

## **Part Two**

# **Professional Development**



*Handing On the Faith with Excellence*

## **Handbook**

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

**General Directory for Catechesis:  
Key Concepts**

*Jesus Christ,  
after his Resurrection,  
together with the Father,  
sent the Holy Spirit  
in order that He might accomplish from within the work of salvation  
and that He might animate His disciples to continue the mission  
to the whole world.*

*He was the first and supreme evangelizer.  
He proclaimed the Kingdom of God  
as the urgent and definitive intervention of God in history,  
and defined this proclamation “the Gospel”, i.e. “the Good News”.*

*To this Gospel, Jesus devoted his entire earthly life:  
He made known the joy of belonging to the Kingdom,  
its demands, its magna carta, the mysteries which it embraces,  
the life of fraternal charity of those who enter it and its future fulfillment.*

*(GDC 34)*

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## Revelation

God truly reveals Himself as one who desires to communicate Himself, making the human person a participant in His divine nature. In this way God accomplishes His plan of love.

Fully revealed in Jesus Christ and realized by the power of the Holy Spirit, the providential plan of the Father implies:

- the Revelation of God, of His innermost truth, and of the true vocation and dignity of the human person;
- the offer of salvation to all, as a gift of God's grace and mercy, a gift which brings freedom from evil, sin and death;
- the definite call to gather into the family of God all of His scattered children.  
(*GDC 37*)

God uses a pedagogy to reveal Himself to the human person: He uses human events and words to communicate His plan. (*GDC 38*)

God revealed Himself progressively – through the prophets and through salvific events, until He brought to completion His self-revelation by sending His own Son. Jesus is indeed the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word. (*GDC 40*)

## Conversion and Faith

Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to His person and the decision to walk in His footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making of oneself a disciple of Jesus. This demands a permanent commitment to think like Him, to judge like Him and to live as He lived. In this way the believer unites himself to the community of disciples and appropriates the faith of the Church. (*GDC 53*)

This “Yes” to Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of the revelation of the Father, is twofold: a trustful abandonment to God and a loving assent to all that God has revealed to us. This is possible only by means of the action of the Holy Spirit. (*GDC 54*)

Faith involves a “metanoia,” i.e. a change of life, a profound transformation of mind and heart. Faith and conversion arise from the heart, that depth of the human person which involves all that the person is.

By meeting Jesus Christ and by adhering to Him the human being sees all of his deepest aspirations completely fulfilled. He finds what he has always been seeking and finds it superabundantly.

Faith is a gift from God. It can only be born as a completely free response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who moves the heart and turns it toward God, and who makes it easy to accept and believe the truth. (*GDC 55*)

Faith is destined to grow in the hearts of believers. Adhering to Jesus Christ sets in motion a process of continuing conversion which goes on for the whole of one’s lifetime. (*GDC 56*)

## The Sacraments of Initiation

Faith, moved by divine grace and cultivated by the action of the Church, undergoes a process of maturation. Catechesis, which is at the service of this growth, is also a gradual activity. The gradual nature of catechesis is inspired by the stages of the great catechumenal tradition of the Church. In the baptismal catechumenate, formation is articulated in four stages:

- ***the pre-catechumenate***: the locus of the first evangelization leading to conversion, where the kerygma of the primary proclamation is explained,
- ***the catechumenate***: the context of integral catechesis beginning with the “handing on of the Gospels”,
- ***the time of purification and illumination***: a more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation, including the “handing on of the Creed, and the “handing on of the Lord’s Prayer”,
- ***the time of mystagogy***: the experience of the sacraments and entry into the community. (*GDC 88*)

There is a fundamental difference between pre-baptismal catechesis and post-baptismal catechesis. However, some elements of the pre-baptismal catechumenate must inspire post-baptismal catechesis. The pre-baptismal catechumenate:

- constantly reminds the whole Church of the fundamental importance of initiation and the basic factors which constitute it: catechesis and the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist;
- is the responsibility of the entire Christian community and thus increases awareness of the importance of every form of faith-education that the Church offers;
- is completely permeated by the mystery of Christ’s Passover; thus all catechesis must be inspired by the Paschal Mystery;
- is an initial locus of inculturation since the Church receives catechumens integrally, together with their cultural ties; all catechetical activity incorporates into the catholicity of the Church, authentic seeds of the word scattered through nations and individuals.
- Is a process of formation and a school of the faith whose catechesis is characterized by: comprehensiveness and integrity of formation, gradual character expressed in definite stages, meaningful rites, symbols, biblical and liturgical signs, constant references to the Christian community. (*GDC 90 and 91*)

# Evangelization

The Church exists in order to evangelize, i.e. to carry forth the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength the Good News may enter into the hearts of human beings and renew the human race. (*GDC 46*)

Evangelization is the process by which the Church, moved by the Spirit, proclaims and spreads the Gospel throughout the entire world. The elements in the process of evangelization are:

- **Christian Witness:**

Urged by charity, evangelization impregnates and transforms the whole temporal order, appropriating and renewing all cultures; it bears witness among all peoples of the new way of being and living which characterizes Christians;

- **Primary Proclamation:**

Evangelization explicitly proclaims the Gospel and calls to conversion; this is addressed to non-believers and those living in religious indifference;

- **Christian Initiation:**

By means of catechesis and the sacraments of Christian Initiation, evangelization initiates into the faith and the Christian life those who convert to Jesus Christ or those who take up again the path of following Him, incorporating them into the Christian community;

- **Continuing Education in Faith within the Christian Community:**

Evangelization nourishes communion among the faithful by means of continuous education in the faith (homilies and other forms of catechesis), the sacraments and the practice of charity;

- **Arousal to Mission:**

Evangelization sends the disciples of Christ to proclaim the Gospel by word and deed throughout the whole world. (*GDC 48*)

In fusing one's confession of faith with that of the Church herself, the Christian is incorporated into the Church's mission: to be the universal sacrament of salvation for the life of the world. (*GDC 83*)

# Evangelization and Catechesis

Catechesis plays an integral part in each element of the process of evangelization.

- **Primary Proclamation (pre-catechesis):**

Many who present themselves for catechesis require genuine conversion. Only by starting with conversion can catechesis fulfill its proper task of education in the faith. Catechesis educates the convert in the faith and incorporates him into the Christian community. Catechesis promotes and matures *initial conversion*. (GDC 61 and 62)

- **Christian Initiation (Initiatory Catechesis):**

Catechesis is a fundamental element of Christian Initiation and is closely connected with the sacraments of initiation, especially with Baptism, the sacrament of faith. The “profession of faith” is at once an element inherent in Baptism and the goal of catechesis. The aim of catechetical activity is to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith.

Those who have converted to Jesus Christ and who have been educated in the faith, receive the sacraments of Christian Initiation and are delivered from the powers of darkness. Having died, been buried and risen with Christ, they receive the spirit of adoption as children and celebrate with the whole people of God the memorial of the Lord’s death and resurrection. (GDC 65 and 66)

Initiatory catechesis lays the basis for the Christian life of the followers of Jesus.(GDC 69)

- **Continuing Education in Faith within the Christian Community (Continuing Catechesis):**

The process of continuing conversion goes beyond what is provided by basic catechesis. Continuing formation in faith is directed to the individual Christian in the journey towards holiness. It is also directed to the Christian community as such so that it may mature in its spiritual life, its love for God and neighbor and its openness to the world as a missionary community. This demands of the community a great fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit, the constant nourishment of the Body and Blood of Christ and continuing education in the faith, listening all the time to the word of God.

In the Christian community the disciples of Jesus Christ are nourished at a twofold table: “that of the word of God and that of the Body of Christ.” The Gospel and the Eucharist are the constant food for the journey to the Father’s House. (GDC 70)

## Ministry of the Word and Catechesis

The ministry of the word is a fundamental element of evangelization. Through the Church it transmits Revelation by using human words. These, however, always refer to works:

- works which God has done and continues to do, especially in the liturgy;
- the witness of Christians,
- the transforming action which these Christians achieve, together with so many people of goodwill throughout the world.

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the ministry of the word, the one through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church and through her in the world. (*GDC 50*)

The ministry of the word does this in five ways:

- ***By Primary Proclamation:***

The most immediate expression of the missionary mandate of Jesus, it is directed to non-believers – those who have chosen unbelief, those Christians who live on the margins of Christian life, those who follow other religions. The religious awakening of the children of Christian families is an eminent form of this proclamation.

- ***By Christian Initiation:***

Those who are moved by grace to decide to follow Jesus are introduced into the life of faith, of the liturgy and of the charity of the People of God. The Church achieves this fundamentally by catechesis, in close relation with the sacraments of initiation (whether these are about to be received or have already been received). Important forms include:

- catechesis of non-baptized adults in the catechumenate,
- catechesis of baptized adults who wish to return to the faith,
- catechesis of baptized adults who need to complete their initiation,
- catechesis of children and of the young,
- Christian education in families,
- religious instruction in schools.

- ***By Continuing Education in the Faith:***

Christians already initiated in the basic elements of the Christian faith need to nourish and deepen their faith continually throughout their lives. This is accomplished through a great variety of forms: systematic and occasional, individual and community, organized and spontaneous.

- **By Liturgy:**

This takes different forms:

- the homily which is one of the most important,
- celebrations of the word,
- instruction received during the administration of the sacraments,
- immediate preparation for reception of a sacrament,
- celebration of sacramentals,
- and, above all, participation in the Eucharist.

- **By Theology:**

Theology seeks to develop understanding of the faith. Theology must confront philosophical forms of thought, various forms of humanism and the human sciences and dialogue with them. It is articulated whenever the systematic treatment and the scientific investigation of the truths of the faith are promoted. (*GDC 51*)

This ministry of the word serves the process of full conversion:

- the first proclamation of the Gospel is characterized by the call to faith;
- catechesis gives a foundation to conversion and provides Christian life with a basic structure;
- ongoing education in the faith provides the necessary nourishment that every baptized adult needs. (*GDC 57*)

Catechesis is that particular form of the ministry of the word which matures initial conversion to make it into a living explicit and fruitful confession of faith:

- Initiatory Catechesis, both before and after the reception of Baptism, prepares for this decisive undertaking.
- Continuing catechesis helps to mature this profession of faith, to proclaim it in the Eucharist and to renew the commitments which it entails. (*GDC 82*)

## Catechesis

Catechesis, for its part, transmits the words and deeds of Revelation and makes clear the profound mysteries they contain. Catechesis not only recalls the marvels worked by God in the past, but also in the light of the same Revelation, interprets the signs of the times and the person's present life, for it is in these that the plan of God for the salvation of the world is realized. (*GDC 39*)

Jesus is the fullness of Revelation and catechesis is Christocentric. The mystery of Christ is the center from which all other elements are structured and illuminated. (*GDC 41*)

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

- her understanding of the mystery of God and His salvific plan,
- her vision of the human person's highest vocation,
- the style of evangelical life which communicates the joy of the Kingdom,
- the hope which pervades her,
- the love which she has for humankind and all God's creatures. (*GDC 78*)

The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ. It proposes to help those who have just converted to know better:

- this Jesus to whom they have entrusted themselves,
- His mystery,
- the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him,
- the requirements and teaching contained in His Gospel,
- the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him.

Catechesis seeks to solidify and mature this first adherence.

Baptism, the sacrament by which we are configured to Christ, sustains this work of catechesis with the help of its grace. (*GDC 80*)

Communion with Jesus Christ, by its own dynamic, leads the disciple to unite himself with everything with which Jesus Christ himself was profoundly united:

- with God his Father, who sent Him into the world,
- with the Holy Spirit, who impelled His mission;
- with the Church, His body, for which He gave himself up,
- with humankind whose lot He wished to share. (*GDC 81*)

## ***The Role of the Parish Community in Catechesis***

Catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith and Christian life welcomes the catechumens, sustains them and forms them in faith. The accompaniment which a community gives to the initiated is eventually transformed into their being totally integrated by the same community. (*GDC 69*)

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

- **To Promote Knowledge of the Faith:**

By introducing the disciples of Jesus to a knowledge of Tradition and of Scripture, catechesis leads to the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan. Catechesis nourishes the life of faith and equips it to explain itself to the world. It teaches the meaning of the Creed as a compendium of Scripture and of the faith of the Church.

- **To Promote Liturgical Education:**

Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of His salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. Catechesis, along with promoting a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, also educates the disciples of Jesus Christ to that full, conscious and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood.

- **To Promote Moral Formation:**

Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in His footsteps. Catechesis transmits to the disciples the attitudes of the Master Himself. The Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus takes up the Decalogue and impresses upon it the spirit of the beatitudes, is an indispensable point of reference for the moral formation which is most necessary today. Catechesis teaches the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel.

- **To Teach to Pray:**

Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had. To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which He turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication and awe for His glory. All of these sentiments are reflected in the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught His disciples and which is the model of all Christian prayer.

- **To Educate for Community Life:**

Christian community life does not happen spontaneously. It is necessary to educate for it carefully. Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community by inculcating the attitudes Christ calls for in the Gospel:

- the spirit of simplicity and humility (Mt. 18:3),
- solicitude for the least among the brethren (Mt. 18:6),
- particular care for those who are alienated (Mt. 18:12),
- fraternal correction (Mt. 18:15),
- common prayer (Mt. 18:19),
- mutual forgiveness (Mt. 18: 22),
- fraternal love which embraces all these attitudes (Jn. 13:34).

Catechesis also encourages fraternal attitudes toward members of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities. It gives a clear exposition of all the Church's doctrine and also a suitable knowledge of other confessions with which there are shared elements of faith. It arouses and nourishes a true desire for unity.

- **To Educate for Participation in the Life and Mission of the Church:**

Catechesis prepares the Christian to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. It seeks to equip and prepare the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives, and to cooperate in the different ecclesial services, according to their proper vocation.

Catechesis nourishes the evangelical attitudes which Jesus taught His disciples when He sent them on mission:

- to seek out the lost,
- to proclaim and heal,
- to be poor,
- to know how to accept rejection and persecution,
- to place one's trust in the Father and in the support of the Holy Spirit,
- to expect no other reward than the joy of working for the Kingdom.

*(Mt. 10: 5-42, LK 10: 1-20)*

Catechesis also prepares for interreligious dialogue, i.e. meaningful communication with men and women of other religions. Catechesis helps to reconcile and at the same time to distinguish between the proclamation of Christ and interreligious dialogue. *(GDC 85-86)*

## **A Synthesis of the Meaning of Inculturation in the General Directory for Catechesis**

### ***What Is Inculturation?***

In the Incarnation, the Word of God became man in space and time, an individual rooted in a specific culture. This is the original “inculturation” of the word of God and the model for all evangelization by the Church. (*GDC 109*)

The Gospel message seeks inculturation because the Good News is destined for all peoples. (*GDC 97*)

The Church sets out to meet each person taking into serious account diversity of circumstances and cultures and maintains the unity of many in the one saving Word: (*GDC 169*)

Inculturation is not simply an external adaptation designed to make the Christian message more attractive. It is the penetration of the deepest strata of persons and peoples by the Gospel, which goes to the very center and roots of their cultures. (*GDC 109*)

The question posed by the Second Vatican Council is still valid: “What is to be done to prevent increased exchange between cultures -- an exchange which ought to lead to genuine and fruitful dialogue between groups and nations -- from disturbing the life of the community, overthrowing its traditional wisdom and endangering the character proper to each people?”

- In many places there is an acute awareness that traditional cultures are being assailed by powerful external forces and by alien imitations of imported life styles, with the result that the identity and values proper to peoples are thus being gradually eroded.
- The widespread influence of the communications media, out of economic or ideological interest, often imposes a vision of life which does not respect the cultural distinctiveness of the peoples whom they address.

Thus, with inculturation, evangelization encounters one of its greatest challenges. In the light of the Gospel, the Church must appropriate all the positive values of a culture and of cultures and reject those elements which impede development of the true potential of persons and peoples. (*GDC 21*)

## ***Who Does the Work of Inculturation?***

The work of inculturation is done by all the people of God. It takes place gradually and is an expression of the community's Christian experience (*GDC 109*)

The whole People of God reflect the authentic "sensus fidei" which must never be lost sight of.

Inculturation needs to be guided and encouraged, but not forced, lest it give rise to negative reactions among Christians.

It must be an expression of the community's life, one which must mature within the community itself, and not be exclusively the result of erudite research.

The thrust to incarnate the Gospel requires the cooperation of all who live in the same cultural condition – clergy, pastoral workers, Catechists and laity. (*GDC 206*)

The People of God do the work of Inculturation by the following means:

- principally by the ecclesial community. The Church community is represented by a Catechist who has a profound religious sense, a living social conscience, and is well-rooted in the cultural environment.
- by local catechisms which present the Gospel in relation to the demands, hopes, questions and problems of the cultures to whom they are addressed.
- by catechetical institutes and the catechumenate which incorporate, as appropriate, the language, symbols and values of the culture in which those to be catechized live.

In each Diocese, catechetical programs and materials should be updated and revised. (*GDC 213*)

If there are several linguistic or ethnic groups in the diocese, programs, guides and directories should be provided in the various languages. (*GDC 214*).

- by preparation of those who are to proclaim the Gospel so that they become capable of giving reasons for their hope in cultures often pagan or post-Christian. (*GDC 110*)

The direct involvement of those persons who can best indicate effective ways of proclaiming the Gospel in a specific culture is fostered by widespread catechesis. (*GDC 214*)

## ***What Is the Role of Catechesis in Inculturation? (GDC 202 to 214)***

Catechesis, like evangelization in general, is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. To do so, Catechesis must:

- know in depth the culture of the persons being catechized and the extent of that culture's penetration into their lives.
- recognize a cultural dimension in the Gospel itself; the Gospel does not spring from some human cultural humus, but it cannot be isolated from the cultures in which it was initially inserted and in which it has found expression through the centuries.
- witness to the transcendence of the Gospel and at the same time discern those seeds of the Gospel present in culture:

The Christian community must discern which modes of thought, which criteria and which lifestyles of the culture are compatible with the faith; these it adopts. It must discern which are contrary to the Kingdom of God; these it seeks to purify and transform. (GDC 109)

This discernment is governed by two basic principles – compatibility with the Gospel, and communion with the universal Church. (GDC 109)

The methodology which catechesis uses is a dynamic process consisting of the following interactive elements:

- o listening to the culture of the people for an echo of the word of God,
  - o discerning what has an authentic Gospel value or is at least open to the Gospel,
  - o purifying what bears the mark of human frailty or sin (passions, structures of evil),
  - o stimulating dialogue,
  - o fostering an attitude of radical conversion to God and patient interior maturation.
- translate the authentic essentials of the Gospel message into a definite culture language. (GDC 112)

Catechesis must transmit the gospel message in its integrity and purity, taking diligent care to present faithfully the entire treasure of the Christian message. But Integrity must be accompanied by adaptation; consequently, catechesis must explain the elements of the faith in a manner adapted to the capacity of those being catechized.

- proclaim the profound change, i.e. the conversion, which the Gospel, as a transforming, regenerating force, works in culture.
- promote a new expression of the Gospel in accordance with evangelized culture:
  - o In the complex relationship between inculturation and the integrity of the Christian message, the criterion to be applied is a Gospel attitude of a missionary openness to the integral salvation of the world.
  - o This must always unite acceptance of truly human and religious values with the missionary task of proclaiming the whole truth of the Gospel, without falling either into closed inflexibility or into facile accommodations which enfeeble the Gospel and secularize the Church.
  - o Gospel authenticity excludes both of these attitudes which are contrary to the true meaning of mission. (*GDC 113*)

## ***What Are the Agents which Catechesis Uses to Effect Inculturation?***

The agents are:

- the Christian Initiation process which has important cultural implications such as:
  - o acquiring new motivations in life,
  - o education of conscience,
  - o learning a biblical and sacramental language,
  - o knowledge of the historical density of Christianity.

The baptismal catechumenate is an initial locus of inculturation. Following the example of the Incarnation of the Son of God, made man in a concrete historical moment, the Church receives catechumens integrally, together with their cultural ties. All catechetical activity participates in the function of incorporating into the catholicity of the Church, authentic seeds of the Word, scattered through nations and individuals. (*GDC 91*)

- the Family, the central and primary agent of an incarnate transmission of faith.
- liturgical Catechesis with its richness of signs and with its accessibility to so many people by such things as:
  - o the Sunday homily,
  - o the content of the Lectionary,
  - o the structure of the liturgical year,
  - o occasions of particularly significant catechesis such as marriages, funerals, visits to the sick, feasts of patron saints.
- multi-ethnic and multi-cultural situations which lead to a greater discovery and appreciation of the resources of diverse groups to receive and express the faith.

## ***What Is the Role of Language and Media in Inculturation?***

Inculturation of the faith is a linguistic task. In order to express its meaning and demonstrate its existential importance, Catechesis must:

- respect and value the language proper to the message, especially biblical language, as well as the historical-traditional language of the Church (creed, liturgy) and doctrinal language (dogmatic formulations).
- enter into dialogue using forms and terms proper to the culture of those to whom it is addressed and speaking a language suited to today's children and young people, to intellectuals and scientists, to the illiterate, to people of simple culture, to the handicapped, etc.;
- stimulate new expressions of the Gospel in the culture in which it has been planted. (*GDC 208*)

The evangelization of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media. Catechesis must:

- have a greater appreciation of the media's use of the language of the image and balance it with the language of the word;
- safeguard the genuine religious meaning in selected forms of expression;
- promote deep personal discernment and mature criticism of what is being received from the media;
- develop and provide catechetical aids to help accomplish these aims.

The cooperative efforts of all those engaged in Catechesis are needed. (*GDC 209*)

## ***Where is Inculturation Directed?***

The Gospel seeks a catechesis which reaches people where they live, especially where the most elementary and fundamental cultural exchanges take place: family, work environment, free time.

The light of the Gospel must enlighten such forums of modern society as:

- communications;
- civil campaigns for peace, development and liberation of peoples;
- the protection of creation;
- the defense of human rights especially of minorities, women and children;
- scientific research;
- international relations. *(GDC 211)*

It is necessary to distinguish inculturation in countries of recent Christian origin, where the primary proclamation of the Gospel must yet be consolidated, from inculturation in countries of long Christian tradition which have need of a new evangelization. *(GDC 212)*

Account must be taken of situations which are open to conflict and tension deriving from factors such as:

- ethnic pluralism,
- religious pluralism
- differences in development which sometimes are strident,
- urban, rural and suburban life styles,
- massive secularization in some countries and strong religiosity in others. *(GDC 212)*

Respect must be given to the cultural tendencies of the various social and professional strata, such as:

- men and women of science and culture,
- the world of workers,
- the youth,
- the marginalized,
- foreigners,
- the disabled. *(GDC 212)*

Attention must be paid to the diverse cultures existing in one and the same people or nation. *(GDC 212)*

## **Profiles of Catechetical Leaders**

*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 hopes, the sadness and the anxieties,  
of people today.  
The disciple gazes upon human history  
and participates in it,  
not only from the standpoint of reason  
but also from that of faith.*

*In the light of faith the world appears  
at once created and sustained by the love of the Creator  
and freed from the slavery of sin  
by Christ, who was crucified and rose.*

*The Christian knows that every human event –  
indeed all reality – is marked by:*

- *God's creative activity communicating goodness to all beings;*
- *the power of sin which limits and numbs man;*
- *the dynamism bursting forth from the Resurrection of Christ*

*By means of catechesis,  
the Church desires to stir Christian hearts to the cause of justice  
and to a preferential option or love for the poor, so that her  
presence may really be light that shines and salt that cures.  
(GDC 16 – 17)*

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## ***Personal Characteristics Indicative of a Call to Catechetical Ministry*** (GDC 142)

### **Understanding of:**

- one's gifts, personality, strengths, talents, weaknesses, and limitations and how they impact one's ministry.
- one's own emotional, physical, and spiritual limitations.
- the need for lifelong faith formation and education to grow as a person and as a professional minister.
- the complexities of daily life and ministry.
- the need for an integrated spirituality based on prayer, reflection, and liturgical participation grounded in the ecclesiology of Vatican II.
- commitment to ministry which builds on and expands one's baptismal call to ongoing personal conversion.
- the ways in which God is active in one's ministry.
- the need for compassion and justice in ministerial activities.
- Church structures: local, diocesan, regional, and global.

### **Ability to:**

- engage in self-reflection and access one's abilities accurately.
- set healthy and responsible boundaries, and maintain a healthy balance in one's personal life and ministry.
- develop and commit to a plan for continuing personal and professional education and formation.
- be flexible and assign appropriate life-giving priorities in varied circumstances.
- participate in ongoing spiritual formation, e.g., prayer, retreats, spiritual direction, community workshop.
- develop a commitment to leadership in ministry as a lifestyle.
- articulate one's personal faith with others: colleagues, staff, catechists, etc.
- model and apply justice and charity in dealing with people, developing programs, selecting materials, etc.
- minister effectively in relationship to the larger church community and its structures.

National Certification Standards for Professional Parish Directors of Religious Education #510.01 to 510.10, approved by the USCC Commission on Certification and Accreditation. Used with permission.

## **Faith Qualities Essential for the Catechetical Ministry** (GDC 53-57)

*Only men and women of faith can share faith with others, preparing the setting within which people can respond in faith to God's grace. (Sharing the Light of Faith #207)*

### ***Called by God***

The Director/Coordinator receives and responds to a call which comes from the Lord and is articulated in the local Church.

The response to this call includes the willingness to give time and talent not only to catechizing others but also to furthering one's own growth in faith.

The Director/Coordinator is able to articulate this call as well as his/her commitment to the ministry of catechetical leadership

### ***Grounded in the Lord***

The Director/Coordinator is committed to Jesus Christ and lives in an ever-deepening relationship with Him. It is from this relationship, that the ministry of the Director/Coordinator flows (GDC 81).

The Director/Coordinator believes in the Gospel and in its power to transform lives, and frequently reflects on and prays with the Scriptures.

### ***Faithful to the Church***

The Director/Coordinator demonstrates a fidelity to the official teachings of the Catholic Church and realizes that, in the exercise of the catechetical ministry, it is the Church that is represented.

The Director/Coordinator tests and validates personal understanding and insights in the light of the Gospel message as presented by the teaching authority of the Church.

The Director/Coordinator is aware that, as a pilgrim people, the Church is in constant need of renewal, and strives therefore to discern the Spirit's presence ever at work in the Church community (GDC 32).

### ***Committed to Community***

The Director/Coordinator appreciates the Eucharist as the deepest sign of community and the cause of its growth, and participates frequently in its celebration with other members of the catechetical community.

The Director/Coordinator sees and promotes the parish as the focal point of community in the Church.

The Director/Coordinator has learned the meaning of Christian community by experiencing it and fosters relationships within the catechetical community through:

- shared prayer, shared ministerial goals, and shared faith-values,
- the acceptance of individual strengths and weaknesses,
- discussion, recreation, and working together,
- conflict handled as a source of growth,
- Christian reconciliation.

### ***Oriented to Mission***

The Directors/Coordinator holds inviolate the dignity of each human person and continually works for this dignity – witnessing through personal attitudes and actions and infusing the entire catechetical program with the social teachings of the Church (*GDC 17-19*).

## **Profiles of Catechetical Leaders**

The Archdiocese of New York formally recognizes two positions of parish catechetical leadership under the authority of the Pastor, who is the parish's primary catechetical leader. These positions are: the Director of Religious Education and the Coordinator of Religious Education.

### **Requirements to Become a Director of Religious Education**

The Director of Religious Education has a master's degree in an appropriate field such as religious education, religious studies, theology, or a master's in any field plus 24 graduate credits in religious education or a related field.

A person with a master's degree in education can become a Director of Religious Education by completing the Advanced Leadership Formation offered by the Catechetical Office. The content of the 5 theology courses may be taken from other Catholic Institutions which give the course material in equivalent content and hours.

Once hired, the Director is required to take the Basic Leadership Training Course for all Directors/Coordinators new to the Archdiocese. Upon completion of the Basic Leadership Training Course, the Director should be competent to develop, to teach and to supervise all aspects of total parish catechesis.

## **Requirements to Become a Coordinator of Religious Education**

A pre-requisite for serving as Coordinator of Religious Education is the completion of the Catechist Formation Program, Levels 1 and 2. It is highly recommended that the Coordinator of Religious Education hold a Bachelor's degree. The Coordinator does not have a master's degree in a field such as religious education, religious studies, or theology.

Once hired, the Coordinator is required to take the Basic Leadership Training Course for all Directors/Coordinators new to the Archdiocese. Upon completion of the Basic Leadership Training Course, the Coordinator should complete the Advanced Leadership Formation. The Coordinator should then be competent to administer sections of the total parish catechetical program, according to ability and training.

## Competencies of the Director of Religious Education

### ***Theological and Catechetical Competencies*** (GDC 36 – 46)

- Ability to present and explain the official teachings of the Catholic Church coupled with a demonstrated fidelity to these teachings.
- Ability to encourage, assist and challenge Catechists and other adults to grow and mature in their Catholic Faith.
- Ability to develop the total parish program in light of teachings reflective of the Church Documents (GDC 27 – 28).
- Ability to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a primary teaching resource.
- Ability to recognize the elements in culture and society which lend understanding to the Church's teachings and incorporate those elements into the religious education program; ability to challenge those elements which contradict the Gospel message (GDC 193 - 194).
- Ability to explain the catechetical ministry and its importance in the Church today and to present the catechetical leader's role and responsibilities in carrying out the mission of the parish.
- Ability to recognize what in today's society supports Catholic values and to provide ongoing evangelizing Catechesis to adults as well as youth and children (GDC 26).
- Ability to discern in expressions of "popular piety" both the desirable qualities that resonate with true faith and the aspects that can lead to error, and then to direct it wisely (GDC 195 – 196).
- Ability to complete Basic Leadership Training offered by the Catechetical Office and to advance continually in the educational content outlined in Church documents such as *The Catechetical Leader in the Third Millenium*.

## ***Competencies for Catechist Formation*** (GDC 233 – 236)

- Ability to communicate with others in a way that invites their support for and participation in the catechetical ministry as the responsibility of all the members of the parish community (GDC 220).
- Ability to recruit, interview and screen candidates, and select those with the potential to be good Catechists (GDC 221).
- Ability to discern and call forth the gifts and talents of Catechists.
- Ability to insure the formation of Catechists according to the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program (GDC 234).
- Ability to provide Catechist formation, not only for those at beginning stages, but also for those already certified (GDC 238).
- Ability to supervise Catechists in catechetical content and methodology, as well as in the management of religious education sessions.
- Ability to give Catechists the instruction and formation which supervision has shown is necessary.
- Ability to support Catechists and to facilitate the development of a faith community among the Catechists and staff (GDC 238).
- Ability to manage personnel, to evaluate, to challenge inappropriate behavior/performance, to call for correction, and to dismiss when necessary.

## ***Competences for Program Development***

- Ability to inspire and implement a parish vision of catechesis based upon the catechetical documents of the Church (*GDC 257*).
- Ability to conduct needs assessments to ascertain the catechetical needs of the parishioners.
- Ability to facilitate the planning of long-term and short-term goals and objectives for various segments of the parish religious education program.
- Ability to select, adapt, facilitate the use of, and supplement catechetical texts and resources according to Church documents, the USCCB Protocol, archdiocesan directives and the needs of the parish.
- Ability to use contemporary technology to promote catechesis.
- Ability to discern and address the influences that media has on society and the formation of the individual (*GDC 209*).
- Ability to integrate into the curriculum of the Religious Education Program the social justice teachings of the Church in such a way as to motivate to action (*GDC 17 - 19*).
- Ability to make use of the resources of other archdiocesan and community services to augment program development.
- Ability to devise procedures and tools for the effective evaluation of each component of the total religious education program.
- Ability to integrate into the Religious Education Program the ***Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis*** (*GDC 84 – 87*) which are:

## **1. To Promote Knowledge of the Faith**

*By deepening knowledge of the faith, catechesis not only nourishes the life of faith but equips it to explain itself to the world. (GDC 85)*

- by faithfully incorporating into the parish catechetical program the Church's teaching as it is found in the Church documents and in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
- by sharing the Church's teaching, as found in the above documents, with Catechists in order to help them grow in their understanding of the faith that they are teaching,
- by implementing the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis, Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6, and Grade Seven and Grade Eight*.

## **2. To Give Moral Formation**

*Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in his footsteps. Catechesis must, therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitudes of the Master Himself. (GDC 85)*

- by infusing into the religious instruction given in each session moral formation which helps the students realize what it means to live as disciples of Jesus,
- by insuring that, within the Religious Education Program, the moral dimensions of the Catholic Faith are clearly and consistently taught using *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis* and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
- by keeping ever before the Catechists "conversion to and following of Jesus Christ" as the ultimate mission of their religious education sessions.

### **3. To Provide Liturgical Education**

*Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of his salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. The Church ardently desires that all the Christian faithful be brought to that full, conscious and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood. (GDC 85)*

- by fostering in the program participants a deep love and appreciation of the Mass, the Holy Eucharist and all the sacraments of the Church,
- by insuring that the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments is clearly and consistently taught to all children, youth and families in the Religious Education Program,
- by providing opportunities for Mass and the Sacrament of Penance at least once a semester for all the children in the Religious Education Program,
- by using current Church guidelines and liturgical principles in planning liturgical/sacramental celebrations and in designing catechetical sessions for Catechists and families.

### **4. To Teach to Pray**

*When Catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit. (GDC 85)*

- by insuring that prayer is a significant part of each religious education session,
- by helping the Catechists become familiar with the variety of prayer forms in the Catholic Tradition so that they may introduce these to the children,
- by designing and implementing a variety of prayer forms and retreat experiences as an integral part of the Religious Education Program,
- by praying regularly with the Catechists using different styles of prayer – at meetings, in shared prayer sessions, at individual conferences,
- By structuring into the yearly calendar at least one day of prayer for Catechists.

## **5. To Educate for Community Life**

*Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. (GDC 86)*

- by making Catechists aware that in their catechetical sessions they are continuously educating for life in the Christian Community,
- by providing settings and experiences which create and promote Christian community, such as opportunities for –
  - o faith-sharing and prayer together,
  - o celebrating together the Eucharist and other liturgical experiences,
  - o socializing,
  - o collaborating in planning and evaluating the religious education program,
  - o affirming the contributions and talents of each member.

## **6. To Initiate into the Missionary Dimension**

*Catechesis seeks to equip the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives. (GDC 86)*

- by insuring that the Church's social teachings are integrated, as appropriate, into the catechesis of every level of the parish religious education program,
- by promoting social justice in all dimensions of religious education program,
- by incorporating opportunities for service into every level of the religious education program,
- by promoting understanding and respect for the priesthood and religious life, and encouraging the young people to consider these vocations,
- by presenting the lay vocation as the call to live, faithfully and heroically, the Christian life in the midst of a secular society,
- by preparing the youth to communicate respectfully with people of other religious beliefs by giving them a secure rootedness in their own Tradition, a basic understanding of the tenets of non-Catholic and non-Christian Traditions, and the certainty that each person is called to fullness of life in God.

## ***Competencies for Administration***

- Ability to administer the Religious Education Program in a manner which supports other parish ministries and contributes to the building up of parish community (*GDC 253-254*).
- Ability to select/hire, in consultation with the Pastor, staff to provide secretarial and support services.
- Ability to work effectively with a secretarial staff.
- Ability to design, implement and evaluate religious education program policies and procedures.
- Ability to plan, conduct and evaluate productive meetings.
- Ability to share and/or delegate administrative responsibilities.
- Ability to facilitate group interaction and teamwork (*GDC 159*).
- Ability to work with others to define a problem, generate alternative solutions and follow a course of action.
- Ability to affirm the contributions and talents of each Catechist and staff member.
- Ability to manage conflicts.
- Ability to communicate clearly and appropriately through writing and public speaking.
- Ability to plan, organize and manage one's time in accordance with priorities and work responsibilities.
- Ability to make effective use of computer and other technology for instructive and administrative purposes.
- Ability to draft the catechetical budget, to present it to the Pastor and appropriate parish financial groups, and to defend and negotiate it.
- Ability to maintain a total parish catechetical program securely within the perimeters of Church law, civil law and the administrative directives of Part 1 of the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors & Coordinators of Religious Education*.

## **Relational Skills of the Director of Religious Education**

### ***Relationship to Archdiocesan Catechetical Office (GDC 265 – 267)***

- Relates with Archdiocesan Catechetical Office as “the means which the Bishop of the Diocese, as head of the community and teacher of doctrine, utilizes to direct and moderate all the catechetical activities of the diocese” (GDC 265).
- Carries out catechetical directives of the Archbishop as the primary catechetical authority of the Archdiocese (GDC 222-223).
- Directs parish program in accordance with the leadership of Archdiocesan Catechetical Office (GDC 272 – 278).
- Supports, promotes and implements archdiocesan policies and programs affecting catechesis.
- Achieves Archdiocesan Certification as a Director of Religious Education.
- Participates in Archdiocesan professional formation as well as in regular meetings and projects of Regional Catechetical Office.
- Completes in a timely manner Archdiocesan reports, surveys and consultations.

### ***Relationship to Pastor (GDC 224 -225)***

- Administers with accountability to the Pastor.
- Collaborates with Pastor in implementing catechetical directives coming from Pope, Sacred Congregations, U.S. Bishops, the N.Y. State Bishops (GDC 268 to 271).
- Shares in the Pastor’s responsibility for catechetical ministry of the parish.
- Communicates and meets regularly with the Pastor.
- Establishes, reviews, and evaluates mutual expectations with Pastor.
- Advises the Pastor of trends which will affect catechetical planning.
- Recommends to the Pastor the shaping of parish policies affecting catechesis.

### ***Relationship to Parish (GDC 257-258)***

- Keeps the parish community ever aware that Catechesis is a primary responsibility of the parish to each and all of its members (*Canon 528*).
- Works consistently to promote a healthy parish life, realizing that this is the necessary context for an effective Religious Education Program,
- Discerns, both personally and with the Pastor whether or not to join the parish if living in a parish other than the place of work.
- Strives with Pastor and Parish Staff to apply to parish community the directives on inculturation of the Gospel given in *General Directory for Catechesis 202 to 214*.
- Recognizes as assets of the entire parish community all parish buildings/resources; collaborates in management of policies and calendars to make these resources available as appropriate to all parish groups, e.g., parish religious education center, school hall, meetings rooms, technology.

### ***Relationship to Parish Staff***

- Serves as a member of the parish staff (*GDC 72*).
- Communicates and meets regularly with the other members of the parish staff.
- Serves as a resource person for the parish staff on catechetical issues and is able to provide in-service training for its members as needed.
- Advises the staff with regard to Religious Education Program planning.
- Participates in efforts to foster a faith community among the staff.
- Collaborates closely with those persons responsible for the parish youth ministry.
- Collaborates closely with the Parish Director for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in adapting the RCIA to meet the needs of the youth or children in the parish program who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (*GDC 256*)

### ***Relationship to Parish Council***

- Serves as a member of the Parish Council, meets regularly with the Council and serves as a member of the education committee.
- Serves as a resource person regarding catechetical issues.
- Reports regularly on developments in parish catechesis.
- Consults as needed with the Parish Finance Committee in the preparation of the Religious Education Program budget.
- Advises the Parish Council with regard to Religious Education Program planning.

### ***Relationship to Others Involved in the Parish's Ministry***(GDC 261 – 262)

- Provides leadership in fostering unity among the various ministries within the parish.
- Serves as a resource and consultant on catechetical issues.
- Supports parish projects and programs.

### ***Relationship to Peers in the Catechetical Ministry***

- Meets regularly with other catechetical leaders in the Archdiocese to offer mutual support and to learn from one another.
- Participates in professional associations related to the catechetical ministry.
- Participates regularly in opportunities to celebrate and share with other Directors and Coordinators the faith-life that grounds the commitment to catechetical leadership.

### ***Relationship to Parish School Personnel (GDC 259 – 260)***

- Serves as a consultant to the Principal and faculty on catechetical issues (GDC 73 – 75).
- Collaborates with the Principal in developing a unified, parish-based sacramental program for, and celebration of, First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Works with the Principal in identifying common catechetical goals.
- Makes available upon request training opportunities for school Catechists.
- Coordinates calendar/program planning with the Principal.
- Coordinates with the Principal the sharing of facilities and resources.

### ***Relationship to Regional School Personnel***

- Works with the Pastor and the Principal to bring all the parish children attending the Catholic school into the parish-based sacramental programs for First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation,
- 
- helps the Pastor to provide for the parish families the parish-based celebrations of the sacraments.
- Works with Pastor to articulate written agreement on the use of the school facility & resources, which equally benefits the children and families in religious education and in the school.
- Coordinates with the Principal the sharing of the school facility and resources if these belong to parish.

### ***Relationship to Families*** (GDC 255)

- Helps families recognize the many ways they are already revealing the face of God in the intimate sanctuary of family life, “the domestic Church.”
- Helps parents understand, own and fulfill their role as the primary religious educators of their children (GDC 226).
- Designs the Religious Education Program to assist parents in this responsibility (GDC 227).
- Demonstrates sensitivity to diverse family structures and their needs.
- Values and is responsive to the diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds of the families in the parish.
- Communicates regularly with families on catechetical matters.
- Initiates and implements religious education programs in response to the special needs of the families of the parish.
- Implements fully the Family Catechesis Mandate of the Archdiocese.
- Facilitates family participation in the development of family catechesis programs.
- Evaluates the impact and effectiveness of the parish Religious Education Program for the families involved.

### ***Relationship to Other Church Communities (GDC 197- 201)***

- Communicates and cooperates with neighboring Catholic parishes, and offers mutual support and help where possible (*GDC 252*).
- Fosters in Catechists and students a deeper understanding of other faith traditions.
- Supports ecumenical outreach to other faith communities.
- Collaborates as appropriate in ecumenical and interfaith projects.

### ***Relationship to the Local Community & the Wider Society (GDC 22-23)***

- Cooperates as appropriate in programs and projects of the local civic community (*GDC 211*).
- Encourages Religious Education Program participants to continually seek ways to serve the needs of the neighborhood and the wider community.
- Teaches children and youth to live, and give witness to, the Gospel message in the midst of a secularized society (*GDC 193-194*).
- Identifies in the local community and wider society the manifestations of religious indifference and atheism that appear under the guise of secularism, and helps children and youth in the parish program to identify and confront them (*GDC 22-23*).
- Advises Catechists and families, when appropriate, of social and educational services provided by the civic community.

## Competencies of the Coordinator of Religious Education

### ***Theological and Catechetical Competencies*** (GDC 36 – 46)

- Ability to identify and explain clearly the official teachings of the Catholic Church contained in the section of the curriculum for which the Coordinator is responsible coupled with a demonstrated fidelity to these teachings.
- Ability to encourage Catechists and other adults to grow in their Catholic faith.
- Ability to select textbooks and materials which reflect the teachings of the Church (GDC 27 – 28).
- Ability to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a primary reference.
- Ability to recognize the elements in culture and society which lend understanding to the Church's teachings and incorporate those elements into the religious education program (GDC 193 – 194).
- Ability to explain the catechetical ministry and to present the catechetical leader's role and responsibilities in carrying out the mission of the parish.
- Ability to recognize in expressions of "popular piety" both the desirable qualities that resonate with the faith, and also the aspects that can lead to error (GDC 195 -196).
- Ability to complete the Basic Leadership Training Course and the Advanced Leadership Formation offered by the Catechetical Office.

## **Competencies for Catechist Formation** (GDC 233 – 236)

- Ability to communicate with others in a way that invites their support for, and participation in, the catechetical ministry as the responsibility of all members of the parish community (GDC 220).
- Ability to recruit, interview and screen candidates, and select those with the potential to be good Catechists (GDC 221).
- Ability to discern and call forth the gifts and talents of Catechists.
- Ability to insure the formation of Catechists according to the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program (GDC 234).
- Ability to encourage the Catechists to pursue their formation and to assist them in finding courses, workshops and growth opportunities (GDC 238).
- Ability to observe the teaching/learning situation of each session and to provide ways for the Catechists to improve as needed in catechetical content and methodology as well as in the management of religious education sessions.
- Ability to provide the Catechists with the instruction and formation which observation has shown is necessary.
- Ability to support Catechists and to facilitate the development of a faith community among the Catechists and staff (GDC 246 – 247).
- Ability to manage the personnel working in the Coordinator's area of responsibility, to evaluate, to challenge inappropriate behavior/performance, to call for correction, and to dismiss when necessary.

## ***Competencies for Program Development***

- Ability to plan the Religious Education Program in accordance with the catechetical documents of the Church (*GDC 257*).
- Ability to take a leadership role in planning annual goals and objectives for the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Ability to select from existing learning models the most appropriate means of addressing the catechetical needs in the Coordinator's area of responsibility, including catechesis of those persons with special learning needs.
- Ability to select, adapt and facilitate the use of catechetical texts and resources, according to Church documents, the USCCB protocol, archdiocesan directives and the needs of the parish (*GDC 283*).
- Ability to use contemporary technology to promote catechesis (*GDC 209*).
- Ability to discern and address the influences that media has on society and the formation of the individual.
- Ability to insure that the Religious Education Program includes for each age level in the Coordinator's area of responsibility, the social justice teachings of the Church (*GDC 17 – 19*).
- Ability to make use of the resources provided by archdiocesan and community services to augment program development.
- Ability to choose and use procedures and tools for the effective evaluation of the Religious Education Program in the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Ability to integrate into the Coordinator's area of catechetical responsibility the **Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis** (*GDC 84 – 87*), which are:

## 1. To Promote Knowledge of the Faith

*By deepening knowledge of the faith, catechesis nourishes not only the life of faith but equips it to explain itself to the world. (GDC 85)*

- by insuring that the Church's teaching is faithfully presented within the Coordinator's area of responsibility, by using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
- by helping Catechists to use the Catechism and the resources in their Catechist's manual to come to an adult understanding of the material they are teaching,.
- by implementing the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis, Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6, and Grade Seven and Grade Eight*.

## 2. To Give Moral Formation

*Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in His footsteps. Catechesis must, therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitudes of the Master Himself. (GDC 85)*

- by infusing into the religious instruction given in the Coordinator's area of responsibility a moral formation which helps the students realize what it means to live as disciples of Jesus,
- by insuring that within the Coordinator's area of responsibility, the moral dimensions of the Catholic faith are clearly and consistently taught using the *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis*,
- by keeping ever before the Catechists "conversion to and following of Jesus Christ" as the ultimate mission of their religious education sessions.

### **3. To Provide Liturgical Education**

*Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of his salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. The church ardently desires that all the Christian faithful be brought to that full, conscious and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood. (GDC 85)*

- by fostering in the participants of the program a deep love for and appreciation of the Eucharist and the other sacraments of the Church,
- by insuring that the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments is clearly and consistently taught in the Coordinator's area of responsibility,
- by providing opportunities for Mass and the Sacrament of Penance for all the children in the Religious Education Program at least once a semester,
- by using current Church guidelines and liturgical principles in planning liturgical/sacramental celebrations for Catechists and children.

### **4. To Teach to Pray**

*When Catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit. (GDC 85)*

- by insuring that prayer is a significant part of each religious education session in the Coordinator's area of responsibility,
- by helping the Catechists become familiar with a variety of prayer forms in the Catholic Tradition so that they may introduce these to the children,
- by offering a variety of prayer forms and retreat experiences as an integral part of the Religious Education Program,
- by praying regularly with the Catechists using different styles of prayer,
- By structuring into the yearly calendar at least one day of prayer for Catechists.

## **5. To Educate for Community Life**

*Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. (GDC 86)*

- by making Catechists aware that in their catechetical sessions they are continuously educating for life in the Christian Community,
- by providing settings and experiences which create and promote Christian community, such as opportunities for -
  - o faith-sharing and prayer together,
  - o celebrating the Eucharist together,
  - o socializing,
  - o collaborating in planning and evaluating the Religious Education Program,
  - o affirming the contributions and talents of each member.

## **6. To Initiate into the Missionary Dimension**

*Catechesis “seeks to equip the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives. (GDC 86)*

- by insuring that the Church’s social teachings are integrated, as appropriate, into the catechesis of each level in the Coordinator’s area of responsibility,
- by promoting social justice in all dimensions of the religious education program.
- by incorporating opportunities for service into all levels of the religious education program,
- by promoting understanding and respect for the priesthood and the religious life, and encouraging young people to consider these vocations,
- by presenting the lay vocation as the call to live, faithfully and heroically, the Christian life in the midst of a secular society,
- by preparing the youth to communicate respectfully with people of other religious beliefs by giving them a secure rootedness in their own tradition, a basic understanding of the tenets of non-Catholic and non-Christian traditions, and the certainty that each person is called to fullness of life in God.

## ***Competencies for Administration (GDC 253-254)***

- Ability to administer a Religious Education Program in a manner which supports other parish ministries and contributes to the building up of parish community.
- Ability to collaborate with the Pastor and other administrators of the religious education program in the selection/hiring of secretarial staff.
- Ability to work effectively with a secretarial staff.
- Ability to articulate, implement and evaluate religious education program policies and procedures.
- Ability to plan, conduct and evaluate productive meetings.
- Ability to share and/or delegate administrative responsibilities.
- Ability to facilitate effective group interaction and teamwork (*GDC 159*).
- Ability to work with others to define a problem, generate alternative solutions and follow a course of action.
- Ability to affirm the contributions and talents of each Catechist and staff member.
- Ability to manage conflicts.
- Ability to communicate clearly and appropriately through writing and public speaking.
- Ability to plan, organize and manage one's time in accordance with priorities and work responsibilities.
- Ability to make effective use of computer and other technology for instructive and administrative purposes.
- Ability to draft the Religious Education Program budget for the appropriate financial consultants, and to negotiate it.
- Ability to maintain the Religious Education Program securely within the perimeters of Church law, civil law and the administrative directives of Part 1 of the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors & Coordinators*.

## **Relational Skills of the Coordinator of Religious Education**

### ***Relationship to Archdiocesan Catechetical Office (GDC 265 – 267)***

- Relates with Archdiocesan Catechetical Office as “the means which the Bishop of the diocese, as head of the community and teacher of doctrine, utilizes to direct and moderate all the catechetical activities of the diocese” (GDC 265).
- Carries out the catechetical directives of the Archbishop as the primary catechetical authority of the Archdiocese (GDC 222 – 223).
- Coordinates parish program in accordance with leadership of Archdiocesan Catechetical Office (GDC 272 – 278).
- Supports, promotes and implements archdiocesan policies and programs in areas of Coordinator’s responsibility.
- Achieves Archdiocesan Certification as a Coordinator of Religious Education.
- Participates in Archdiocesan professional formation as well as in regular meetings and projects of Regional Catechetical Office.
- Completes in a timely manner Archdiocesan reports, surveys and consultations in the Coordinator’s area of responsibility.

### ***Relationship to Pastor (GDC 224 – 225)***

- Administers with accountability directly to the Pastor if there is no Director of Religious Education on staff, recognizing that the Pastor has the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated and met.
- Cooperates with the Pastor\* in implementing the catechetical directives from the Pope, the Sacred Congregations, the United States Bishops, and the New York State Bishops (GDC 268 to 271).
- Assists in Pastor's responsibility for the catechetical ministry of the parish.
- Communicates and meets regularly with the Pastor\*.
- Establishes, reviews, and evaluates mutual expectations with the Pastor\*.
- Discusses with the Pastor\* trends which will affect catechetical planning.
- Suggests to the Pastor\* the shaping of parish policies affecting catechesis.

*\*If the Coordinator is accountable to a parish Director of Religious Education, individual meetings would be with the Pastor and/or Director as appropriate.*

### ***Relationship to Parish (GDC 257 – 258)***

- Keeps the parish community ever aware that Catechesis is a primary responsibility of the parish to each and all of its members (*Canon 528*).
- Works consistently to promote a healthy parish life, realizing that this is the necessary context for an effective Religious Education Program.
- Discerns both personally and with the Pastor whether or not to join the parish if living in a parish other than the place of work.
- Strives with the Pastor and the parish staff to apply to parish community the directives on inculturation of the Gospel given in the *General Directory for Catechesis 202 to 214*.
- Recognizes as assets of entire parish community all parish buildings/resources; collaborates in management of policies and calendars to make these resources available as appropriate to all parish groups e.g. parish religious education center, school, hall, meeting rooms, technology.

### ***Relationship to Parish Staff***

- Serves as a member of the parish staff (*GDC 72*).
- Communicates and meets regularly with the other members of the parish staff.
- Serves as a resource person for the parish staff on catechetical issues in the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Advises the staff with regard to program planning in the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Cooperates in efforts to develop a faith community among the staff.
- Collaborates closely with those persons responsible for the parish youth ministry.
- Collaborates closely with the Parish Director for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in adapting the RCIA to meet the needs of the youth or children in the parish program who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (*GDC 256*).

### ***Relationship to Parish Council***

- Serves on the Parish Council education committee if there is a Director of Religious Education and serves as a member of the Parish Council if there is no Director of Religious Education.
- Serves as a resource person regarding catechetical issues in the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Reports regularly on catechetical programs in the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Consults as needed with the Parish Finance Committee in the preparation of the Religious Education Program budget if there is no Director.
- Advises the Parish Council with regard to Religious Education Program planning for the Coordinator's area of responsibility.

### ***Relationship to Others Involved in Parish's Ministry (GDC 261 – 262)***

- Participates in fostering unity among the various ministries within the parish.
- Services as a consultant on catechetical issues in the Coordinator's area of responsibility.
- Supports parish projects and programs.

### ***Relationship to Peers in the Catechetical Ministry***

- Meets regularly with other Catechetical Leaders in the Archdiocese to offer mutual support and to learn from one another.
- Participates in professional associations related to the catechetical ministry.
- Participates regularly in opportunities to celebrate and share with other Directors and Coordinators the faith-life that grounds the commitment to catechetical leadership.

### ***Relationship to Parish School Personnel (GDC 259 – 260)***

- Serves as a consultant to the Principal and faculty on catechetical issues in the Coordinator's area of responsibility (GDC 73 – 75).
- Collaborates with Principal in developing a unified, parish-based sacramental program for, and celebration of, First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Works with the Principal in identifying common catechetical goals.
- Coordinates calendar/program planning with the Principal.
- Coordinates with the Principal the sharing of facilities and resources.

### ***Relationship to Regional School Personnel***

- Works with the Pastor and the Principal to bring all the parish children attending the regional school into the parish-based sacramental programs for First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Helps the Pastor to provide for the parish families the parish-based celebrations of the sacraments .
- Works with Pastor to articulate a written agreement on the use of the school facility and resources which equally benefits the children and families in Religious Education and in the school.
- Coordinates with the Principal the sharing of the school facility and resources if these belong to parish.

### ***Relationship to Families (GDC 255)***

- Helps families recognize the many ways they are already revealing the face of God in the intimate sanctuary of family life, “the domestic Church”.
- Helps parents understand, own and fulfill their role as the primary religious educators of their children (*GDC 226*).
- Designs the Religious Education Program to assist parents in this responsibility (*GDC 227*).
- Demonstrates sensitivity to diverse family structures and their needs.
- Values and is responsive to the diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds of the families in the parish.
- Communicates regularly with families on catechetical matters.
- Implements religious education programs in response to the special needs of families in the Coordinator’s area of responsibility.
- Implements fully the Family Catechesis Mandate of the Archdiocese
- Facilitates family participation in the development of family catechesis programs.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the parish Religious Education Program for the families involved.

### ***Relationship to Other Church Communities*** (GDC 197 – 201)

- Communicates and cooperates with neighboring Catholic parishes, and offers mutual support and help where possible (GDC 252).
- Encourages in Catechists and students a deeper understanding of other faith traditions.
- Supports ecumenical outreach to other faith communities.
- Collaborates as appropriate in ecumenical and interfaith projects.

### ***Relationship to the Local Community and the Wider Society*** (GDC 22-23)

- Cooperates as appropriate in programs and projects of the local civic community (GDC 211).
- Encourages Religious Education Program participants to continually seek ways to serve the needs of the neighborhood and the wider community.
- Teaches children and youth to live and give witness to the Gospel message in the midst of a secularized society . (GDC 193-194)
- Identifies in the local community and wider society, the manifestations of religious indifference and atheism that appear under the guise of secularism, and helps children and youth to identify and confront them (GDC 22 – 23).
- Advises Catechists and families, when appropriate, of social and educational services provided by the civic community.

## ***Professional Formation***

*The voice of the Spirit,  
which Jesus, on behalf of the Father,  
has communicated to his disciples,  
resounds in the very events of history.  
Behind the changing data of present situations  
and in the deep motives of evangelization,  
it is necessary to discover  
the genuine signs of the presence  
or the purpose of God.*

*Such analysis must always be done  
in the light of faith.  
Availing herself of the human sciences,  
which are always necessary,  
the Church seeks to discover  
the meaning of the present situation  
within the perspective of the history of salvation.  
Her judgments on reality are always a diagnosis of the need for mission.*

*(GDC 31 and 32)*

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## **Formation of Directors and Coordinators (GDC 140)**

### ***Requirements for Becoming a Director of Religious Education***

Initially, the prospective Director of Religious Education must have a masters degree in an appropriate field such as religious education, religious studies, theology, catechetics, or a masters in any field with 24 graduate credits in religious studies or a related field. Any questions regarding the approval of the institution awarding the degree will be decided by the Director of the Catechetical Office.

A person with a masters degree in Education, can become a Director of Religious Education by taking the Advanced Catechetical Leadership Formation offered by the Catechetical Office. The content of the 5 theology courses may be taken from other Catholic Institutions which give the course material in equivalent content and hours.

### ***Requirements for Becoming a Coordinator of Religious Education***

Initially, the prospective Coordinator of Religious Education should have a bachelor's degree, and may have a masters in a field other than religious studies. The Coordinator does not have a master's degree in a field such as religious education, religious studies, theology. They should also have Catechist Certification Levels I and 2.

If a person who aspires to be a Coordinator does not have a bachelor's degree, they must at least have the minimum catechetical background of Catechist Certification, Levels I and 2.

## **Professional Formation and Training for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education** (GDC 141)

The Catechetical Leadership Training Program offers ministry training and formation for those who have been appointed by their Pastors to the position of Director or Coordinator of Religious Education. The Program consists in the Basic Leadership Training Course and the Advanced Leadership Training Program.

### ***The Basic Leadership Training Course (GDC 146)***

The Basic Leadership Training Course is mandatory for all Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education new to the Archdiocese of New York. It consists in eleven six-hour training sessions given by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office. It is completed within the person's first two years in the position. There are four general sessions for all parish catechetical leaders and seven specific sessions for the particular areas of catechetical responsibility.

### ***The Advanced Leadership Formation (GDC 250)***

The Advanced Leadership Formation is an academic program for Coordinators of Religious Education offered by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office. It consists in 9 courses offered over a period of 3 to 4 years and gives an in-depth preparation in theology and catechetics, as well as in catechetical administration.

Directors should participate in those courses of the Advanced Leadership Formation that they have identified as lacking in their formation.

### ***The Masters in Religious Studies (GDC 251)***

To be a Director of Religious Education it is necessary to have a master's degree in an appropriate field such as theology, religious studies, catechetics, or a master's in any field plus 24 graduate credits in religious studies or a related field. A person with a masters degree in Education, can become a Director of Religious Education by taking the Advanced Catechetical Leadership Formation.

Also to be taken are the Basic Leadership Training Program and those components of the Advanced Leadership Formation which are missing in the Director's background and training.

## **Pre-requisites for enrollment in Catechetical Leadership Program:**

- Appointment by a Pastor to a parish catechetical leadership position;
- Submission of the Personnel Record Form to Archdiocesan Catechetical Office;
- Interview with Director of Archdiocesan Catechetical Office;
- Interview with Regional Catechetical Director appropriate to the area of ministry;
- Completion of the *Catechist Formation Program, Levels 1 and 2*  
(Directors take the level one methodology course appropriate to their ministry.)

## **Suggested Time Frame For Educational Process (GDC 145)**

### ***For Coordinators of Religious Education***

First and Second Year:	Basic Leadership Training Program for Directors/Coordinators new to Archdiocese
Second, Third and Fourth Years:	Advanced Catechetical Leadership Training
Fifth Year:	Supervision

### ***For Directors of Religious Education***

First and Second Year:	Basic Leadership Training Course for Directors/Coordinators new to Archdiocese
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In order to begin the Supervision Process, a person must have worked as a Director or Coordinator of Religious Education for three years.

# **Contents of Basic Leadership Training Course (GDC 146)**

*Textbook: Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*

## **Four General Sessions for all Parish Directors and Coordinators:**

### **1. Introduction to Catechetical Mission and Office:**

Purpose and Goal of the Church's Catechetical Mission and Vision  
Archdiocesan Catechetical Office Leadership and Services  
Overview of *Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors/Coordinators*  
Total Parish Catechesis as context for Religious Education  
Job Descriptions Particular to each Parish Catechetical Leader

### **2. Family Catechesis:**

All Catechesis as Family-centered  
Methods and Models Approved for Family Catechesis Ministry  
Responsibilities of Family Catechesis Coordinator and Team  
Difference between Family Catechesis and Home Schooling in Religious Education  
Additional Catechetical Experiences to Enrich Catechetical Program:

### **3. The Spirituality of Mission for Catechetical Leaders:**

Day of Prayer on Mission of the Catechetical Leader as expressed  
in the Catechetical Office Logo: Word of God and Fire of the Holy Spirit  
Faith Sharing on the Call of the Lord to the Catechetical Ministry  
Communal Commitment Ceremony

### **4. Catechesis and Contemporary Technology**

Digital Technology as a Viable Means of Evangelization and Catechesis  
Opportunities and Challenges of Current Technology  
Effective, Appropriate Use of Social Media and Mobile Devices for Catechesis  
Effective, Appropriate Use of Websites, Email, Software Programs for Catechesis

## **Seven Sessions Particular to Directors/ Coordinators of Religious Education:**

### **5. Professional Practice**

Legal Responsibilities of the Catechetical Program  
Personnel Issues and Catechetical Office Files  
Pastor Evaluation and Compensation  
Budget Management  
Development and Management of the Crisis Management Plan

**6. Relationship with Catechist**

Vocation of the Catechist and Mandate of the Church  
Recruitment, Interview and Selection of Catechetical Personnel  
Building Faith Community with Catechists  
Regular Supervision of Parish Catechetical Personnel  
Orientation to the Catechist Formation Program.  
Catechist Handbook

**7. Catechesis for Sacraments**

First Penance and First Communion Preparation: Essential Elements of Program  
Catechetical program as Context for Sacramental Preparation  
Texts and Curriculum Materials for First Penance and First Communion  
Role of Parents, Pastor, Parish Community, School Personnel  
Preparation for the Liturgical Celebrations.  
Introduction to RCIA and the Children's Catechumenate  
Theology and Practice of Confirmation

**8. Catechetical Program Development 1**

Religious Education & Sacramental Preparation for Children/Youth with Special Needs  
Working with the Families of Children with Special Needs  
Introduction to Major Textbook Series for Elementary Religious Education  
*Archdiocesan Catechetical Guidelines for Grades 1 – 6*,  
Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis

**9. Catechetical Program Development 2**

Pre-school Catechesis and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd  
Religious Education for the Young Adolescent Learner  
Teaching the *Archdiocesan Catechetical Guidelines for Grades 7 and 8*  
Textbooks and Curriculum Materials for Junior High Age Youth  
Preparation for Confirmation.

**10. Communication Skills**

The Relational Skills of the Parish Director/Coordinator  
Public Speaking and Written Communication  
How to Organize and Conduct Meetings for Staff and Parents  
How to Prepare and Lead Prayer with Catechists, Parents and Other Adults.

**11. Educational Basics**

How to assist Catechists in managing the learning environment  
How to Assist Catechists in Lesson Planning and the Use of Catechist Manual  
How to assist Catechists in using *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis*  
Student Homework, Evaluation and Testing, Record Keeping  
How to Work with Parents to Assist Student Learning and Behavior

## **Advanced Leadership Formation** **for Coordinators of Religious Education** (*GDC 144*)

For Coordinators of Religious Education, the Advanced Leadership Formation is the second step in completing the *Catechetical Leadership Program*. There are nine courses each consisting of eight three-hour sessions. They provide in-depth preparation in theology, catechesis and catechetical administration. Coordinators are required to take all eight courses.

The pre-requisites for entrance into this program are completion of the Catechist Formation Program, Levels 1 and 2, and the Basic Leadership Training Course.

For Directors of Religious Education, most of the courses in this program have been taken in their Master's Program (in Theology, Religious Studies, Religious Education). Directors are urged to take the courses that they have not had in the Master's program.

For persons with a Masters in Education, completing the Advanced Leadership Formation will allow them to become a Director of Religious Education.

# Contents of Advanced Leadership Formation

## ***Development of the Christian Person***

Studies the development of the Christian person according to Catholic spirituality and human psychology and provides a practicum in leadership styles.

### *Course Outline:*

- The Family and the Development of the Person
- Cognitive Development
- Stages of Faith Formation
- Moral Development
- Forms of Prayer in the Catholic Tradition
- Spiritual Traditions especially the Ignatian “Contemplation in Action”

## ***Christology***

Provides an overview of the Church’s understanding of the person and mission of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and the development of Christology in the history and tradition of the Church.

### *Course Outline:*

- Christology of St. Paul
- Gospel Christologies
- Christology in Selected Other New Testament Writings
- Biblical Research on the Historical Jesus and the Christ of Faith
- Development of Christology in Church History especially the Ecumenical Councils
- Understanding of Jesus Christ through Prayer and Christian Mysticism

## ***Church Documents***

Presents the rich tradition of Church documents from the period of the early Church to the present with a special emphasis on the Second Vatican Council.

### *Course Outline:*

- Church Documents: their purpose, author(s), types
- Vatican Council II
- Social Justice Documents
- Catechetical Documents

## ***Morality***

Presents Catholic morality and explores the criteria for moral decision-making

### *Course Outline:*

#### Nature of Moral Theology:

- Faith and Morality
- Contemporary Moral Theology

#### Nature of the Human Person:

- The Human Person
- Freedom and Knowledge
- Sin and Kinds of Sin

#### Formation of Conscience:

- Moral Decision Making
- Discernment of Spirits

#### Criteria for Judgment:

- Scripture in Moral Theology
- Jesus and Discipleship
- Church Teachings on the Moral Life

#### Natural Law:

- Concept of Natural Law in Tradition and in Current Catholic Morality
- Law and Obedience
- Morality of Human Actions

#### Grace and Virtues:

- Grace: Its Meaning and Its Effects
- The Human Virtues
- The Theological Virtues
- The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

### ***The Church: Its History to the Present***

Provides an exploration of the development of the Church as affected by sociological, political and historical factors:

#### *Course Outline:*

- Early Church: Pentecost to the Edict of Milan (313)  
Council of Nicea
  
- Church in the Dark Ages: 4<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
Council of Constantinople,  
Council of Ephesus,  
Council of Chalcedon
  
- Church in the Middle Ages: 11<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
Lateran Council 4,  
Council of Florence
  
- Reformation: 16<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
Council of Trent,  
Vatican Council 1
  
- Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
Vatican Council II
  
-

## ***History of the Sacraments***

Presents the theological and historical development of the seven Catholic sacraments.

### *Course Outline:*

- Baptism and Christian Initiation
  - Baptism in Middle Ages,
  - Baptism in Modern Times
  
- Confirmation and Christian Initiation
  - Age of Confirmation through history
  - Confirmation in Modern times
  
- Eucharist
  - From the Last Supper to the Liturgy
  - Development of the Liturgy through the centuries
  - Changes in the Eucharistic Liturgy after Vatican Council II
  - Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: Vatican Council II*
  
- Penance
  - Repentance and Reconciliation in Early Christianity
  - Confession and Penance in Middle Ages
  - Sacrament of Penance in Modern Times
  
- Anointing of the Sick
  - Healing and Anointing in the Early Church
  - From Anointing of the Sick to “Extreme Unction”
  - Anointing of the Sick in Modern Times
  
- Marriage
  - Early Christian Marriage
  - From Secular to Ecclesiastical Marriage
  - Marriage understood as Sacrament
  - Marriage in Modern Times
  
- Orders
  - Christian Ministries in the Early Church
  - Development of understanding of “Orders”: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - Holy Orders in the Middle Ages
  - Catholic Priesthood after the Reformation and the Council of Trent
  - Orders in the Church Today

## **The Catechetical Leader and Evangelizing Catechesis**

Presents an overview of the Church's understanding of evangelizing catechesis, including the nature and the history of evangelization and catechesis and its multi-cultural context.

### *Course Outline:*

- Development of Catechetical Ministry from Early Church to Present
- Evangelization and Catechesis
- The Changing Parish Landscape
- The Multi-cultural Catechetical Program
- Promotion of the Parish Catechetical Program.

## **Catechetical Leadership**

Helps the Coordinator to identify personal leadership styles and skills and to explore ways to apply them in the Parish Program.

### *Course Outline:*

- Inculturation
- Personality Types and Leadership Styles According to the Myers Briggs Inventory
- Profiles of Catechetical Leader as presented in Archdiocesan Handbook
- Collaborative Leadership: Relational Skills as presented in Archdiocesan Handbook
- Supervision, Evaluation and Professional Guidance of Catechists
- Evaluation of Parish Catechetical Program and its Personnel

## **Communication and Administration Skills**

Teaches the communication skills necessary for effective parish catechetical ministry, focusing on listening skills, interviewing, group management, effective oral and written communication, digital communication, public speaking and conflict management.

### *Course Outline:*

- Oral Communication Skills and Skills in Public Speaking
- Written Communication Skills
- Listening Skills
- Group Management Skills
- Skills in Delegation
- Interviewing Skills
- Conflict Management Skills

## **Training Within the Regional Framework for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education**

The Regional Director, through regional meetings and on-going formation presentations, as well as through continual individual mentoring and guidance, as a crucial role in the formation of the Directors and Coordinators in the region. The Regional Director trains them in the following sections of the Archdiocesan Handbook:

Relational Skills essential to the fulfillment of the Ministry, using  
*The Relational Skills section of the Archdiocesan Handbook*

Job Description, using  
*Diagram for Total Parish Catechesis,*  
*Authority Structures for the Catechetical Ministry*  
*Coordination of Catechetical Program Pre-School through Eighth Grade*  
*Monthly Calendar of Responsibilities*

Preparing and following a Religious Education Budget, using  
*Worksheet for Catechetical Program Budget*

Catechist Formation Program and Requirements for Catechist Certification, using  
*Catechist Formation section of Handbook*  
*Observation & Evaluation of Catechist*  
*Parish Handbook for Catechists*  
*Personnel Guidelines for Catechists and Other Staff Members*  
*Lesson Plan for Religious Education Session*

Oversight of Program Curriculum, using  
*Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis*

Ongoing Instruction and Guidance in the Maintenance of a Safe Environment, using  
*The Directives from the Safe Environment Office*  
*The Handbook section Administration for a Safe Environment*

Catechesis for Students Outside Program Structure:  
*Sacramental Catechesis for Older Students*  
*Basic Catechesis to Prepare children/youth to Join Age-Level Sessions*  
*Religious Education for Children and Youth Who Cannot Be Mainstreamed*

## **Use of the Internet and Social Media for Catechesis**

All Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education, at whatever stage of formation they are, must continue to develop their abilities to use contemporary technology as a viable means for evangelization and catechesis. Catechetical leaders must have basic knowledge concerning the effective and appropriate use of contemporary media and communication technology tools for catechetical formation. They should be open to implementing new technologies as they develop. Catechetical leaders should avail themselves of online opportunities designed to introduce and/or update knowledge and use of technology.

The administrative guidelines for the use of the internet and social media for Catechesis are located on the Catechetical Office Website:

Go to: [www.nyfaithformation.org/resources](http://www.nyfaithformation.org/resources)

Click on: *Computer and Online Resources.*

## **On-going Professional Development**

After completing the Basic and Advanced Leadership Training, Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education are expected to continue their on-going formation by regular attendance at Regional meetings, conferences, workshops and study days sponsored by the Catechetical Office. Conference and travel expenses are to be included in the parish religious education budget or in the total parish budget for the continuing education of staff.

## **Supervision of the Director and Coordinator (GDC 157)**

The Supervision Process is the last training segment required for Certification. The supervision component of the certification process offers the Director/Coordinator the opportunity for individualized professional assessment, guidance and training over a two-year period. The goal of this process is the professional growth of the Director/Coordinator such that the abilities and skills presented as normative in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators* are developed to an adequate level.

The supervision component is overseen by the Director of Formation for Catechetical Leaders. The supervision itself is done by the Regional Catechetical Director or by another person appointed by the Director of the Catechetical Office.

### ***Prerequisites***

The person to be supervised must have worked as a Director/Coordinator for at least 3 years prior to beginning the supervision component.

The decision to enter into supervision is made by both the Regional Catechetical Director and the parish Director/Coordinator. If the Regional Director has a reservation regarding the suitability of the Director/Coordinator for certification, that person may not begin the process.

### ***Steps to be Followed***

1. Attendance at the required meeting to begin the supervision process. This meeting is held in September for all Directors/Coordinators in the Archdiocese who are to enter supervision.
2. An extensive self-assessment is made by the Director/Coordinator, based on the Profiles and Relational Skills of the Director/Coordinator as listed in *Archdiocesan Handbook*.
3. Using the completed self-assessment, the Regional Catechetical Director then evaluates the Director/Coordinator's skills and professional performance.

4. The Director/Coordinator and Regional Director meet several times to discuss the assessment results so that the final product reflects both evaluations.
5. The Director/Coordinator, with the person who will be the supervisor, chooses the focus of the two-year supervision, and together they plan how this specific area of professional growth will be worked on.

They also decide how all areas assessed as weak will be addressed and brought up to the “adequate” level. This is called a Growth Plan.

6. The Director/Coordinator will meet with the supervisor approximately every 6 weeks. Some of these visits may be on-site at the parish.
7. The Pastor will also be asked to evaluate the Director/Coordinator, both in writing and in a meeting with the Regional Director.
8. At the end of supervision, the Regional Director will make one of three recommendations:

Immediate Certification

Certification on Completion of Certain Aspects of the Growth Plan

Certification not Recommended at this Time

*(This recommendation should be made as soon as it is obvious in the supervision process.)*

9. Upon receiving the entire record of the supervision, the Director of Formation makes a recommendation regarding the person’s certification.
10. The final decision on the Director/Coordinator’s certification is made by the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.

## **Certification (GDC 217-219)**

By certification, the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office affirms that, to the best of its knowledge, the individual parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education has met the standards expressed in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*.

By participation in the certification process the Director/Coordinator has demonstrated the willingness to meet these standards.

By certification, the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education affirms that he/she intends to be an active member of a catechetical leadership community whose commitment to catechetical ministry reaches beyond the parish to the wider Archdiocesan Church.

Through certification, the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office identifies the Director/Coordinator as a significant member of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Leadership Community – those people who put their competencies and skills at the service of the Catechetical Mission of the wider Church.

### ***Requirements for Certification***

Completion of Application/Selection Process

Completion of the Basic Leadership Training Course

Regular Attendance at Regional Catechetical Meetings

Completion of Education required for Certification --

For Coordinator:       Advanced Leadership Formation

For Director:           master's degree in appropriate field

*such as religious studies, theology or a master's in any field plus 24 graduate credits in religious studies or a related field. Also acceptable is a Masters in Education plus the Advanced Leadership Program.*

Personal Invitation into the Supervision Process from the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office

Completion of two-year Supervision Process

*In order to begin the supervision process, a person must have worked as a Director/Coordinator for three years.*

Recommendation for Certification by the Regional Catechetical Director and by the Director of Formation for Religious Education Leaders

Approval for Certification by the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.

## **Renewal of Certification** (GDC 217-219)

Certification is for 5 years, after which time it must be renewed.

The requirements for the renewal of certification are:

- 30 class hours in catechesis or theology over 5 years (attendance at the *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum* can provide up to 4 hours a year),
- yearly attendance at a spiritual renewal opportunity offered by the Archdiocesan or the Regional Catechetical Office for the purpose of providing opportunities for both personal prayer and spiritual sharing among catechetical leaders,
- regular attendance each year at regional catechetical meetings,
- yearly attendance at a minimum of one professional formation seminar/workshop sponsored by the Catechetical Office,
- exercising catechetical leadership beyond the parish for the sake of the vicariate or the Archdiocese (e.g. serving on a committee, teaching , mentoring),
- recommendation for Renewal of Certification by the Regional Catechetical Director and by the Director of Formation for Catechetical Leaders,
- approval for renewal of certification by the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.



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# **Formation and Certification Programs**

## **for**

### **Directors & Coordinators**

### **of Religious Education**

## **Personal Record**

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

**Region** \_\_\_\_\_

## Educational Background

Degrees \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Director/Coordinator/Assistant)*

Application received \_\_\_\_\_

Interview with Director of Archdiocese Office \_\_\_\_\_

## Basic Leadership Training Course

<i>Dates attended</i>	<i>Components</i>
_____	1. Orientation to Catechetical Mission & Office
_____	2. Family Catechesis
_____	3. Spirituality of Mission for Catechetical Leaders
_____	4. Catechesis and Contemporary Technology
_____	5. Professional Practice
_____	6. Relationship with Catechist
_____	7. Catechesis for Sacraments
_____	8. Catechetical Program Development 1
_____	9. Catechetical Program Development 2
_____	10. Communication Skills
_____	11. Educational Basics

# Catechist Formation Program

For Coordinators            Level I \_\_\_\_\_ (Date Completed)

   Level II \_\_\_\_\_ (Date Completed)

For Directors                Educational Component \_\_\_\_\_ (Date Completed)

## For Coordinators: Advanced Catechetical Leadership

Dates Attended

Components

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Christology

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Morality

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The Church: Its History to the Present

\_\_\_\_\_

4. History of the Sacraments

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Church Documents

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Development of the Christian Person

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Catechetical Leadership

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Communication and Administration Skills

\_\_\_\_\_

9. The Catechetical Leader and Evangelizing Catechesis

## Supervision Requirement

3 Years Experience as Director/Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Time Frame of Supervision Process \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

## Certification

Recommended by Regional Catechetical Director:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation by Director of Formation of Catechetical Leaders:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approval by Director of Archdiocesan Catechetical Office:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, New York Catholic Center, 1011 First Avenue, New York, NY 10022 212-371-1000

## PERSONNEL RECORD OF PARISH DIRECTOR / COORDINATOR OF

Check all that apply: \_\_\_\_\_ **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** \_\_\_\_\_ **CATECHUMENATE (RCIA)**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle name)

**HOME ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street and number) (City) (State) (Zip code)

**HOME TELEPHONE** (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **CELL PHONE** (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

Check what applies: \_\_\_\_\_ Lay \_\_\_\_\_ Priest \_\_\_\_\_ Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Consecrated Religious

If Consecrated Religious, name of Religious Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

*Degree Major Concentration College /University Location Year Degree Received*

PhD / M.Div				
MA +graduate credits				
MA				
BA +graduate credits				
BA				
Associate Degree				
Undergraduate credits				
Education in non-degree programs				
High School				

### 2. PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR RESUME

Revised: May 2016

**3. MINISTRY FORMATION / CERTIFICATION in the N.Y. Archdiocese**

Program	Date of completion Certification	Area of Concentration: Elementary, Youth, AFF, RCIA	Comments
Level One Catechist Certification			
Level Two Catechist Certification			
Basic Leadership Training			
Advanced Catechetical Leadership			
Director/Coordinator Certification from another Diocese			

*(For numbers 4, 5, 6... list experience in chronological order beginning with the present)*

**4. CATECHETICAL MINISTRY LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Position	Institution (Parish / School)	Location (City / State)	Number of Years	Dates

**5. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**

Position	Institution	Location(City / State)	Number of Years	Dates

**6. TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Position	Institution	Location(City / State)	Number of Years	Dates



**10. REFERENCES** (Supervisors from last 3 places of employment or volunteer work)

Name of Supervisor	Position	Institution	Location	Telephone

**11. LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION: Pastor or Major Superior**

Name of Pastor / Major Superior	Church /Religious Congregation	Location	Telephone

I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this personnel record form 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 authorize investigation of all matters contained in this personnel record form and agree that any misleading or false statements may result in termination. I hereby authorize my present/ past employers / supervisors to furnish the Archdiocese of New York, Catechetical Office, with information about my employment / volunteer history. I understand that the reference requested will be communicated on a confidential basis and that any information provided therein will not be shared with me. I further acknowledge that this personnel record form is not a contract of employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

Send original to: Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of New York, *1011 First Avenue, New York, New York 10022*  
Attention: Director of Archdiocesan Catechetical Office

Revised: May 2016