al médico que señalo en esta forma y a seguir sus instrucciones medicas. Si no es posible ponerse en contacto con este médico, el representante del programa de catequesis parroquial podrá hacer los arreglos que estime necesarios. Estoy de acuerdo en asumir la responsabilidad financiera de cualquier diagnóstico, tratamiento médico o medicamento que se considere necesario.

De acuerdo a mi conocimiento, toda la información presentada aquí es correcta y completa. Con mi firma abajo doy mi consentimiento y autorizo los procedimientos necesarios que han sido mencionados anteriormente.

Firma del Padre/Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

**Información del Niño, página 3, para \_\_\_\_\_**  
(Nombre del Niño)

**Acuerdo Para Ser Utilizado en caso de que un Niño Tenga Alergias**

¿El niño tiene alergias? \_\_\_\_\_ SI \_\_\_\_\_ No  
Lista de alergias:

Modo de proceder en caso de que la alergia presente emergencia:

**Padre/Madre y el Director de Educación Religiosa están de acuerdo en lo siguiente:**

¿Qué medicamento será administrado? \_\_\_\_\_

¿Quién administrará la medicación?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nombre de la persona)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Función de la persona)

¿Dónde se mantendrá este medicamento de manera que sea fácilmente disponible?

¿Qué otras acciones serán tomadas?

¿Por quién? \_\_\_\_\_

**Cuando un medicamento se es administrado de emergencia, el "911" será llamado sin excepción.**

Firma del padre/tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Firma del Director de Educación Religiosa: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Firma de cualquier otra persona involucrada: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

# Agreement to be Used in Case of Child with Severe Medical Condition

What is Child's medical condition?

Course of action to be followed during Parish Religious Education session:

**The parent and the Director of Religious Education agree on the following course of action:**

What medication will be administered? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will administer medication?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
( Role of Person, e.g. Director)

Where will this medication be kept so as to be readily available?

\_\_\_\_\_

What medical device will be used? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will use the medical device?

*(N.B. If child cannot administer the device, e.g. epi-pen, only parent or adult designated by parent should administer it)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
( Role of Person)

Where will this device be kept so as to be readily available?

\_\_\_\_\_

What other actions will be taken and by whom?

## Signatures:

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Religious Education \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of any other person involved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event that emergency medication or medical treatment is administered, the undersigned, his/her personal representatives, heirs and assigns, DO HEREBY RELEASE, DISCHARGE AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the Religious Education Program, the parish, or the Archdiocese of New York (the "releasees") for any and all claims or liability arising out of the administration of emergency medication or medical treatment and further agree to hold releasees harmless and indemnify releasees from any claim, judgment or expense releasees may incur by administering emergency medication or medical treatment.

I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT. I UNDERSTAND IT IS A RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS. I VOLUNTARILY SIGN MY NAME EVIDENCING MY ACCEPTANCE OF THESE PROVISIONS.

**Signatures:**

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acuerdo en caso de una Grave Condición Médica de un Niño

¿Cuál es la condición médica del niño?

Curso de acción a seguir durante la sesión de Educación Religiosa de la Parroquia:

**El padre y el Director de Educación Religiosa coinciden en el siguiente curso de acción:**

¿Qué medicamento será administrado?

\_\_\_\_\_

¿Quién administrará la medicación?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nombre de la persona)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Función de la persona [p.ej. Director])

¿Dónde se mantendrá este medicamento de manera que sea fácilmente disponible?

\_\_\_\_\_

¿Cuál dispositivo médico será utilizado?

\_\_\_\_\_

¿Quién va a utilizar el dispositivo?

(Nota: Si el niño no puede administrar el dispositivo, p.ej., epi-pen, sólo los padres o adulto designado por los padres debe administrar el epi-pen)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nombre de la persona)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Función de la persona)

¿Dónde se mantendrá este dispositivo de manera que sea fácilmente disponible?

\_\_\_\_\_

¿Qué otras acciones se tomarán y por quién?

### Firmas:

Padre/tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Director de Educación Religiosa: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Firma de cualquier otra persona involucrada: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

En caso de que un tratamiento médico o medicamento de emergencia sea administrado, el abajofirmante, o su representante personal, herederos o cesionarios, POR ESTE MEDIO LIBERA, DESCARGA, Y HACE UN PACTO DE NO DEMANDAR al Programa de Educacion Religiosa, la parroquia, o a la Arquidiócesis de Nueva York (“los exonerados de responsabilidad legal”) de cualquier y toda reclamación o responsabilidad que surja de la administración de tratamientos médicos o medicamentos de emergencia y además estoy de acuerdo en mantener a los exonerados responsabilidad legal, de toda reclamación, juicio o cargo que los exonerados puedan incurrir al administrar tratamiento médico o medicamentos de emergencia.

AFIRMO QUE HE LEIDO ESTE DOCUMENTO. AFIRMO QUE ENTIENDO QUE ESTO ES UNA LIBERACION DE TODAS LAS RECLAMACIONES. FIRMO MI NOMBRE VOLUNTARIAMENTE EVIDENCIANDO MI ACEPTACION DE ESTAS PROVISIONES.

Firma:

Padre/tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

**Epinephrine (Epi-Pen) Report Form**  
**To be completed by Director of Religious Education**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the Incident, how it occurred, actions taken and by whom:

What is current condition of child?

Was 911 Called? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_No

Was custodial parent called? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_No

Was custodial parent reached? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_No

If parent was not available, was person designated as parent substitute in case of medical emergency called: \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_No

Was substitute reached? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_No

Signature of Director of Religious Education \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Instructions and Forms for Field Trips  
and for Use of Buses**

**To be used for Released Time Religious Education  
and for Field Trips**

**Catholic Mutual Group**  
Archdiocese of New York  
1011 First Ave. New York, NY 10022-4134  
Phone: 212-371-1000 X3020; Fax: 212-826-8379

### **Requirements When Hiring Buses**

When hiring buses for transportation, there are two documents that must be procured from the bus company and copies faxed/mailed to Catholic Mutual Group:

1. Service Contract

In Art. 1, Statement of Services, provide the specifics of trip. (e.g.. renting 2 buses, on May 15, 2014 for round trip from St. Mary's Church, Bronx, NY, to the Museum of Natural History, New York City) Contract must be signed by Pastor, Director/Coordinator of Religious Education, and a representative of bus company.

2. Certificate of Insurance

The Director of Religious Education must ask the bus company to provide a copy of their *Certificate of Insurance*. That certificate gives evidence of:

- Auto Liability Coverage for \$10 million per occurrence
- If evidence of \$10 million auto liability is split between General Liability and Umbrella/Excess amounts, it is necessary that the following sentence be included on the Certificate of Insurance: "Excess Liability Coverage includes Excess Auto Liability."
- General Liability Coverage of \$1 million per occurrence
- Proof of Workers Compensation

In addition, the bus company's Certificate of Insurance must name the Parish as Additional Insured according to the following format:

St. Mary Church/ Parish Religious Education Program  
Archdiocese of New York  
Timothy Cardinal Dolan

Procure the *Service Contract* and the *Certificate of Insurance* as soon as you have the date for the trip since frequently the certificates need to be sent back to the bus company for revision. When the completed and signed *Service Contract* and the *Certificate of Insurance* are received, fax both to Catholic Mutual. Catholic Mutual will then release the approved *Certificate of Insurance* to the Parish Program.

Note: If the same bus company is being hired for subsequent trips and their *Certificate of Insurance* is still current (check year range on the certificate), only a newly executed *Service Contract* needs to be procured from the company. However, the current *Certificate of Insurance* must be sent again to Catholic Mutual to accompany the *Service Contract*.

## Service Contract with Bus Company

This agreement is made this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by and between, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, New York ("Customer") and \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ ("Vendor").

**ARTICLE 1. STATEMENT OF SERVICES:** Vendor shall provide and arrange for all aspects of the following service or services, including but not limited to all required vehicles, labor, materials, supplies, equipment, and facilities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ the "Service").

**ARTICLE II. ADDITIONAL VENDOR/SUB-VENDOR:** Vendor shall not enter into any agreement with any entity and/or person to perform any portion or aspect of the Service ("Sub-vendor") without first notifying Customer. Customer shall have the right to determine whether any such Sub-vendor will be permitted to perform any portion or aspect of the Service.

**ARTICLE 111. INDEMNIFICATION:** To the fullest extent permitted by law, Vendor shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless Customer and each member, partner, director, officer, agent and employee thereof from and against all claims, damages, losses, and expenses, including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees arising out of or resulting from:

- I. any accident or occurrence which happens, or is alleged to have happened, in connection with the performance of the Service provided that any such claim, damage, loss or expense is attributable to bodily injury, sickness, disease or death, or to injury to or destruction of tangible property including the loss of use resulting therefrom other than as results from the sole negligence of Customer;
- II. any accident occurrence which happens, or is alleged to have happened, in or about the place where such Service is being performed or in the vicinity thereof (a) while the Vendor is performing the Service, either directly or indirectly through an approved Sub-vendor as provided in Article II; or (b) while any of the property, vehicles or personnel of the Vendor is in or about such place or the vicinity thereof by reason of or as a result of the performance of the Service; or
- III. any accident or occurrence which happens, or is alleged to have happened, in or about the place where such Service is being performed and/or during the performance of the Service as a result of the violation of any statutes, rules or regulations applicable to the Service including, but not limited to, violations of New York Vehicular and Traffic Laws, Labor Law and the Industrial Code.

**ARTICLE IV. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

- I. The Vendor shall, prior to the commencing of any portion or aspect of the Service under this Contract, furnish Customer with Certificates of Insurance confirming the insurance coverage required during the term of the Contract and the additional insureds and Blanket Additional Insured Endorsement as required in paragraph iii below.

- II. The Vendor shall cause all insurances to be in full force and effect as of the date of this Contract and to remain in full force and effect throughout the term of this Contract and as further required by this Contract. The Vendor shall not take any action, or omit to take any action that would suspend or invalidate any of the required coverages during the time period such coverages are required to be in effect.
- III. The Vendor shall obtain and maintain in full force and effect commercial general liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage with a combined single limit of not less than \$1,000,000 each occurrence. The required general liability insurance shall include a comparable limit with respect to Personal Injury and Advertising injury, and a "Blanket Additional Insured Endorsement" in favor of the Customer.
- IV. The Vendor shall obtain and maintain in full force and effect Statutory Workers Compensation Insurance as required by New York State.
- V. When the Service includes hiring or chartering bus, limousine or any other transportation services, the Vendor shall obtain and maintain in full force and effect Automobile Liability Insurance with a combined single limit of not less than \$10,000,000 per occurrence.
- VI. The Vendor shall name Customer, the Archdiocese of New York and the Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan as additional insureds to the general liability insurance and automobile liability insurance policies required under this Contract.
- VII. Each policy must contain an endorsement that such policy is primary and non-contributory insurance to any other insurance available to the additional insured with respect to claims arising hereunder.
- VIII. Each policy must expressly state that it may not be canceled or non-renewed unless thirty (30) days' advance notice of cancellation is given in writing to Customer by the insurance company
- IX. Prior to performing the Service contemplated by this agreement, the Vendor shall provide the Customer with a Certificate of Insurance verifying that the required insurance coverage, inclusive of all terms and conditions listed in paragraphs I through ix above, is in full force and effect.

**ARTICLE V. COMPENSATION:** Vendor shall be paid in full for the proper and timely performance of the Service in the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars (\$\_\_\_\_\_). Payment shall be made [in whole upon completion of the Service] [in installments pursuant to the following schedule:

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Contract has been executed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 [Customer: Pastor and Director of Religious Education)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 [Vendor: Representative of Bus Co.]

## RECOMMENDED BUS COMPANY LIST

A & E Transportation Co. (National Express Corp, Durham School Services, L.P.)

Academy Express 718-967-9700; 212-964-6600; 201-420-7000

Atlantic Express 800-336-3886 Ext 8111 or 8113 (In S.I. 718-556-8111)  
Amboy Bus Co., Inc.( Atlantic Express Transportation) 7 North Street, S.I., NY

Brown Bus Inc, 50 Venner Road, Amsterdam , NY (Goes to NYC area)

Chappaqua Transportation, 130 Hunts Lane, Chappaqua, NY 10514 (First Student uses them)

Coach Bus Lines, 800-877-1888

DeCamp Bus Lines, Montclair, NJ , 800-631-1261 or 973-783-7500.

First Student in Poughkeepsie 845-454-3000; in Kingston, 845-338-5809

George M. Carroll School Transportation in Newburgh, 845-565-8300

Island Charter/IC Bus, 718448 4006 ext. 209, (goes all over the U.S.; reasonable rates)

J & R Tours, 914 668 5050

Leprechaun Lines, New Windsor, 845-561-7900, ext. 310

Martz Group, [www.Martzgroup.com](http://www.Martzgroup.com)

Mid State Bus Service, Newburgh, 845-371-0800

Mile Square Transportation, Inc. & E-Z BUS, LLC, 15 Worth Street, Yonkers, NY 10701

Quality Bus Co., Sparrowbush, NY

West Point Tours Inc. Trailways, 845-561-2671

### **We discourage doing business with:**

VIP. Not compliant with our requirements

City Wide Transit

Supertrans N.Y. Inc.

TNT – Will only sign Service Contract for long term assignments

**Institutional Community Service, Archdiocese of New York** (212 371 1000 ext. 2615) is available to assist Parish programs in hiring buses and procuring insurance.

**Catholic Mutual Group**  
Archdiocese of New York  
1011 First Ave. New York, NY 10022-4134  
Phone: 212-371-1000 X3020; Fax: 212-826-8379

**Request for Certificate of Insurance When Required from the Site to Be Visited**

*If the site to which the students are to be taken (e.g. Spirituality Center for Confirmation Retreat) requires Certificate of Insurance from the Archdiocese, the Director takes one of two possible actions: either call Catholic Mutual for instructions OR complete and send them this form.*

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Location (Parish 3-Digit #) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Holder of Certificate: (Name and Complete Address of Entity to Whom the Certificate Will Be Given)

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

Type of Insurance Requested: (Check those applicable, if not sure leave blank)

General Liability       Automobile Liability       Workers Comp.  
 Property                       Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Limits Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

(If anything over \$ 1 million in General Liability is requested , please indicate.

If you were not given a specific requested amount, just leave this blank.)

Additional Insured(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

(Indicate "Yes" if the requestor of the certificate asks to be named as such.)

For Property Insurance only: Loss Payee: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

Purpose for which Site will be used ( e.g. Confirmation Retreat)

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

Date(s) of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ OR CONTRACT TERM: \_\_\_\_\_

(all contracts must be attached)

*Fax completed Request for Certificate of Insurance to:*

*Catholic Mutual Group, Archdiocese of New York: 212-826-8379*

*Keep a copy for your records.*

*The completed Certificate of Insurance will be emailed back to you and you are to forward it to the leasing company which has requested it. If you have any questions, call Catholic Mutual at 212-371-1000, X3020.*



**Permiso de los Padres para la Transportación del Niño  
A la Parroquia de Instrucción Religiosa  
(Released Time Classes)**

Nombre del Niño: \_\_\_\_\_

Día de semana en que hay clase: \_\_\_\_\_

Hora que comienza la clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Hora que termina la clase: \_\_\_\_\_

Yo solicito que, con el propósito de recibir instrucción religiosa,

mi niño, \_\_\_\_\_, sea trasladado atreves de  
autobús

desde \_\_\_\_\_

*(Nombre de la escuela pública que el estudiante atiende)*

hasta \_\_\_\_\_

*(Nombre del Programa de Educación Religiosa)*

a \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Dirección del Centro Catequético Parroquial donde las clases serán dadas)*

Yo entiendo que las autoridades de la parroquia tomarán precauciones razonables para prevenir cualquier accidente, lesiones personales y la pérdida o daño de pertenecías durante el transporte, pero ni ellos o la Arquidiócesis de Nueva York están asumiendo ninguna responsabilidad legal por cualquier accidente ocurrido, con la excepción de no haber tomado las precauciones apropiadas.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Padre o Tutor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

# Parental Permission for Child's Participation in Parish-Sponsored Trip

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Purpose of the Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

## To Whom It May Concern:

I hereby request that my child, \_\_\_\_\_  
be allowed to attend and participate in the activities connected with the trip  
to \_\_\_\_\_ which will be held on \_\_\_\_\_.

I will provide for the transportation between my home and the parish premises.

I understand that transportation between the parish premises to the destination of the  
trip will be provided by \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that my child will leave the parish premises at \_\_\_\_\_  
and will return to the parish premises at approximately \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that the Parish authorities will take reasonable precautions against  
accident, personal injury and loss of, or damage to, property while going to, from and at the site  
of the trip, but they or the Archdiocese of New York are not assuming any legal liability for any  
such occurrence except any liability based on their failure to take such reasonable precautions.

Telephone where parent/guardian can be reached during the duration of trip:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Parent/Guardian*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Home Address*

## Permiso de los Padres para participar de Hijo/a en un Paseo Patrocinada por la Parroquia

Nombre de la Parroquia: \_\_\_\_\_

Descripción del Paseo: \_\_\_\_\_

Propósito Educativo del Paseo: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha del Paseo: \_\_\_\_\_

### A Quien Le Pueda Interesar:

Yo doy permiso a mi hijo/a, \_\_\_\_\_, para que asista y participe en las actividades relacionadas con el paseo a \_\_\_\_\_ que tendrá lugar el día \_\_\_\_\_  
(Fecha)

Dispondré de la transportación desde mi casa al lugar de encuentro de la parroquia

Entiendo que el transporte desde la parroquia hasta el destino del paseo, será proporcionado por \_\_\_\_\_

Entiendo que mi hijo/a saldrá de la parroquia a las \_\_\_\_\_ y regresara a la parroquia aproximadamente a las \_\_\_\_\_

Entiendo que las autoridades de la Parroquia tomaran precauciones razonables para prevenir cualquier accidente, daños corporales, y perdidas de propiedades, o daños, hacia, durante y al regreso del viaje, pero la Archidiócesis de Nueva York no asumirá ninguna responsabilidad legal por cualquier accidente excepto la parte de responsabilidad basada en la falla de tomar tales medidas razonables de precauciones.

Numero de Teléfono o Celular donde el padre o tutor legal puede ser llamado durante la duración del viaje: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Firma del Padre o Tutor Legal*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Fecha*

## ***Emergencies and Crisis Management***

*Jesus proclaims  
that the Good News of the Kingdom of God is near, notwithstanding  
the problems, tensions, conflicts and difficulties of the world.  
The Gospel seed makes fertile the history of mankind  
and promises a rich harvest.*

*Christians, in the most diverse social situations,  
perceive the world with the same eyes  
with which Jesus contemplated the society of his time.  
The disciple of Jesus Christ  
deeply shares the joys and hope,  
the sadness and anxieties of people today.  
He gazes upon human history and participates in it,  
not only from the standpoint of reason  
but also from that of faith.*

*(GDC 15 – 16)*

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## Definition of “Crisis”

In the context of the physical well-being of all who are participating in the parish Religious Education Program, a crisis is a sudden, unforeseen occurrence that destabilizes the normal situation, involves danger to persons, and requires immediate action to protect the children, youth and staff. The question is not *will* a crisis occur in a Religious Education Program but *when* will it occur. A crisis for the Religious Education community can be but is not limited to:

- accident and illness
- explosion or fire
- bomb threat or bio-hazard threat
- natural disaster, e.g. ,tornado
- an unauthorized person in the Religious Education building
- potentially dangerous person(s) in the wider area where program is taking place
- child abuse or neglect involving children or youth in the program
- incidence of sexual molestation
- charges of molestation against someone in the program
- the suicide of a person connected to the program in some way
- violence or violent death of a person connected to the program in some way

### ***Crisis Procedures***

It is the role of the Director\* to take actions which will protect against a crisis, lessen its effects, or even save lives.

To this end, the Director must prepare all staff for the eventuality of a crisis and ensure that all Catechists know exactly what to do in an emergency. These instructions are given orally by the Director and should also be written in the Catechist Handbook.

- For the sake of brevity only the word “parent” will be used throughout the Guidelines but the intent is to refer to the child’s primary caretaker, whether parent or guardian.

For the sake of brevity, the title “Director” is used throughout and refers to the Catechetical Administrator of the Religious Education Program, whether Director or Coordinator.

## Accidents and Illness

In the case of a relatively minor accident that occurs to a child/youth while attending the Religious Education Program, the following steps are taken:

- The Catechist reports the accident immediately to the Director;
- If bleeding is involved, the blood-borne pathogen procedures are followed
- The Director notifies the parent. If the parent cannot be reached, the Director follows the instructions for emergencies specified by the parent on the *Child Information Record* (c.f. *Program Requirements Chapter, Sample Forms*)
- The Director completes the *Student Accident Report* and keeps it on file whether or not there appear to be injuries. A copy of the report should also be faxed to the Archdiocesan Insurance Division: Catholic Mutual Group at 212 826 8379.

In case of a serious accident or illness that occurs to a child/youth while attending the Religious Education Program, the following steps are taken:

- The Catechist reports the accident immediately to the Director;
- 911 or the local policy/emergency rescue squad is called immediately;
- The Director notifies the Pastor

The Director notifies the designated parent; if the parent cannot be reached, the Director follows the instructions specified by the parent on the *Child Information Record* (*Program Requirements Chapter, Sample Forms*)

- As soon as possible, the Director notifies the Archdiocesan Insurance Division - Catholic Mutual Group (212-371-1000, Ext. 3020) - so that they will be prepared in the event that an accident/illness gives rise to a claim.
- The Director, by the next business day, completes the *Student Accident Report*, keeps a copy in a separate file entitled "Accident Reports" (NOT in the child's personal file), and faxes a copy to Catholic Mutual Group at 212 826 8379. The Director does not give a copy to the parent – this report is for internal use only.
- The Director completes the *Notification of Injury Form, Part 1*. Part 2 of the form is completed by the parent.

- The parent, after completing Part 2, sends the original form to AIG, P.O. Box 26008, Overland Park, KS 66225. This Insurance claim should be accompanied by the medical bills not covered by the family's health insurance. The Director should advise the parent to keep a copy of whatever they send to AIG for their personal records. It is up to the parent whether or not they opt to use the *Notification of Injury Form*.  
Note: the *Notification of Injury* form is the only form given to the parent by the Director.
- It is advisable for the Director to get back from the parent a copy of the *Notification of Injury Form* with Part 2 completed. If this is done, a copy is faxed to the Catholic Mutual Group (212 826 8379) and a copy kept in the Parish Program's Student Accident File.

### ***Student Accident Insurance***

By being registered in the Parish Religious Education Program, all children/youth have student accident insurance coverage. A "covered activity" is a function authorized by the Religious Education Program:

- in which the covered person participates, attends or performs duties;
- that is organized by, or under, the auspices of the Religious Education Program;
- for which adult supervision is provided by the Religious Education Program.

Under this policy, accident coverage, which is in excess of the parent's health coverage, is provided by National Union Fire Insurance Company of NY through AIG Management. If the parents are uninsured, this coverage would be primary.

### ***Accident of a person not covered by Student Accident Insurance***

In case of an accident occurring to any person not covered by the Student Accident Insurance (e.g. family member of a child/youth, visitor, parish volunteer) the Director completes the Accident Report for Parishioners, Volunteers, etc., keeps the original and faxes a copy to Catholic Mutual Group (212 826 8379). Do not give a copy to the injured party. This Report is for internal use only.

## ***Liability Insurance***

The Archdiocese of New York maintains liability coverage for negligent acts resulting in bodily injury or property damage. The Director, the Catechist, and other volunteers are covered as long as they are acting within the scope of responsibilities assigned to them by the parish and as long as the act was neither intentional nor criminal.

If bodily injury or property damage should occur, notify the Pastor immediately. He will contact Risk Management Planning Group (RMPG) (888-767-4492). Failure to give notice could be a basis for a carrier to deny coverage.

## **Severe Allergic Reactions**

For procedures to be followed in case of a child/youth with severe allergic reactions who uses an Epi-Pen, see the *Program Requirements Chapter*, the sections on *Medical Concerns* and the *Sample Forms*.

## Child/Youth Accident Report

Religious Education Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Injured Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Accident \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_ Was Photo Taken (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_

Place Where Accident Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Injury/Damage \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Accident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was Director/Coordinator notified? (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Catechist/Supervisor in charge when accident occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the Catechist/Supervisor present at the scene of the accident? \_\_\_\_\_

### Immediate Action Taken:

Was Parent notified? (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_ Time notified \_\_\_\_\_ How \_\_\_\_\_

By whom was Parent notified? \_\_\_\_\_

Child/youth taken home? \_\_\_\_\_ By Whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Doctor called? \_\_\_\_\_ By Whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions given by Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Call made to 911? (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_ To local police? (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_

First Aid given (yes/no)? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Type of First Aid Administered \_\_\_\_\_

Child/youth transported by ambulance (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_ Ambulance Service \_\_\_\_\_

Where was child/youth transported? \_\_\_\_\_

### Witnesses of accident:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Signature: Director/Coordinator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature: Pastor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Report to Catholic Mutual Group, Archdiocese of New York, by next business day: 212-826-8379.

**NATIONAL UNION FIRE  
INSURANCE COMPANY**  
MAIL CLAIM FORM TO:  
**AIG, EDUCATIONAL MARKETS**  
MAIL CENTER  
P.O. BOX 26008  
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66225  
(800) 257-6250  
www.studentinsurance.com

### NOTIFICATION OF INJURY

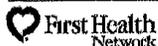
Any person who knowingly and with intent to defraud any insurance company or other person files an application for insurance containing any materially false information, or conceals for the purpose of misleading, information concerning any fact material thereto, and any person who knowingly makes or knowingly assists, abets, solicits or conspires with another to make a false report of the theft, destruction, damage or conversion of any motor vehicle to a law enforcement agency, the department of motor vehicles or an insurance company commits a fraudulent insurance act, which is a crime, and shall also be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed five thousand dollars and the value of the subject motor vehicle or stated claim for each violation.

Reference Number
<b>FOR OFFICE USE</b>
Policy Number
Coverage Code

**FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL & MAILED TO OUR OFFICE WITHIN 90 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE ACCIDENT**

PART I - ACCIDENT REPORT						
1A. Name of School			1B. Name of School District/Diocese/Association			
2A. Name of Student (Last)		(First)	(Middle Initial)	2B. Social Security No.	2C. Grade	2D. Birthdate
2E. Sex						
3. Nature of Injury (Please describe fully indicating what part of body was injured - e.g. broken arm, sprained ankle, etc.)						
4. Describe how accident occurred. (Please provide all details.) <b>MUST BE A BODILY INJURY DUE TO AN ACCIDENT.</b>						
5A. Was the accident school-related? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			5B. Is the accident covered under a catastrophic policy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
6A. Did Accident Occur:			6B. a) Date of Accident		6C. Name of Activity	
a) while the claimant was supervised?			b) Time		6D. Name and Title of Supervisor	
b) during sponsored activity?			c) Place			
c) during programmed hours?						
d) on activity premises?						
e) while traveling directly and uninterruptedly to or from home premises and school for regular school sessions or school sponsored and supervised activities?						
7A. _____			7B. _____		7C. _____	
Signature of School Officer			Title		Date	

PART II - TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN OR CLAIMANT (IF ADULT)			
1A. Name of Father/Guardian or Claimant (if adult) <input type="checkbox"/> None	1B. Social Security No.	1C. Address/City/State/Zip	1D. Phone Number
2A. Name of Mother/Guardian or Spouse (if adult) <input type="checkbox"/> None	2B. Social Security No.	2C. Address/City/State/Zip	2D. Phone Number
3A. Name of Father/Guardian's or Claimant's (if adult) Employer <input type="checkbox"/> None		3B. Address/City/State/Zip of Employer	3C. Phone Number
4A. Name of Mother/Guardian's or Spouse's (if adult) Employer <input type="checkbox"/> None		4B. Address/City/State/Zip of Employer	4C. Phone Number
5A. List all Insurance Company(ies) under which the claimant is insured <input type="checkbox"/> None		5B. Policy Number(s)	5C.
_____		_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group <input type="checkbox"/> Govt.
_____		_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group <input type="checkbox"/> Govt.
_____		_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group <input type="checkbox"/> Govt.
_____		_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Group <input type="checkbox"/> Govt.
<b>Affidavit:</b> I verify that the above information regarding insurance is accurate and complete. I understand that the intentional furnishing of incorrect information via the U.S. Mail may be fraudulent and violate federal laws as well as state laws.			
_____			_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian or Claimant (if adult)			Date
<b>Authorization:</b> I hereby authorize any physician or hospital who has treated or attended to the above claimant to furnish the insurance company or its representative any information requested. A photocopy of this authorization is to be considered valid.			
_____			_____
Signature of Insured (Parent or Guardian if claimant is under 18)			Date



**SEE CLAIM INSTRUCTIONS ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM**

NU K-12 NY

## ***Claim Instructions***

Treatment must commence within 90 days from the date of the accident.

1. In case of an accident, notify the Religious Education authorities/organization immediately.
2. Notify ALL treatment facilities (physician's office, hospital, etc.) of this insurance coverage so that any invoices and/or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) can be sent directly from the medical facility to The Maksin Group.
3. Have Part I and Part II completed on the Notification of Injury form. Do not leave any blank spaces or write "N/A" in any blank space. If either parent or guardian is uninvolved, deceased, unemployed, self-employed or disabled, please state so. If you are employed, but do not have insurance, please state "NO INSURANCE" and provide us with a statement from your employer that the claimant has no insurance. Otherwise, our office will submit an insurance questionnaire to your employer to be used as verification of no dependent coverage.
4. Attach any itemized bills to the claim form, along with any corresponding Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for each itemized bill. An itemized bill includes treatment rendered, the dates of the treatment, diagnosis codes, physician's or hospital's name, address and tax ID. number. Balance Due bills are not acceptable. Be sure to attach any receipts for bills paid out-of-pocket. Otherwise, benefits will be paid to the provider of service.

Please Note: Both an itemized bill and EOB (if applicable) must be submitted for claims to be considered for accident medical expense benefits.

5. Mail the Notification of Injury form. along with any other applicable correspondence , to our office within 90 days from the date of the accident. Do not leave this form with the Religious Education Director, hospital, physician, etc. Our address is Maksin Management Corp, P.O. Box 2648, Camden, NJ 08101-2648. If you need further assistance, feel free to contact Customer Service at 1-800-257-6250 (phone)/1-856-486-4376 (fax). We will be happy to assist you.

If your medical coverage is under an HMO, PPO or similar plan, you must follow their requirements for obtaining benefits. Otherwise, our benefits may be reduced, where applicable, as stated in the policy provisions. This restriction does not apply in every state.

Catholic Mutual Group  
1011 First Avenue, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
TEL: 212-371-1011 Ext 3020 – Fax: 212-826-8379

## Accident Report for Parishioners, Volunteers, etc.

PARISH/AGENCY/INSTITUTION \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FAX # \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF REPORT \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON REPORTING ACCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF ACCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION OF ACCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ WERE PHOTOS TAKEN (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

IS THE PARTY INVOLVED A  
PARISHIONER/VOLUNTEER/OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

PARTY INVOLVED-NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL \_\_\_\_\_ WORK \_\_\_\_\_

INJURY/DAMAGE \_\_\_\_\_ TRANSPORTED BY AMBULANCE (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

AMBULANCE SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_ HOSPITAL \_\_\_\_\_

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE ACCIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

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

WITNESSES (Please include address and phone number)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/REMARKS \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Blood-borne Pathogens

Blood-borne pathogens present social as well as medical problems and require sensitive and Christian responses. The following are guidelines for dealing with persons who suffer from HIV, AIDS, HBV, or for that matter, any physiological, mental, or emotional condition.

Everyone, including people with HIV or AIDS, is protected against discrimination. Children with HIV or AIDS shall not be excluded by reason of the infection with HIV unless the following conditions are evident as determined by the child's physician and parents, together with the Director of Religious Education:

- the child is not toilet-trained or is incontinent;
- the child is unable to control drooling;
- the child is unusually physically aggressive, with a documented history of biting or harming others.

All medical information relating to HIV infection of students is confidential and only people with a legal right to know may be granted access to it.

Religious Education Programs must have a well-planned way of responding to injuries in order to safeguard the health of the helping-adult while caring for the injured child/youth. This plan of action should be based on the assumption that any person could be a carrier of a blood-borne pathogen or other communicable disease.

Therefore, the Director follows the written instructions entitled *Blood-borne Pathogens Instruction Sheet for Catechist* with whatever adaptation are necessary for the parish situation. These instructions are based on the *Exposure Control Plan* and the standard issued by the *Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)*.

Each Catechist and program volunteer must be trained in the plan. Every Catechist should be provided with the kit described in the *Blood-borne Pathogens Instruction Sheet*.

The *Blood-borne Pathogens Instruction Sheet* should make provision for clean-up of blood/body fluid to be done by a person trained for this specific custodial responsibility.

## Blood-borne Pathogens Instruction Sheet for Catechists

*When a Catechist or volunteer needs to intervene and implement “universal precautions,” the person does so from an informed, voluntary response under the “Good Samaritan Act” and uses prudent public health protective procedures.*

### **Instructions for the Catechist:**

Bring the Catechist’s Biohazard Kit to each Religious Education session.

Treat all blood and body fluids as if they were potentially infectious.

If an accident involving a blood spill occurs, encourage the individual to tend to his/her own injury. Direct or help the individual involved with a blood/body fluid incident to care for him/herself having minimal contact with you.

e.g. If a child has a bloody nose, hand the child the tissues and instruct him to pinch his nose;

If a child has a cut, hand the child clean paper towels and direct him to hold the towel firmly over the cut.

When you need to intervene and provide assistance that requires contact, always place a barrier between yourself and the individual. (e.g. rubber gloves)

When providing assistance:

- wear disposable vinyl gloves;
- use disposable towels/tissues for each injury;
- place any blood-stained materials in a sealable plastic bag;
- remove gloves following the proper procedures;
- wash hands thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap using proper hand washing procedures;
- keep other children away from area of body fluid spill. Cover it with paper towels.

As soon as possible notify the Director who will call a custodial person for immediate clean-up. If no one comes to clean up, the 10% bleach solution in the Catechist Biohazard kit can be used as a temporary disinfectant.

### **Contents of Catechist Biohazard Kits**

- disposable vinyl gloves
- band-aids of various sizes and types
- paper towels
- alcohol towelettes
- plastic bags with ties
- 10% bleach solution
- gauze pads
- absorbent powder/emergency clean-up powder
- *the Blood-borne Pathogens Instruction Sheet for Catechist*

## **Norms for Crisis Preparedness**

A brief, clear statement of emergency procedures such as fire, weather and bomb threats is included in the catechist and the parent handbooks.

A diagram of emergency exit routes is on display in every room where Religious Education sessions are held. The diagram is appropriately adapted to each location.

Fire Drills are held regularly according to established procedures.

Lock-down drills, shelter-in-place drills and evacuation procedures are regularly practiced.

A record of each fire drill, lock-down drill and shelter-in-place drill, whether a practice situation or a real crisis, is kept on file.

All Catechists, Catechist Assistants, and Catechist Substitutes are trained in emergency procedures.

## ***Fire Drills***

At least once a semester, in early fall and in the spring, fire drills are held for each session of the Religious Education Program. The drill should make use, insofar as possible, of the procedures known to the children from their public school drills.

The route to be used in evacuating the children from the building is posted in the rooms where the session is regularly held and also is included in the catechist handbook. Fire Department personnel should assist the Director in determining the safest evacuation routes. Each Catechist should be aware of a secondary evacuation route should it be necessary.

Each Catechist and child/youth should know ahead of time the site to which the children/youth are evacuated in case of fire or other emergency.

Instructions given to Catechists include the following:

- insure that all children are out of the room and then lead them to the assigned place of safety;
- have the last person out of the room close the door;
- bring the attendance register and use it to verify that all those in your charge are safely out of the building;

A staff member is appointed whose responsibility is to check the bathrooms and evacuate any children in those rooms. For each disabled child in the program, a staff member is appointed to assist that student. This is always an adult other than the Catechist.

The Director's immediate responsibility is to see that the facility has been completely evacuated.

The date on which the drill occurred and the number of seconds/minutes that it took to evacuate the building must be recorded and kept on file in the Director's office.

Give to the local police and fire officials the floor plan of the Religious Education sessions and indicate on it any pertinent information about children with disabilities.

## ***Shelter- in- Place Drills***

*A Shelter-in-Place procedure should be implemented in an event such as chemical spill, gas leak outside the building, a severe weather emergency.*

The basic elements of the Shelter-in-Place Procedure are as follows. These are acted upon within the context of the Religious Education Program's *Crisis Management Plan*.

- Director, Catechists and other staff get everyone inside the Religious Education building.
- Director calls 911 immediately.
- Director calls Pastor.
- Director and Catechists move all children to the safest areas within the Religious Education building, away from windows and doors. Every attempt must be made to avoid large areas such as gymnasiums.
- Director and Catechists close and lock all doors and windows
- Each Catechist verifies attendance and insures that every child is accounted for. If a child is missing, the Catechist notifies the Director immediately by means of a cell phone or similar device.

The Director locates the child and insures his/her safety.

- Director has staff member (e.g. custodian) turn off HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning)
- Catechist remains in place with the children/youth and waits for the instructions from the Director on how to proceed.

## **Lock-Down Drills**

*A Lock-Down should be implemented in the event there is an internal physical threat to the building and its occupants. i.e. an intruder, or an external physical threat to the building and its occupants. i.e. a dangerous person near the building, police activity near the building.*

The basic elements of the Lock-Down are as follows. These are acted upon within the context of the Religious Education Program's *Crisis Management Plan*.

- Director utilizes the public address system to inform the staff that the school is going into lockdown mode. The message over the public address system should be clear, for example "This is a lock down."

If the site does not have a public address system, plan for an alternate means to immediately inform all staff .

- Director calls 911 immediately.
- Director calls Pastor.
- Catechist closes blinds on windows and doors to prevent anyone seeing into room.
- Children are placed so as not to be visible or a target from outside the room.
- Each Catechist verifies attendance and insures that each child is accounted for. If a child is missing, the Catechist notifies the Director immediately by cell phone or a similar device. The Director locates the child and insures his/her safety.
- The Police will conduct a building sweep to locate the intruder.
- All wait for Director to give further instructions. These instructions will be relayed to the Director by the police and communicated to Catechists by means of the method previously agreed upon in the *Crisis Management Plan*.

## **Crisis Management Plan**

Every Parish Religious Education Program must have a *Crisis Management Plan* in place. A copy of this plan is kept in the Religious Education Office and in the Parish Office. A third copy is kept in a place separate from the building which houses the program e.g.. parish church or parish rectory. A copy of this plan should also be sent to the Regional Catechetical Director to be kept on file.

A *Crisis Management Plan* can reduce the onset of panic, one of the chief dangers in a crisis, by assigning responsibilities and offering a blueprint for action. It enables children and adults to cope with serious conditions and traumatic events. No plan can address the full-range of crises which a program might face, but, with common sense, a master plan can be created that is flexible enough to provide guidance for any crisis.

It is the Director's responsibility to determine the nature of the individual crisis and to request the assistance necessary according to the Crisis Management Plan which has been approved and signed by the Pastor.

### ***Purpose and Philosophy***

The *Crisis Management Plan* includes the following:

- a plan of crisis intervention,
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities,
- clearly defined action steps,
- clearly defined communication channels and rumor control,
- preparations for dealing with media, when appropriate,
- a yearly review and updating of the plan.

## ***Crisis Management Worksheets and Final Crisis Management Plan***

The packet of worksheets includes:

- Directions for Designing the *Crisis Management Plan*
- Selection of Crisis Management Team
- Crisis Response Timetable
- Guide for Public Announcements
- Crisis Management Plan Checklist
- Sample Letter / Telephone Message for Parents
- Post-Crisis Report

The worksheets are designed to help the Director identify the various aspects involved in responding to a situation which has a serious impact on the Religious Education Program and threatens the children and the Catechetical staff. The worksheets lead the Director through forming a Crisis Management Team and developing a Crisis Management Plan for each session.

The packet is designed to be used in conjunction with other resources such as members of local law enforcement agencies, Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, local public school districts.

If there is already a *Crisis Management Plan* in place in the program, this packet can help the Director to update it.

### ***Directions for Designing the Crisis Management Plan***

- Consult the Pastor to insure his approval of all aspects of the plan and to determine the role he will have as part the Plan.
- Form the Crisis Management team. This team is made up of people who will be present on the scene, e.g. Catechists, hall monitors, Catechist Assistants, custodians.
- As a team, list all possible incidents which would qualify as “crisis”.
- List what must be done first to assure the safety of children and staff e.g. secure building, evacuate children, lockdown rooms, limit access.
- Review overall security procedures for building entrances, building itself, parking lot and grounds.
- Plan how the Crisis Management team will maintain contact with one another, with staff, with emergency personnel, with Pastor.
- Plan how parents will be notified.
- List all who need to be alerted in order to provide assistance e.g., emergency personnel, local authorities, Regional Catechetical Office, Archdiocesan Catechetical Office,
- Review Crisis Management Checklist and adapt for your own program.
- Establish a safety code for staff as well as children.
- Submit plan to local law enforcement and safety officials for their review and guidance.
- Design follow-up mechanisms for each crisis.  
E.g., an armed intruder will necessitate follow-up discussion on increasing safety as well as long-term counseling; the sudden death of a catechist will need a means to memorialize that person as well as assistance in grieving.
- Develop a training program for staff including custodians, office staff, volunteers.

## Selection of Crisis Management Team (Worksheet)

Each Religious Education Program should have a Crisis Management Team in place to plan responses to the various emergencies a program may face. The team, usually headed by the Director of Religious Education, implements actions which will lessen the effects of the disaster, save lives, minimize panic.

In forming a Crisis Management Team, it is important to select administrators and staff who are able to function as a team, respond to emergencies, perform specific tasks as determined by the Director\Coordinator, and be generally available to respond to an event.

1. The Team	Name	Telephone	Cell Phone
Crisis Team Coordinator	_____	_____	_____
Recorder (information gatherer)	_____	_____	_____
911\Emergency Liaison	_____	_____	_____
Liaison with faculty staff	_____	_____	_____
Liaison with parents	_____	_____	_____
Liaison with students	_____	_____	_____
Media Liaison:	_____ the Pastor	_____	_____
Nurse Health Rep	_____	_____	_____

2. What will be the Pastor's Role (in addition to ultimate Parish authority and media spokesperson)? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Definition of the Types of Crisis Which Will Convene the Team:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Define Immediate Response Specific to Each Team Member

5. **Crisis Command Station** both within the site and off site.

The site should be accessible to team members, have a telephone line(s), allow communication with classroom and other sites, have a computer.

On site of Religious Education Center  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Center Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Essential Telephone Numbers of Extended Team:**

**Pastor** \_\_\_\_\_

Police \_\_\_\_\_

Fire \_\_\_\_\_

Catechetical Office \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Director \_\_\_\_\_

Ambulance \_\_\_\_\_

Counselors \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Staff & Administrators with Special Skills**

(CPR, volunteer fire persons, crisis counselors)

**Person**

**Skill**

**Location**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**7. Team Training**

When will it occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will conduct it? \_\_\_\_\_

Where will it occur? \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Faculty Training in Emergency Procedures**

When will it occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will conduct it? \_\_\_\_\_

Where will it occur? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Crisis Response Time Table**

### ***Initiate First 30 Minutes Response*** (The first 30 minutes are key)

- Assess Crisis.
- Notify Pastor
- If Crisis happens outside program hours, notify staff by telephone
- Convene Team.
- Determine Action – if necessary, evacuate building.

### ***Post Crisis Actions***

- Complete Crisis Management Report.
- Prepare necessary notices\announcements  
Using the Crisis Management Report as a guide, determine who should be informed and prepare the needed materials.
- Determine group(s) most impacted.
- Activate Follow-up for those groups.
- Activate Follow-up for Religious Education Program.
- Debrief Crisis Management Team based on the response and results.

## Guide for Public Announcements (Worksheet)

### Guide for Responding to the Media:

Is this incident likely to attract media?	YES	NO
If so, has the Catechetical Office been notified to alert the N.Y. Archdiocesan Communications Office?	YES	NO
Have staff/parents/children been notified to refer media to the spokesperson?	YES	NO

### Announcing Incident to the Parish Personnel

Who will be told? \_\_\_\_\_

Memo?	YES	NO
Who will write it?	_____	
When should it be distributed?	_____	
How should it be distributed?	_____	

Meeting?	YES	NO
How should it be announced?	_____	
When should it be held?	_____	
Where should it be held?	_____	
Who will preside?	_____	

Telephone?	YES	NO
Who will write the message?	_____	
When should it be done?	_____	
Who will call?	_____	

### Announcing Incident to Parents & Children:

Will incident be announced to all children	YES	NO
Will incident be announced to all parents?	YES	NO
Written announcement? If so, when?	_____	
Verbal announcement? If so, when?	_____	
Who will deliver it?	_____	

## **Crisis Management Plan Checklist (Worksheet)**

- Is Crisis Management Team in place and trained?  
Is there designated staff specifically trained to handle crisis events?
- Is *Crisis Management Plan* written and approved and signed by Pastor?  
When was it last reviewed?
- Is Pastor's role clear and articulated in writing?
- Has someone been assigned to complete the Crisis Report form?
- Does the Crisis Management team have all emergency numbers available?
- Do the Directors, Coordinators and specified team members have cell phones?  
Do they have the cell numbers of all other team members?
- Has the staff been trained in Crisis Response?
- Do parents know the Religious Education crisis response procedure?
- Have sites been designated for children in the event of evacuation?
- Are there members of the staff with first aid training?
- In the event of a crisis, who is responsible for checking attendance lists to ensure that all children are accounted for?
- 
- Has local law enforcement been involved in creating the response plan?
- Are there local emergency resources other than fire and police departments that the program can tap if needed?
- Are floor plans for the building(s) readily available and prominently posted?
- Does a plan exist for follow-up?



*A copy of this plan should be sent to the Regional Catechetical Director (due October 1). Copies should be kept in the home of the Crisis Management Team Coordinator, on file in the parish Religious Education Office and on file in the Parish Office.*

<b>PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN (Year: _____)</b>			
Parish Name & Parish #:	Vicariate:	Telephone:	Fax:
Director/Coordinator:	Home Phone:	Private Line:	Cell Phone:
Pastor:	Rectory Phone:	Private Line:	Rectory Fax:
Regional Catechetical Director:	Office Phone:	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
<b>CRISIS RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Police / Fire / EMS</b>	<b>Poison Control</b>	<b>Hospitals</b>	<b>ADAPP</b>
911	1-800-222-1222		Frances Maturo/Christine Cavallucci
			1-718-904-1335
<b>Safety Audit (date)</b>	<b>Emergency Drill (date)</b>	<b>Staff in-service (date)</b>	<b>CPR training (date)</b>
<b>CHILDREN &amp; VOLUNTEER RECORDS (BACKUP LOCATIONS)</b>			
<b>Medical Emergency Forms</b>	<b>Permanent Record Cards</b>	<b>Master Phone List</b>	
<b>CRISIS CODE</b>			
Where to find the Crisis Code (e.g., catechist folder, catechist handbook) & Actions triggered by use of the Code:			
Who is authorized to announce the Code?			
<b>ON SITE LOCATION ~ DETAILS</b>			
In the event children must leave their classroom, the location to where they may be safely moved:			

**CRISIS TEAM MEMBERS**

**SESSION DAY & TIME:**

Member Name	Location	Cell phone	Special skills / Assignment
			Team Coordinator
			First Aid / CPR

**COMMUNICATION**

Who will post message on web site/answering machine?	
Who will prepare a statement for parents?	
When & how will staff be informed?	
Who will prepare a press statement?	The Pastor
Who will be the contact with the Regional/Archdiocesan Catechetical Office?	

**EVACUATION PLAN**

	Primary Evacuation Site	Secondary Evacuation Site
Location:		
Telephone (# at evacuation site):		
Site contact person:		
How will children reach evacuation site?		
How will children be returned to program site?		

**SIGNATURES**

Director's / Coordinator's Signature:	Date:
Pastor's Signature:	Date:

## **Sample Parent Letter/Telephone Message For Parents**

Dear Parents,

Today the Religious Education Office received a call indicating that a bomb had been placed within the building. The building was evacuated and the police notified. When they arrived, the police and fire departments checked the buildings and found nothing. Therefore, the Religious Education sessions resumed as scheduled.

Our first concern at all times is the safety and well-being of your children. Any threat to the safety of our children and staff is taken seriously as it was today. We are grateful to the students and staff for their cooperation in evacuating the buildings and maintaining proper behavior during the time they were not able to return to the building.

We will continue to do our best to assure a safe environment for your children at all times in the Religious Education Program. Should you have any questions, please call me.

Sincerely,  
Religious Education Director

## **Sample Telephone Message for Use in Crisis**

*(Note: Provide accurate, simple facts to describe the crisis)*

*(Note: If there were children/youth removed from the building because of injury, those parents must be contacted immediately and individually.)*

Yes, (event) occurred today at (Religious Education Program name). The children were evacuated from the building while the police and fire officials conducted an evaluation. Nothing was found. Children returned to the building and sessions have resumed.

## Post Crisis Report

Incident \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Children/Youth Involved \_\_\_\_\_

Details Known: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Crisis Team Leader and Members involved:

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

### ***Authorities Notified/Consulted/ Results***

Name

Time

Archdiocesan Catechetical Office \_\_\_\_\_  
Consultation Results:

Regional Catechetical Director \_\_\_\_\_  
Consultation Results:

Police Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Family Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Other Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Administration for a Safe Environment***

*The Church is acutely conscious of everything that injures the dignity of the human person. She understands that all human rights spring from this dignity, which is the constant object of Christian concern and commitment.*

*What concerns the Church above all is the integral development of the human person and of all peoples. She notes with joy that a beneficial trend is advancing and permeating peoples of the earth, making them ever more aware of the dignity of the individual. Her vigorous insistence on respect for human rights and her decisive rejection of all their violations are clear expressions of that consciousness. (GDC 18).*

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## Directives and Resources of Safe Environment Office

The full policies of the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policies and Program must be implemented in all sessions and activities of the Parish Religious Education Program. These policies and programs are to be found both on the *Safe Environment web page* and in the *Safe Environment Resource Manual*.

The purpose of this chapter of the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education* is to assist the Director\* in fulfilling the administrative requirements of the Safe Environment Program within the context of the Parish Religious Education Program.

This chapter also includes administrative guidance for the Director concerning sexual harassment in the workplace.

\*For the sake of brevity, the title “Director” is used throughout and refers to the Catechetical Administrator of the Religious Education Program, whether Director or Coordinator.

\*Only the word “parent” will be used throughout this chapter but the intent is to refer to the child’s primary caretaker, whether parent or guardian.

## **Safe Environment Training for Children and Youth**

Each year the Parish Religious Education Program provides to each child and youth in the Religious Education Program, the curriculum entitled *Right, Safe, and Good Relationships*. To do this teaching, the Religious Education Director chooses Catechists qualified for the subject matter. The lessons can be given on a one-time basis or in segments throughout the year. The latter method is preferred because it solves the problem of children being absent when the lesson is given.

Lesson plans for each grade level have been made available by the Safe Environment Office for use by each Parish Religious Education Program. These are found on the Safe Environment website under *Children's Curriculum*.

### ***Parent \* Notification***

The Safe Environment Training Program must be explained in the Religious Education Program Parent Handbook and references provided for the Safe Environment webpage. Parents must be notified as to when the parish Religious Education Program will give the Safe Environment training to their children and be invited to preview the materials to be used.

### ***Parent Opt-Out***

Parents have the option to exempt their child from any session of the Safe Environment Training. If this is their choice, they must complete and sign the *Parent Opt-Out Form*. This form is kept in the Religious Education Office file. The Opt-Out option and procedure should be stated in the parent handbook.

### ***End of the Year Report***

The *End of the Year Report* gives the total number of children trained in the Safe Environment Curriculum during the current school year and the number who did not receive the training. It must be completed by the Director and sent to the Regional Catechetical Office by May 1.

Due May 1

**Catechetical Office**



*Handing On the Faith with Excellence*

**Archdiocesan Safe Environment Program End-of-Year Report**

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

Director/Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Parish Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

***This is a summary report that covers all children trained during entire academic year.***

<b>Total No. of Children in Program</b>	<b>No. of Children Instructed</b>	<b>No. of Children Opted Out by Parent/Guardian</b>

**Send Completed Report to Regional Catechetical Director by May 1.**

**Safe Environment Training for Children/Youth**

**Parent Opt-Out Form for Religious Education Program**

*The Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Safe Environment Policies of the Archdiocese of New York* require that all children and youth in our schools and religious education programs be given Safe Environment training that is age appropriate and in accord with Catholic moral principles. The Archdiocese of New York provides such training through the curriculum entitled *Right, Safe and Good Relationships*. This training also provides to parents supplementary training materials which are available on the internet at [www.archny.org/pastoral/safe-environment-program/training/](http://www.archny.org/pastoral/safe-environment-program/training/). If you choose not to have your child participate in this training, please sign this form and acknowledge that the supplementary training materials have been offered to you.

Parish Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child/Youth in Program \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level of Child/Youth \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish my child to participate in the Safe Environment training offered by his/her Religious Education Program and I acknowledge that the Safe Environment training materials have been offered to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## **Personnel Requirements from the Safe Environment Office**

Every Parish Religious Education Program must fully comply with the Archdiocesan Safe Environment policies and requirements.

Every Parish Religious Education Program must have the *Resource Manual of the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office*. In addition, the information is available on the Safe Environment Program web page and the Director must be familiar with this essential site..

### ***Screening Process and Training***

All prospective Religious Education Directors, Catechists and staff members, whether paid or volunteer, whose position or duties would place them in regular contact with minors, must:

- complete the Safe Environment screening process including submitting to a background check before starting work;
- acknowledge receipt of the Archdiocesan policy relating to sexual misconduct and the appropriate Code of Conduct;
- complete the Safe Environment training appropriate to their position within 45 days of commencing duties.

If a program is scheduled to last for less than 45 days (e.g., vacation bible schools, summer camps,), all new personnel must complete the Safe Environment requirements before the program begins.

If any person fails to satisfy the Safe Environment requirements by the appropriate date, they may not come into contact with minors in any program or activity of the Archdiocese or any of its parishes or institutions until they complete the Safe Environment requirements.

## ***Required Background Check Forms***

The Parish level is responsible for giving the Background Check forms to the Parish personnel, collecting them, returning the completed forms to the Safe Environment Office and keeping copies in the appropriate and secure Parish file.

The Pastor is responsible for the Background Check forms for the Director of Religious Education.

The Director of Religious Education is responsible for the Background Check forms for the Catechists, Catechetist Assistants, Secretaries and any other parish personnel regularly present during the Religious Education Program sessions.

To be a Catechist, a person must be at least 18 years of age. Someone 16 or 17 years of age can be an assistant to the Catechist. The 16 or 17 year-old assistant must complete a Background Check Form but only with parental consent.

Youth 15 years of age or younger may only serve as helpers to the adult Catechist. They cannot complete a Background Check form but they must be advised of the Safe Environment Code of Conduct . They fall into the category of those whom the Catechist must supervise

In filling out the Background Check form, the Catechist or Catechist Assistant should use these precise titles. They should not use the title of "Teacher" or "Teacher-Assistant".

The Safe Environment Office will not accept any completed and signed Background Check forms that are older than 90 days. It is therefore necessary for the Director to submit the signed forms to the Safe Environment Office promptly..

If a background check results in a red-flag on any person who is regularly present during the Religious Education Program sessions, the Pastor is notified. The Pastor makes the decision whether or not to allow the person flagged to take part in the Religious Education Program.

The Background Check Forms consist of the following:

- *Archdiocesan Policy on Background Checks* (kept by employee or volunteer)
- *Fact sheet on Background Checks* (kept by employee or volunteer)
- *Summary of Rights under Fair Credit Reporting Act* (kept by employee or volunteer)
- *Sexual Misconduct Policy, both Summary & Full Policy* (kept by employee or volunteer)
- *Code of Conduct* (kept by employee or volunteer)
- *Authorization & Disclosure for Background Check* (filled out by employee or volunteer, copy sent to Safe Environment Office & original copy kept in Parish files)
- *Catechetical Office Volunteer Application* (filled out by catechist and kept in Religious Education Office files)

These forms are available both in Spanish and English in the *Safe Environment Resource Manual* and on the Safe Environment web page.

## **Rosters**

Twice a year (Fall and Spring), the Safe Environment Office will send to the Directors of Religious Education a roster of Religious Education Program personnel. This roster should agree with the list of volunteers and employees in the parish Religious Education Program. Any discrepancies should be addressed and notations made to the roster.

N. B. Catechists whose names are missing should not be added to the roster. Rather, the Director immediately gives the Catechist the Background Check form to be completed and then the Director sends it to the Safe Environment Office. If the Catechist's name is missing from the roster for any other reason, the Director contacts the Safe Environment Office.

The parish Director returns the annotated roster to the Regional Catechetical Office and it is the Regional Office that sends it on to the Safe Environment Office.

Whenever people change institutions or parishes, even within the Archdiocesan structure, a new background check is required.

If a person is working in two parishes simultaneously, that person needs two background checks.

## **Safe Environment Training**

The packet of materials for the training programs includes a sign-in sheet. A master copy of the sign-in sheet is also included in the *Safe Environment Resource Manual*. On completion of the training, the facilitator must send the Sign-in sheets to the Safe-Environment Office.

There are 2 levels of training:

### **Virtus Training Program**

Required to attend are: Clergy, Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministers and CYO Moderators, Catholic School personnel, and anyone in a supervisory capacity over children and youth.

These sessions are 3 hours each and presented by personnel from the Safe Environment Office. They are offered monthly throughout the Archdiocese, with dates, times and locations listed on Safe Environment web site. Participants must pre-register on line.

### **Safer Spaces Training Program**

Required to attend are: Catechists, catechist assistants, secretaries, maintenance staff and other parish personnel regularly present during Religious Education Program sessions

This training is 40 minutes long and is facilitated by the Director of Religious Education. The Director must first have taken the *Virtus* Training. The *Safer Spaces* training consists of a presentation on DVD supported by a facilitator's guide and a master copy of the training booklet. Each parish Religious Education Program has received these materials from the Safe Environment Office. *Safer Spaces* is available from the Safe Environment Office in both English and Spanish.

*Safer Spaces* Training may also be completed online. Those volunteers who wish to take this session must have already submitted a Background Check form to the Safe Environment Office through the parish.

Any youth 15 years of age or younger, when signing the attendance list for *Safer Spaces*, must write their birth date next to their name.

## Safe Environment Checklist

### Training

- Director takes 3-hour *Virtus* Training.
- Catechists take *Safer Spaces* training online or on site. The training is taken after the Background check has cleared and within the limit of 45 days of beginning their ministry in the parish,.

### Background Checks

- Catechist submits Catechist Application to Director of Religious Education, who keeps it in the secure file of the Religious Education Program.
- Catechist submits Background Check form to Director. (Catechist cannot work with children until the background check has been approved.)
- Director sends to Safe Environment Office all Background Checks as soon as possible.
- Catechist signs acknowledgement that he/she has read the sexual misconduct policy.
- Director ensures that all Catechists & program personnel complete the Background check process.

### Rosters

- The Fall roster is sent to the Director from the Safe Environment Office. The Director makes sure all the Catechists are on the list and have taken the required training. Then returns roster to Regional Catechetical Office.
- The Spring roster is sent to the Director from the Safe Environment Office. The Director makes sure all the Catechists are on the list and have taken the required training. Then returns roster to Regional Catechetical Office.

### Instruction of Children

- Children/youth in sessions are instructed in the *Right, Safe, and Good Relationships* Curriculum.
- In the Fall, parents are notified about the opt-out option by Director of Religious Education and sent the required materials.
- By May 1, Director sends End-of-Year Report to Regional Catechetical Office, giving the number of children who did and who did not receive the instruction.

## **Designated Reporters for the Parish Community**

Archdiocesan policy requires that the Pastor, the Director of Religious Education, the Catechists and the staff of the Religious Education Program report all incidents of suspected child abuse following the procedure outlined below. These personnel are not “Mandated Reporters” under New York State Social Services Law section 413. However, they are required to report all incidents following the policy of the New York Archdiocese and the directions of the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office.

The Pastor is the legal head of the parish and thus is ultimately responsible for what happens there. Thus, he must be notified of all incidents and should be made aware of all developments.

When Archdiocesan policy requires that a report be made on an abuse incident and the Pastor declines to make the report, the Director of Religious Education will be directed by the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office to make the report, or the Safe Environment Office itself will make the report.

Since a parish commitment to protecting its children and helping its families is much broader than its Religious Education Program, its response plan should also be broader.

## **Process to be Followed in Response to Suspected Child Abuse Internal to the Religious Education Program and Involving a Parish Employee or Volunteer**

An "internal incident" is an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made against any person within the parish Religious Education Program (i.e. priest, deacon, sister, brother, layman, laywoman, employee, volunteer), In response the following is done.

- The person(s) receiving the information immediately informs the Director.
- The Director immediately informs the Pastor.
- Either the Pastor or the Director immediately calls the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office (646-794-2897). (If Safe Environment Office cannot be reached, the Office of Legal Affairs is called.) The Safe Environment Office will direct the parish leadership through the situation according to Archdiocesan policy.
- If there is a real and imminent threat to the security or safety of the child, the Pastor or Director must call the police immediately. In an emergency, they should not wait to speak to the Safe Environment Office before dialing 911. The first priority is to ensure child's safety.
- Guided by Safe Environment Office, the Pastor informs the parents of the complaint.
- The Director of Religious Education informs the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
- The Pastor advises the person making the complaint (or their parent) to notify the District Attorney of the appropriate county.
- If the Pastor judges the complaint to be credible, i.e. judges that there is "reasonable cause to believe", he places the accused person on leave at once.  
  
(Employee continues to receive salary/benefits until there is a resolution of the complaint or an investigation shows that improper custodial conduct occurred, at which time salary/benefits may cease and employee is placed on unpaid leave pending the outcome of the investigation.)
- If the employee/volunteer admits to the alleged abuse of a minor, he/she is to be terminated. If found guilty in civil court, the employee/volunteer is to be terminated and is not to be considered for future work or service in the Archdiocese.
- To protect the reputation and good name of both the accused and the victims, anyone having information about an incident or case of child abuse is not to share that information with anyone except the appropriate authorities.

## **Process to be Followed in Response to Suspected Child Abuse External to Religious Education Program and Not Involving a Parish Employee or Volunteer**

An “external incident” is something that happens to a child/youth outside of the Religious Education Program and not committed by a member of the parish staff. The report is typically a self-report by a child /youth to a Catechist. In response the following is done.

- The Catechist immediately notifies the Director.
- The Director immediately informs the Pastor.
- Either the Pastor or the Director immediately calls the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office (646-794-2807) which will direct the parish leadership through the situation according to Archdiocesan policy.
- If there is imminent danger to the child, the Director or Pastor must call the police immediately. They should not wait to speak to the Safe Environment Office before dialing 911. The first priority is to ensure the child’s safety.
- The Director of Religious Education informs the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
- In all cases, if there is **reasonable suspicion**, with some specific signs, that child abuse/neglect/ is occurring, the Safe Environment Office will direct the Pastor or Director to call the **N.Y. Child Abuse Register (800-342-3720)** and report it. Then Parish leadership is to fully cooperate with the investigation of the N.Y. authorities

It is not advisable to wait to be absolutely certain that abuse/neglect is occurring. Reporting in good faith protects the complainant from any liability, even if the report proves unfounded. Reporting is the first step in bringing help to both the abused child and the abusive families.

- If the family/abuser tries to contact the parish leadership about the report, the parish leadership must not have any conversation. Rather they must let the appropriate authorities know about any contact or harassment.

Further specific instructions which the Safe Environment Office will provide to the Pastor and Director will depend on the circumstances in each case.

e.g. If child’s parent or someone in the home is the offender, the child cannot be sent back to the abuser. The Pastor/Director would be instructed to call the police immediately and cooperate fully with the authorities. If the abuser is a non-family member, the Pastor/Director would be instructed to notify the child’s parent unless that would create a risk for the child.

## Characteristics of the Abused Child

Child abuse and child neglect are complex problems that are not confined to any one family, racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic or religious group. They represent a serious breakdown in the family structure, and both the Gospel Message and the legal system of this country call upon the assistance of the wider community in addressing the problem. (GDC 139)

Learning the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect may help the Director and Catechists to recognize when a child, youth and family begin to show the risk factors for abuse or neglect.

There are 4 main categories of abuse:

- physical abuse,
- emotional abuse,
- neglect.
- sexual abuse

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by a parent or caretaker which results in, or threatens, serious injury to the child. This may include excessive corporal punishment.

Verbal harassment, threats, and the systematic destruction of the child's self-esteem are all part of the mental and emotional harm inflicted by emotional abuse.

Neglect means depriving a child of conditions necessary for normal development including food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education and supervision.

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, a youth or another child in a position of power uses a child for sexual gratification or allows another to do so.

Studies indicate that children rarely make false allegations of abuse. If a child speaks of abuse, it should be taken very seriously.

## **Physical Abuse**

### ***Physical Indicators***

- Unexplained bruises or welts: may be in various stages of healing, in clusters of unusual patterns, or on several different areas of the body
- Unexplained burns: may be in shape of cigarette, rope, iron, or caused by immersion which may appear sock-or glove-like
- Unexplained lacerations to mouth, lips, arms, legs or torso
- Unexplained skeletal injuries , stiff swollen joints, or multiple fractures
- Missing or loosened teeth
- Human bite marks
- Unexplained abrasions or bald spots
- Appearance of injuries after an absence from school (weekend, or vacation)

### ***Behavioral Indicators***

- Easily frightened or fearful: of adults/parents, of physical contact, or when other children cry
- Destructive to self and/or others
- Extremes of behavior: aggressive, withdrawn
- Poor social relations
- Learning problems; poor academic performance, short attention span, language delayed
- Runaway or delinquent behavior
- Complaints of soreness or moves awkwardly
- Accident prone
- Wears clothing that clearly is meant to cover body when not appropriate
- Seems afraid to go home

### ***Indicators of Abusive Caretaker***

- Describes the child in a consistently negative manner
- Is a harsh disciplinarian
- Conceals or misleads a provider about a child's injuries

# Emotional Maltreatment

## ***Physical Indicators***

- Failure to thrive
- Developmental lags
- Wetting of bed/pants
- Thumb sucking
- Appears sad
- Speech disorders, such as stammering or stuttering
- Health problems: ulcers, asthma, skin disorders, severe allergies, obesity, extreme weight loss
- Poor appearance
- Drug or alcohol abuse

## ***Behavioral Indicators***

- Habit disorders: sucking, biting, rocking, etc.
- Destructive to self and/or others
- Extremes in behavior: aggressive, withdrawn
- Phobias, sleep disorders,
- Developmental lags: mental, emotional
- Learning problems
- Inhibition of play
- Cruelty, vandalism, stealing, cheating, fire setting, etc.
- Sadomasochistic behavior toward animals and other children
- Head banging
- Overly adaptive behavior: inappropriately adult or infantile
- Depression
- Suicidal ideation

## ***Indicators of Emotionally Abusive Caretaker***

- Rejects, ignores, terrorizes, or isolates the child

# Neglect

## ***Physical Indicators***

- Poor growth pattern
- Constant hunger
- Malnutrition
- Dark circles under eyes
- Poor hygiene: body order, lice
- Inappropriate clothing
- Constant fatigue
- Listlessness
- Falls asleep in school
- Consistent lack of supervision especially for long periods or in dangerous activities
- Unexplained bruises or injuries as a result of poor supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs such as:
  - lack of proper immunizations
  - gross dental problems
  - need for glasses/hearing aids

## ***Behavioral Indicators***

- Developmental lags
- Begs or steals food, forages through garbage
- Always hungry
- Destructive to self and/or others
- Extremes in behavior: aggressive, withdrawn
- Hyperactive
- Assumes adult responsibilities or acts in pseudo-mature fashion
- Exhibits infantile behavior
- Delinquent behavior
- Depressed/apathetic; states "no one cares"
- Frequent school absences or chronic tardiness
- Excessively Seeks attention and/or affection
- Hypochondria

## ***Indicators of Neglect from Caretaker***

- May be substance abuser
- Has chaotic lifestyle which might include loss of job, incoming, housing

# Sexual Abuse

## ***Physical Indicators***

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Genital/anal itching, pain, swelling, or burning
- Genital/anal bruises or bleeding
- Frequent urinary tract or yeast infections
- Pain on urination
- Vaginal/penile discharge
- Poor sphincter control
- Venereal disease
- Pregnancy
- Chronic unexplained sore throats
- Frequent psychosomatic illnesses
- Loss of appetite

## ***Behavioral Indicators***

- Sudden radical behavior change
- Extremes in behavior: aggressive, withdrawn
- Regressive behavior
- Runaway or delinquent behavior
- Depressed, apathetic or suicidal
- Destructive to self and/or others
- Poor social relations
- Refuses to change for gym
- Does artwork depicting sexual themes
- Behaves seductively and has sexual knowledge beyond age
- Compulsive use of language referring to genitals
- Sexually acts out or attempts to force or coerce other children to be sexual
- Complains of soreness or moves or sits awkwardly
- Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate
- Compulsive bathing
- Has nightmares

## ***Indicators of Abusive Caretaker***

- Is extremely protective of family privacy
- Does not allow the child to be involved in extracurricular or developmentally appropriate activities such as being with friends or dating

## **Warning Signs of a Sexual Abuse Offender**

Sexual abuse can occur in any environment including homes, churches, schools and religious education programs. In 8 out of 10 reported cases of child sexual abuse, the victim knows the offender. Offenders go to incredible lengths to ensure that they are not strangers to the child. They can spend months and often years grooming entire communities to accept them as trustworthy and upright. We need to be aware of the warning signs that a sexual predator may be lurking about.

### **Some signs are more obvious than others:**

- Uses bad language around children;
- Tells children dirty jokes;
- Shows pornography to children.

### **Other signs are a little more subtle:**

- Always wants to wrestle or tickle;
- Always wants to be alone with children;
- Prefers to be with children instead of adults;
- Discourages involvement from other adults.

### **Some signs can be hidden entirely:**

- Gives gifts to children without permission;
- Allows children to do things they are not normally allowed to do (e.g. drink alcohol);
- Encourages the children to keep secrets.

# **Anti-Sexual Harassment**

*Developed by Office of Human Resources, Archdiocese of New York*

## ***Introduction***

Sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable behavior on the part of any employee of the Archdiocese of New York. In addition, it is a violation of Federal, State, and City law.

When it exists, it is a problem that affects everyone, at all levels and in all types of work. Each one of us is responsible for compliance against sexual harassment. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring a work environment that is free of all types of discrimination, and harassment including sexual harassment.

## ***Policy***

The Archdiocese of New York is committed to providing a work environment reflecting the highest standards of respect for the personal dignity of every employee.

The Archdiocese neither condones nor permits sexual harassment and undertakes to address, prevent and correct any sexually harassing behavior in the work environment.

Staff members are prohibited from initiating or engaging in sexually harassing conduct or behavior.

## ***Definition***

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical, when:

- submission, acquiescence or rejection of such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a condition of employment; or

- submission, acquiescence or rejection of such conduct is used as a factor in employment decisions including but not limited to evaluation, training, promotion, compensation, duties, transfers, privileges and other terms or conditions of employment; or

- such conduct substantially interferes with employment by creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

## ***Grievance Procedure***

Staff members who personally experience sexual harassment or witness it are required to report such incidents to their supervisor\* who will inform the Office of Legal Affairs. Immediate reporting ensures prompt response and resolution of objectionable conduct.

The Office of Legal Affairs, in coordination with the Pastor and Director of Religious Education, will promptly conduct and document an investigation of each grievance reported.

The Office of Legal Affairs will submit a recommendation to the Pastor. Such recommendation may include but is not limited to:

- Formal warning
- Suspension without pay
- Termination of employment or services.

## ***Directives for Making a Sexual Harassment Complaint***

If you think you are being sexually harassed in your workplace, the following procedure should be used.

- Make your displeasure known to the person harassing you when appropriate. See if the behavior stops.
- If the inappropriate behavior continues, inform your supervisor\* who will contact the Office of Legal Affairs.
- Interviews will be conducted in a timely fashion.
- Confidentiality will be maintained. Only those directly named by the complainant will be interviewed.
- If harassment is determined to be present, appropriate action will follow.
- The situation will be monitored to insure there is no further harassment.

*\*In the parish religious education setting, the "supervisors" are the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education and ultimately the Pastor.*