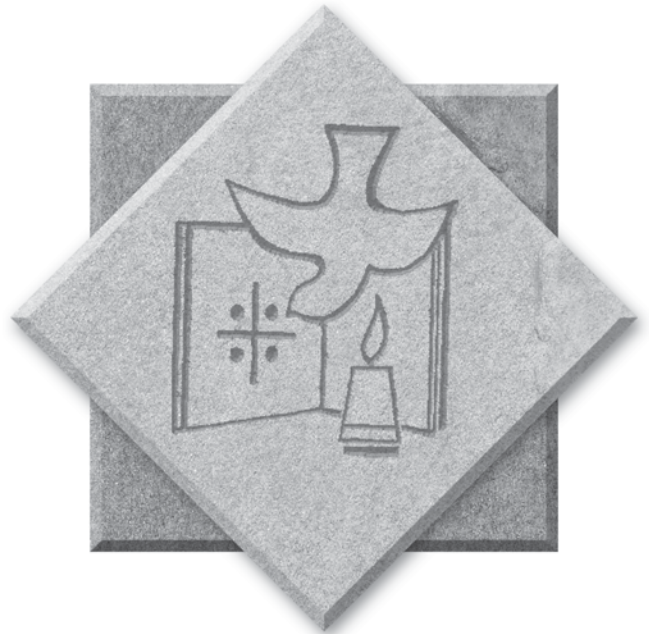


*Handbook
for Parish
Catechetical Leaders
and Pastors*

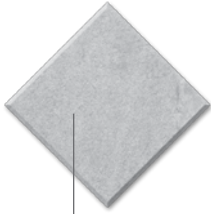
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"And those who have taught
many people to do what is right
will shine like the stars forever."

Daniel 12:3

**Diocese of Syracuse
Office of Faith Formation**



September 2013

Dear Catechetical Leaders and Pastors,

In 2003, the staff of the Office of Religious Education, with the assistance of members of an ad hoc committee of catechetical leaders and pastors, produced the *Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders and Pastors*. We are indebted to all of them for providing a helpful tool to guide us in the many facets of leading parish catechetical programs.

During the past ten years, changes have taken place in our world, in our Church, in our parishes, in the catechetical ministry. We hope that this revision of the previous handbook helps you to address some of the challenges, as well as exciting new opportunities, while building on the solid foundation in faith and ministry that has been integral to our parish programs throughout the years.

Of course, a handbook is simply a tool. The ultimate goal of all catechesis is relationship with the God who has loved us into existence, who has redeemed us through Jesus, the Son, and who has remained with us in the Spirit. Each of us is called to discipleship. Everything we do in catechetical ministry must have as its focus the formation of disciples: active and conscious participants in the life of their local faith community, witnesses, as well as evangelizing agents, of the message of the Gospel.

We continue to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek new methods to evangelize and catechize, to bring people into communion with Jesus.

May the Lord whom we so faithfully serve continue to bless all that we do.

Gratefully,

Catherine Cornue
Diocesan Director
Office of Faith Formation





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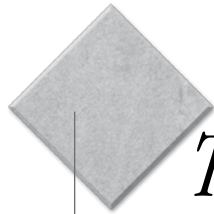


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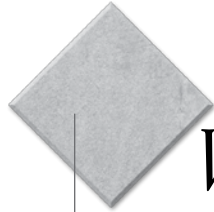
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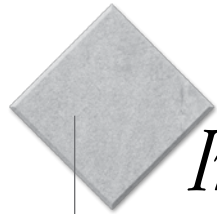
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Works Cited

- (CT) *Catechesi Tradendae*
(*On Catechesis in Our Time*), Pope John Paul II, October 16, 1979
- (CITTM) *The Catechist in the Third Millennium*
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- (CLITTM) *The Catechetical Leader in the Third Millennium*
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National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, 2012
- (ISCM) *In Support of Catechetical Ministry*
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- (ESM) *Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry*
Bishop James M. Moynihan, DD, 2001
- (NDC) *National Directory for Catechesis*
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Introduction

FROM THE BEGINNING...

the mission of the Church has been to continue the mission of Jesus – to proclaim and to build the Kingdom of God. The Risen Lord commanded his followers:

“Go... and make disciples, ...” (*Mt 28:19*)

Pope John Paul II, in *Catechesi Tradendae (On Catechesis in Our Time)*, reflecting on that command of Jesus, states that **“The Church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks ...”** (*CT #1*) Further, he writes that **“...at the heart of catechesis we find in essence a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, ...”** and continues, **“Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.”** (*CT #5*)

“The more the Church, whether on the local or the universal level, gives catechesis priority over the works and undertakings the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community of believers and of her external activity as a missionary Church... The Church is bidden by God and by events – each of them a call from him – to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources, in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel.” (*CT #15*)

Thus we find the catechetical ministry at the heart of the mission of the Church – universal, local and parish.

We believe that catechesis is lifelong and ongoing formation in faith for all the baptized.

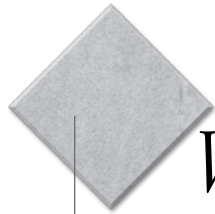
Though it is the responsibility of all within the parish community, some are called specifically to the catechetical ministry.

This Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders and Pastors is offered as a guide for those called to the vocation of catechetical ministry in the parishes of the Diocese of Syracuse.

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Office of Faith Formation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, inspired by the life and mission of Jesus, and embracing the opportunities of our time and culture, commit ourselves to educate, evangelize and empower others through lifelong and ongoing faith formation.





Vision Statement

We, the Office of Faith Formation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, led by the Spirit, challenge ourselves and others to envision a community where faith is experienced, lived, shared and celebrated by all.

THEREFORE, WE WILL...

- respond to the needs of catechetical leaders, parish leaders, coordinators and catechists through education, formation and resources
- challenge ourselves and others to vision – creating a future rooted in the richness of the past and responsive to the Spirit of the present
- emphasize faith formation for all people as a lifelong and life-connected process
- collaborate with all diocesan offices, parishes, other faith communities and local agencies
- model a particular commitment to global and local issues of social justice
- foster the intimate connection between liturgy and catechesis
- include a family perspective in all endeavors.





The Diocesan Office of Faith Formation

"The Bishop directs catechesis through diocesan offices responsible for catechetical activities." (*National Directory for Catechesis*, p. 220)

Among the responsibilities of the Diocesan Faith Formation Office are the following:

- to serve as a liaison between the bishop and the parishes of the diocese regarding the catechetical ministry
- to participate as a member of the New York State Council of Diocesan Directors of Religious Education, in collaboration with the New York State Catholic Conference
- to analyze the catechetical needs of the diocese
- to collaborate with other diocesan offices and agencies in order to provide for the catechetical needs of children, youth and adults
- to develop diocesan catechetical policies including guidelines for sacramental preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation
- to collaborate with the Office of Liturgy regarding initiatory and catechumenal catechesis
- to provide consultation on catechetical matters to parishes
- to provide assistance in the evaluation of parish catechetical programs
- to conduct regular surveys to determine the number of children, youth and adults who are receiving formal catechesis
- to establish norms for the certification of catechists, in accord with *The Catechist in the Third Millennium*
- to establish norms for the certification of catechetical leaders in accord with the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* and *The Catechetical Leader in the Third Millennium*
- to provide for the training and certification of catechists and catechetical leaders according to the diocesan certification processes
- to research and propose catechetical models
- to provide personnel and resources to meet the catechetical needs of persons with disabilities
- to collaborate with the Personnel Office to provide a compensation plan for parish catechetical leaders
- to encourage, motivate and affirm catechists and catechetical leaders
- to provide on-going personal, professional and theological development of catechists and catechetical leaders
- to assist parishes in complying with the directives of the *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* as noted in the policies set forth by the Diocese of Syracuse Safe Environment Committee.

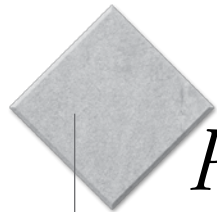
The Regional Faith Formation Offices

“The Diocesan Catechetical Office should have sufficient professional personnel to serve as resources to parishes, areas or regions in relation to all aspects of catechesis.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, p. 220)

The Regional Faith Formation Offices collaborate with the Diocesan Faith Formation Office in fulfilling the responsibilities listed above. In addition, the Regional Faith Formation Offices:

- provide consultation regarding the hiring of catechetical leaders
- provide consultation regarding the use of appropriate resources to pastors, catechetical leaders, catechists, parents and other adults
- provide access to catechetical resources, including textbooks and other catechetical materials through the Regional Resource Centers
- provide for the training of catechists through implementation of the Diocesan Catechist Formation Program
- provide for the training of catechetical leaders through the certification process outlined in this handbook (p 9)
- provide personal and professional support for catechetical leaders through regular meetings with catechetical leaders, days/evenings of recollection, and parish visitations
- collaborate with other diocesan, parish and/or civic offices and agencies
- implement diocesan catechetical policies and guidelines
- provide adult faith formation opportunities on a regional basis
- serve as faculty for the Diocesan Formation for Ministry Program
- provide resources for catechesis for those with special needs.





Parish Faith Formation

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

“... to catechize is ‘to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person...’ Catechesis aims at putting people... in communion... with Jesus Christ” (CT #5)

“The importance of catechesis calls us to hold catechesis, and the preparation and support of those given responsibility for it, as one of our greatest priorities.”

(The Catechist in the Third Millennium, p 3)

PASTOR

As the primary catechist in the parish who shares this responsibility through delegation, the pastor:

- ensures that the catechetical program upholds the teachings of the Catholic Church
- sets the vision and tone in collaboration with those directly responsible for the faith formation program
- promotes and encourages parishioner participation in all aspects of faith formation
- hires a person with expertise in the catechetical ministry
- encourages continuing spiritual and professional development leading to diocesan certification for all involved in catechesis
- provides educational opportunities for on-going spiritual and professional formation leading to diocesan certification
- serves as a resource person for theological questions and as an advisor to the faith formation program.

CATECHETICAL LEADER

“The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader.” (*National Directory for Catechesis, p 220*)

Each parish designates a catechetical leader. Because of his/her position in the ministry of catechesis in the parish, the catechetical leader undertakes many roles, some practical and some motivational. From each of these flow certain responsibilities.

Person of Faith

As one who has **“an uncompromising desire to live the values of the gospel in discipleship to Jesus,”** (*National Certification Standards for Professional Parish Directors of Religious Education, p 14*)

the catechetical leader:

- takes time for prayer, reflection and retreat
- participates in the sacramental life of the Church
- engages in on-going professional and spiritual development
- exemplifies a professional standard of behavior as one who represents the Catholic Church
- witnesses to the value of participation in parish life by presence at parish events and celebrations.

Catechist

As one charged with **Program Development**, the catechetical leader:

- researches the needs and preferences of the people of the parish and designs faith formation programs that endeavor to meet those needs
- develops the catechetical programs for all age levels of the parish following principles enunciated in the *National Directory for Catechesis*
- chooses suitable materials for these programs: texts, supplementary materials, classroom aids from various media, etc. in accord with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- employs technology to transform and enhance all catechesis as envisioned in *The Catechetical Leader in the Third Millennium*.

As one responsible for the **Formation and Training of Personnel**, the catechetical leader:

- assures the proper formation of catechists to nurture within them a faith that is living, conscious and active
- trains the catechists in the basic educational principles for adults and children and assists them in application of this methodology on the particular level at which they catechize; provides continuity and support to these catechists

- presents the catechetical programs for children to the parents, explaining the rationale and enlisting parental participation in these programs as well as in the preparation of their children for the reception of the sacraments
- provides a catechetical perspective and expertise to the other members of the pastoral staff, and serves as a theological resource person to them
- fosters and encourages all catechists to become certified through the diocesan certification process.

Community Builder

As one who acts as a **Facilitator** in the faith development of the parish community, the catechetical leader:

- develops a sense of Christian community among the catechists through catechist formation sessions and periodic meetings of catechists
- facilitates personal faith growth among catechists, children, parents, youth and adults
- fosters community between catechists and their learners
- promotes growth in faith within the parish and helps parishioners to recognize their role in the catechetical mission of the parish.

As a **Resource Person** to others in parish administration, the catechetical leader:

- serves as a resource person to the pastor/administrator and parish staff in the development of the parish as a Christian community
- assists in the development of parish liturgical worship when appropriate
- works with other members of the pastoral staff to develop a sense of faith community out of which shared ministry may grow.

As a **Communication Link** to others regarding catechesis, the catechetical leader:

- channels communication from the pastor/administrator, parish staff and pastoral council to the catechetical staff

- keeps the other members of the staff properly informed and coordinates participation of the other pastoral staff members in the catechetical programs
- serves as a liaison with other parishes, schools and Pastoral Care Areas in matters of catechetical programs
- informs the parish community, especially parents, of on-going catechetical events in the parish, diocese and nation
- communicates on a regular basis with regional and diocesan faith formation offices and attends monthly meetings as often as possible.

Administrator

As one charged with the **Organization** of the catechetical ministry in the parish, the catechetical leader:

- cooperates with and develops relationships, systems and structures necessary to fulfill one's role, responsibilities and policies
- serves as a unifying factor on the pastoral staff in developing a coordinated thrust toward total and systematic catechesis
- calls forth personnel from among the members of the parish who will assist as members of the catechetical staff with responsibility for various segments of the parish catechetical effort
- oversees the recruitment, screening, formation and evaluation of catechists and other auxiliary personnel
- administers the policies established by the parish and diocese
- develops specific parish sacramental policies based on the sacramental guidelines provided by the Diocese of Syracuse.

As one responsible for the **Planning** of parish catechetical programs, the catechetical leader:

- works with the catechetical and parish staffs in formulating a written statement of catechetical purpose in harmony with the parish mission statement
- plans, organizes, and evaluates the ministry of catechesis through the lens of evangelization

Continued on next page

- develops a calendar that provides a minimum of 30 contact hours, which include catechetical, service and retreat experiences
- develops goals and objectives for the catechetical program within the framework of this statement and carries these forward through well-organized programs
- conducts appropriate evaluation procedures to determine whether the objectives of the catechetical program are being achieved.

As one responsible for the **Budget and Record Keeping** for the parish catechetical ministry, the catechetical leader:

- prepares a budget for the parish catechetical program and, when the appropriate parish authorities have approved this, administers the budget
- maintains accurate records on each participating child and adult, especially regarding the sacraments of initiation, and monitors participation of each catechist in formation programs
- directs the work of the faith formation office secretary and other catechetical support staff
- prepares and submits, in a timely manner, reports requested by diocesan and/or regional offices.

CATECHIST

“The Lord Jesus invites men and women, in a special way, to follow him, teacher and formator of disciples. This personal call of Jesus Christ and its relationship to him are the true moving forces of the catechetical activity. From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to ‘evangelize’, and lead others to the ‘Yes’ of faith in Jesus Christ.” (*General Directory for Catechesis #231*)

At the heart of every parish catechetical program are the catechists who have responded to that call. In their pastoral letter, *The Catechist in the Third Millennium: Call, Mission and Formation*, the Bishops of New York State declare, “we affirm the essential role of the catechists in this important work” and “call for a systematic and thorough formation of catechists”, leading to diocesan certification.

In addition, the bishops identify qualities and characteristics necessary for one to effectively serve in this ministry:

“compassion and kindness, common sense, a sense of humor, an open and understanding heart and a sense of one’s own self-worth”, as well as “a real and vital Catholic Christian faith based on a personal relationship with Christ that is nourished in and through the Church. This spirituality includes a commitment to prayer, Scripture reading and reflection, and an openness to the movement of the Spirit in his or her life. A catechist must be committed to the Eucharist, communal worship, the living tradition of the Church and its teachings, and have an ecclesial sense lived out through the practice of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love in conformity with Catholic Christian moral standards.” (*CITTM, p 5*)

It is incumbent upon pastors and catechetical leaders to recognize the giftedness of men and women in their parishes, to invite them to this profound ministry, to provide for their formation and certification, to provide for their ministerial needs and to affirm them in every way possible.

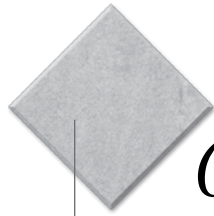
As a person of faith who responds to the call of the Gospel to enhance the catechetical ministry through sharing time, talent and faith, the catechist:

- supports the vision of the parish catechetical program and the direction of the catechetical leader
- develops effective tools and techniques for catechesis
- participates in community building opportunities
- completes the diocesan certification program for catechists.

CATECHETICAL AIDE

As a person of faith who responds to the call of the Gospel to enhance the catechetical ministry through sharing time, talent and faith, the catechetical aide/catechetical associate:

- participates in community building opportunities
- serves as a support to the catechists, the catechetical leader and the parish catechetical program.



Certification Process for Catechetical Leaders

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” (*Mark 16:15*)

By baptism every Christian is called to proclaim the Good News. The spirit singles out individuals and invites them to the specialized role of catechetical leader within their faith community, and many respond to that invitation. As competent leaders they collaborate with others in creating a culture of formation within their faith communities that enables each committed Christian to nurture and grow in relationship with God.

"As such, the catechetical leader will be well formed in the study of catechesis - its theology, its history, and its right praxis." (*National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers, p14*)

Therefore, we strongly recommend that the parish catechetical leader be certified.

The certification process for catechetical leaders in the Diocese of Syracuse has a three-fold purpose:

- to provide for the catechetical leader's spiritual growth
- to increase theological knowledge out of which one catechizes
- to expand on acquired skills through study and practice.

LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION

Through its certification process, the Diocese of Syracuse formally recognizes two distinct certified positions of parish catechetical administration within the parish structure and under the authority of the pastor, who is the parish's primary catechetical leader.

These positions are:

- Director of Faith Formation (DFF)
- Associate of Faith Formation (AFF)

COMPONENTS OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The process of certification as a catechetical leader in the Diocese of Syracuse consists of the following requirements:

- educational requirements as listed below
- completion of the Level I catechist certification process for all catechists in the diocese
- at least 2 years experience administering a parish catechetical program
- consultation with the regional director
- favorable recommendation from the pastor

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DFF

Bachelor's degree in theology or religious studies

OR

Bachelor's degree in education with at least twelve credit hours in theology

OR

Graduate Certificate from

Loyola Institute for Ministry Extension Program (LIMEX)

OR

Graduate degree in theology, religious studies or pastoral ministry from an accredited institution

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AFF

- Commissioning through the diocesan Formation for Ministry program in the area of catechetical ministry.
- Participation in four catechetical workshops, as recommended by the diocesan office.

PROCESS FOR CERTIFICATION OF CATECHETICAL LEADERS

- The catechetical leader completes the application and self assessment found in Appendix B of this handbook and submits it to the Regional Director of Faith Formation.
- The catechetical leader requests a letter of recommendation from the pastor and/or parish ministerial supervisor. This letter is to be sent directly to the Regional Director.
- The applicant meets with the Regional Director to review the completed application as well as the self-assessment and develops a personal growth plan in dialogue with the Regional Director.
- The applicant and the Regional Director conduct a periodic review of the growth plan.
- The finalization of the process with the Regional Director includes:
 - verification of fulfilled educational requirements
 - completion of at least two years of experience administering a catechetical program
 - review of the status of personal growth plan
 - receipt of a letter of recommendation from the pastor or parish ministerial supervisor.



Once all the requirements listed above have been fulfilled, the Faith Formation Office of the Diocese of Syracuse will give approval for certification. Certification is valid for five years, at which time it may be renewed. The catechetical leader is expected to complete a yearly evaluation with pastor and/or appropriate parish personnel. After the evaluation has taken place, the catechetical leader will send a copy to the Regional Director and may be invited to discuss the overall process. The catechetical leader will also submit to the Regional Director each year a list of courses, workshops, conferences, spiritual renewal opportunities, etc., that he/she has attended in order to stay current in this ministry of faith formation (65 minimum contact hours over the 5 years is required).

RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

During the fifth year, the DFF/AFF is responsible for initiating dialogue with the Regional Director concerning the immediate process for renewal of certification. This process consists of:

- review of the catechetical leader's academic updating
- review of the catechetical leader's yearly evaluations
- dialogue with the Regional Director concerning ongoing self-assessment and development of personal growth plan
- notification of the pastor by the Regional Director that the catechetical leader has begun the process of re-certification.

Once all the requirements listed above have been fulfilled, the Faith Formation Office of the Diocese of Syracuse will give approval for re-certification. Re-certification is for five years, at which time it must be renewed according to the above process.

The Regional Director will inform the pastor when the certification/re-certification process is completed and accepted.



Certification Process for Catechists

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

“The Catechist is called to witness to the Word in all areas of life. If the message of faith is to be heard and lived, the catechist must be given ongoing formation in the faith in order to understand it more fully and speak it more clearly, skillfully and faithfully.” (*The Catechist in the Third Millennium*, p 2)

To assure excellence in catechesis, the New York State Bishops strongly recommend that all catechists be certified. “...we recommend that the recruitment, formation and support of catechists be given the highest priority... Catechists will be certified or working toward certification (or have attained certification) according to the guidelines and processes of their own dioceses.” (*CITM*, p 9)

It is an expectation that this process is completed within the first three years of service as a parish catechist.

The diocesan certification process has a three-fold purpose, namely:

- to provide catechists with skills needed to prepare for the practical aspects of the catechetical ministry
- to increase theological knowledge out of which one catechizes
- to encourage and enable on-going, life-long education and formation.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The Diocese of Syracuse offers two levels of catechist certification:

- Level I Catechetical Certification
- Level II Catechetical Certification

Catechists who received their Level I certification before 1996 are encouraged to participate in the current catechist formation courses, since the previous courses have been rewritten to reflect current theological and catechetical insights. All catechists who have received Level I certification are encouraged to work toward Level II.

LEVEL I CATECHETICAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The catechist must satisfactorily complete the following three courses:

Course 1 ~ The Catechist: Call, Mission and Formation

This course will present participants with the Vatican II vision of church, the history of catechesis in the United States, an exploration of the call of the catechist and stages of faith development. Other topics include the skills and information needed to prepare and plan for this important ministry: lesson planning, discipline, classroom management, prayer styles, creative teaching ideas and use of technology.

Course 2 ~ The Word: Foundation of Catechesis

This course will focus on the catechetical ministry of proclaiming the revealed Word of God in both the Old and New Testaments as well as in the person and ministry of Jesus. Participants will be led to a deeper awareness of Jesus as the center of catechesis.

Course 3 ~ Discipleship: Living the Faith

This course will provide a contemporary overview of traditional themes and basic beliefs of our faith by focusing on the creed and the sacraments. Other aspects of the course include an overview of theology, spirituality and social justice. This course will deepen the catechists' understanding of our faith tradition so that they are better prepared to communicate it to others.

These courses are available in person or through on-line components.

LEVEL II CATECHETICAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The catechist must satisfactorily complete thirty (30) contact hours in courses and workshops as follows:

- A total of twenty (20) contact hours, including four (4) hours each in the following CORE areas:
 - Scripture
 - Christology
 - Sacramental Theology
 - Morality
 - Advanced Methodology

- A total of ten (10) contact hours from among the following electives, with a maximum of four (4) hours in any one area:
 - Church/Church History
 - Creed
 - Spirituality
 - Peace and Justice
 - Liturgy and Worship
 - Prayer

Level II catechetical courses could include in-person and on-line courses and workshops recognized by the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation. These may be taken before the Level I certification is completed but Level II cannot be granted until Level I has been achieved.

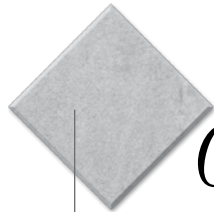
Special Circumstances

The Faith Formation Office recognizes certification from other diocesan certification programs or from other dioceses. Previous accreditation will be reviewed in consultation with a regional director.

ONGOING EDUCATION & FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

After completing both Levels I & II, we recommend that the catechist consider continuing her/his education and formation. The Diocese of Syracuse offers many opportunities for continuing faith formation. Contact any of the regional or diocesan offices, for more information.





Ongoing Personal & Spiritual Development

“A lay ecclesial minister will . . . engage in programs or practices of continuing ministerial formation and life-long personal growth.” (*National Professional Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers, 1.3*).

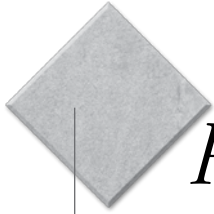
As proclaimers of the Gospel, catechetical leaders need to model lifelong learning to all they serve. Spiritual, professional and personal facets of life need to be held in healthy balance, reflecting holistic growth.

Spirituality is critical to the catechetical ministry. As people of faith we make a commitment to a life-long relationship with Christ. Catechists experience God in their own lives and answer the call to echo God’s Word. Even the most efficient among us are only tools in the hands of the greatest Master Catechist. As catechetical leaders and catechists we need to focus on being as well as doing. Those involved in the catechetical ministry are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities for on-going personal and spiritual development offered in local areas, as well as through the various diocesan offices. Catechetical leaders and catechists continue their personal and spiritual development including time for:

- liturgical celebrations
- vacations
- retreats
- personal daily prayer
- communal prayer
- scripture meditation and study.

The diocese offers several sites where the catechetical leader and/or the catechists may take some time away. These sites are listed here.

- Alverna Heights Franciscan Retreat Center
7770 Green Lakes Road
Fayetteville, NY 13066-9661
(315) 637-3725/637-6661
- Christ the King Retreat House
500 Brookford Road
Syracuse, NY 13224
(315) 446-2680
- The Good News Center
10475 Cosby Manor Road
Utica, NY 13502
(315) 735-6210
- The Spiritual Center
712 NY Route 79
Windsor, NY 13865
(607) 655-2264
- Spiritual Renewal Center
1118 Court Street
Syracuse, NY 13208-1700
(315) 472-6546
- Stella Maris Retreat Center
130 East Genesee Street
Skaneateles, NY 13152-1330
(315) 685-6836
- Transfiguration Monastery
Camaldolese Benedictine Sisters
701 NY Route 79
Windsor, NY 13865-2700
(607) 655-2366



Personnel Policies

IN GENERAL, personnel policies are provided in the Employee Handbook published by the Personnel Office of the Diocese of Syracuse.

The pastor is ultimately responsible for providing the human and financial resources necessary for a comprehensive parish catechetical program for his parish. The United States Catholic Bishops have stated, "We call on them to bring forth from the parish community men and women of faith, well prepared to serve the Church in the ministry of catechesis." (*In Support of Catechetical Ministry*, p 10)

In his pastoral letter, *Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry*, Bishop James Moynihan has stated:

"Equipping the people of the Church for ministry is a priority for the local church." (p 1)

"We will select, educate and form individuals for church leadership positions based on their competence, charisma, and training." (p 8)

The role of parish catechetical leader, whether it is designated to one person within a parish, shared among a team of coordinators within a parish, or shared among parishes in a pastoral care area, is critical to the success of the catechetical ministry.

We believe that each parish should seek to employ a parish catechetical leader who is, or is willing to be, professionally trained and formed in the ministry, certified according to the process for diocesan certification found in this handbook and compensated accordingly.

This vision is supported not only by the previously quoted documents, but also by the Code of Canon Law.

CANON 231

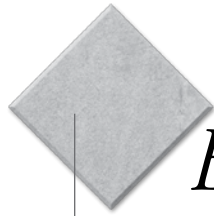
§1. Laypersons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly and to carry it out conscientiously, zealously and diligently.

§2. With due regard for canon 230§1, they have a right to a decent remuneration suited to their condition; by such remuneration they should be able to provide decently for their own needs and for those of their family with due regard for the prescriptions of law; they likewise have a right that their pension, social security and health benefits be duly provided.

Code of Canon Law

Salary guidelines may be obtained from the Personnel Office or the Faith Formation Offices.





Budgeting for Faith Formation

THE PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE of an accurate budget for Faith Formation programs and services is a highly recommended and key responsibility of a parish catechetical leader. Since each parish may include different categories in a budget, dialogue between the pastor and catechetical leader is essential. Categories commonly included in such a budget are listed below.

INCOME/REVENUE

FEES: Income collected for yearly faith formation programs including sacramental preparation, for events such as retreats, guest speakers, etc.

BOOKS/SUPPLIES: All income collected for program materials including textbooks, classroom supplies and those necessary for special projects.

FUNDRAISING: Income from projects such as candy or other sales, dinners, etc.

OTHER: Any additional income from donations, mission collections or dues.

EXPENSES

BOOKS/SUPPLIES: The cost of textbooks used in faith formation programs, supplemental books or magazines, audio or video resources including administrative fee for the Regional Faith Formation Office, supplies used for faith formation sessions, paper, etc.

PRINTING, POSTAGE AND OFFICE SUPPLIES: Materials for and upkeep of office equipment, costs for printing or copying programs, newsletters, brochures, etc., postage for program mailings, office supplies such as letterhead, envelopes, file folders, tape, staples, computer supplies.

TELEPHONE/INTERNET: The cost of telephone and internet service.

FURNISHINGS/EQUIPMENT: The cost of furnishings such as desks, chairs, tables, files, bookcases, etc., or equipment such as television, VCR, DVD, computers, printers, copiers and fax machines.

TRANSPORTATION: Reimbursement for mileage for authorized church business. (Does not include travel to and from the parish.)

CATECHIST FORMATION: Fees for certification courses for catechists, as well as retreats, conferences, days of reflection and certification celebrations.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: The cost of professional and spiritual growth opportunities for eligible personnel, including workshops, seminars, courses, retreats, conferences, membership in professional organizations, subscriptions, books, etc.

LITURGICAL SUPPLIES: Supplies for banners or altar coverings, music, etc., for liturgical celebrations.

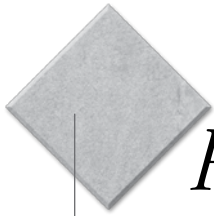
HOSPITALITY: The cost of refreshments provided for faith formation programs or events, as well as supplies such as paper cups, plates, tableware, napkins, paper towels, etc.

OTHER: Expenses not included in the above categories including the cost of hosting a meeting, speaker fees, gifts for catechists, gifts or donations made in the name of the program, materials purchased for fund-raising projects.

RECORD KEEPING

It is highly recommended that catechetical leaders

- make copies of all receipts handed in
- keep a ledger of income and expenses
- have a petty cash fund for incidental expenses.



Preparing Parish Handbooks for Families

A PARISH HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES states the mission, goals and set policy of the parish catechetical program. It is a reference tool for parents/guardians (subsequently referred to as parent), students and catechetical ministers. At the end of each handbook, a signature card should be included. When signed and filed with the catechetical leader, this card serves as a written agreement with parent/guardian and student, that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the policies and procedures specified in the handbook.

It is important to review the items in the handbook periodically, to assure their accuracy. Listed below are some items to include in your handbook as well as several other issues of importance to those involved in a parish catechetical program.

ABSENCES

The family handbook indicates the manner in which the parent is to report the absences of a child from the catechetical session, as well as the procedure for alerting the parent of a student's absence when no prior notification has been received from the parent. This is especially important when the student is not personally brought to the program by the parent.

ACCIDENTS & ILLNESS

The family handbook outlines the procedures to be followed in cases of accident or illness during catechetical sessions. If relatively minor accident/illness occurs to a student while attending the catechetical program, the following steps are taken:

- The catechist reports the accident/illness immediately to the catechetical leader.
- If bleeding is involved, the procedures outlined under "Blood-borne Pathogens" (Appendix D, p 4D) are followed.
- The catechetical leader notifies the parent. If the parent can not be reached, the catechetical leader follows instructions on the Registration Form.

- The catechetical leader completes an accident report and keeps it on file whether or not there appear to be injuries. A copy of the report is sent to the pastor.

In case of serious accident or illness:

- 911 or the local police/emergency rescue squad is called immediately.
- The catechist reports the accident/illness immediately to the catechetical leader.
- The catechetical leader notifies the parent. If the parent can't be reached, the catechetical leader follows instructions on the Registration Form.
- The catechetical leader notifies the pastor.

ATTENDANCE

The family handbook specifies the number of absences (and late arrivals) accepted before the child is required to make up the material missed, as well as procedures for such a make-up.

ADMISSION POLICY (REGISTRATION)

The family handbook includes a statement that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin or special needs.

Parish registration information, including all program dates and fees, should be included in the handbook. Early and/or late fees as well as deadline dates for registration should be noted.

A statement inviting those who may not be able to contribute financially is imperative. A suggestion follows: "It is our parish policy that no child will be denied faith formation because of financial hardship. Scholarships are available to those in need. Please advise the catechetical leader or pastor of any difficulties."

Continued on back

Application forms for students entering the program should include basic information: name, address, phone, date of birth, school, grade, religion, parent's/legal guardian's names, allergies, special needs, emergency contact person and number. Sacramental information should be included as well.

Normally, parishioners are required to attend faith formation classes in the parish in which they are registered and participating as a family. Those seeking to participate in other parish programs must request written permission from their pastor which is then sent to the other parish.

Direct preparation for the sacraments is distinct from regular parish or Catholic school faith formation, and is the responsibility of the parish.

CALENDAR

At the beginning of each academic year, a calendar is provided to the parent listing program dates, holidays, possible make-up dates for weather cancellations and class times. Parents should be notified promptly of any changes in schedule.

CAMPUS SAFETY

Diocesan Safe Environment guidelines will be implemented. During all catechetical sessions, it is necessary that the catechetical leader, coordinator or hall monitor be present in the building. In addition, there must be more than one adult in the building when classes are held.

After all students are in the building, doors should be secured. Exits may be locked from the outside with a crash bar so that students may exit in an emergency. Information on how parents may access their children during the session should also be stated in the family handbook.

CANCELLATIONS

Classes are cancelled only for significant reasons such as dangerous weather conditions. The manner in which parents, bus drivers, crossing guards, school principals and other concerned persons will be informed of cancellation of session is stated in the family handbook.

COMMUNICATION

Procedures by which parents, catechists and catechetical leader contact each other should be clearly described in the family handbook. Communications to the parents

should be written and mailed, unless they can be handed directly to the parent by a staff member. The pastor is kept informed regarding all aspects of the program.

CUSTODIAL RIGHTS OF PARENTS

The catechetical leader should be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent as these pertain to the child's participation in the program as well as release from the program. Both parents usually have the right to information about their child. Written documentation of orders of protection, etc. should be kept on file. Such orders are usually valid for six months.

DISCIPLINE

The family handbook clearly outlines the parish discipline policy including the right of the parish to remove a student from the program. Included in this area are steps taken before removal of a child temporarily from their classroom, notification of parents and removal of a child from the program.

DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

The parish policy for dismissing students from class is outlined here. Considerations include whether parents must come into the building to pick up children, whether children must have written permission to walk home, etc.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Parents are the primary teachers of their children. This section of the family handbook outlines ways that parents and other family members can become involved in the faith formation program.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips must be approved by the catechetical leader. Permission slips with pertinent information must be completed by parents/guardians and returned promptly. No child will be allowed to participate in field trips, retreats, or service projects away from the parish campus without this information.

HEALTH & SAFETY

All emergency procedures which include response to fire, weather, power failures, etc. as well as parent parking procedures for drop off and pick up of students should be included in the family handbook. All diocesan safe environment policies are to be followed.

Continued on next page

LOCATION OF SESSIONS

Information from diocesan guidelines for location of catechetical sessions should be included here.

MEDICAL CONDITION OF STUDENTS

The catechetical leader should be informed about any student who has a special condition: physical, emotional and/or psychological, which may present itself during the catechetical session. Particular concerns would be those that may be encountered during the teaching/learning environment such as: allergies, asthma, auditory or visual impairment, seizures, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, etc. The parents should be assured that this information is confidential and will be used with discretion.

MEDICATION

No medication of any kind (including both prescription and over the counter) should be administered to or taken by the student during the Parish Catechetical Program. If a child must take medication during the catechetical session, parents must provide a written request with directives to the catechetical leader. The student will be dismissed from the catechetical session and should be administered the medication by someone with Medication Administration Training.

OUTLINE OF PROGRAMS OFFERED

It is appropriate in a family handbook to briefly outline the faith formation curriculum and sacramental programs. Information about other activities in the parish, such as Children's Liturgy of the Word, children's catechumenate, children's choir, youth ministry and summer programs may also be included.

PHYLOSOPHY/GOALS

A brief statement outlining the vision for faith formation program in the parish should be placed at the beginning of the family handbook. As faith formation is life long and ongoing, you may like to include adult education as it corresponds to children and teens.

FAITH FORMATION STAFF & OFFICE HOURS

The family handbook should include a listing of the faith formation staff members with phone numbers, email addresses, office hours and procedures for making appointments, as well as other relevant information.

RIGHT TO AMEND

A statement such as the following is helpful: "We reserve the right to amend this handbook. Those it pertains to will be notified of the changes."

RULES OF CONDUCT

As disciples of Jesus, conduct of all participants in the parish faith formation program must model respect for self and others. Specific rules of conduct are listed here.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parish policy welcoming people with special needs, whether physical, psychological or emotional, is recommended in this section.

SUPERVISION

Children and youth participating in parish catechetical programs, must be supervised by a responsible adult (18 years or older). This is true during activities sponsored by the program as well. Students should not be left in a classroom alone.

Supervision is a mental as well as a physical act; therefore the supervisor must be attentive to those in his/her care as well as being physically present with them. The younger the child, physically, emotionally or mentally, the more supervision is needed. This supervision is also necessary upon children's arrival and departure and their going to and from locations of sessions, lavatories, and other destinations on parish campus.

The catechist handbook specifies the responsibilities of the adult supervisors and details the procedures to be followed in fulfilling these responsibilities.

The family handbook should state what parish policies are for the supervision of children before and after catechetical sessions on the parish campus.





Preparing Parish Handbooks for Catechetical Staff

A HANDBOOK FOR CATECHETICAL STAFF states the mission, goals and policies for a parish catechetical program. It is a reference tool for the catechetical ministers. In what follows, parents/guardians are referred to as parent.

At the end of each handbook, a signature card should be included. When signed and filed with the catechetical leader, this card serves as a written agreement with the catechist that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the policies and procedures specified in the handbook.

It is important to review the items in the handbook periodically, to assure their accuracy. Listed below are some items to include in the handbook as well as other issues of importance to those involved in a parish catechetical program.

ABSENCES

The catechist handbook indicates the manner in which the parent is to report the absences of a child from the catechetical session. Also included is the procedure for alerting the parent when a student is absent and no prior notification has been given by the parent. This is especially important when the student is not regularly brought to the program by the parent.

ACCIDENTS & ILLNESS

The catechist handbook outlines the procedures to be followed in cases of accident or illness during a catechetical session. The following is recommended: If a relatively minor accident/illness occurs to a student while attending the catechetical program, the following steps are taken:

- If bleeding is involved, the procedures outlined under “Bloodborne Pathogens” (Appendix D, p 4D) are followed.
- The catechist reports the accident/illness immediately to the catechetical leader.
- The catechetical leader notifies the parent. If the parent cannot be reached, the catechetical leader follows instructions on the Registration Form.
- The catechetical leader completes an accident report and keeps it on file whether or not there appear to be injuries. A copy of the report is sent to the pastor.

In case of serious accident or illness:

- 911 or the local police/emergency rescue squad is called immediately.
- The catechist reports the accident/illness immediately to the catechetical leader.
- The catechetical leader notifies the parent. If the parent can't be reached, the catechetical leader follows instructions on the Registration Form.
- The catechetical leader notifies the pastor.

ATTENDANCE

The catechist handbook specifies the number of absences (and late arrivals), accepted before the child is required to make up the material missed as well as procedures for such a make-up.

Accurate attendance records must be kept on file until the student graduates.

ADMISSION POLICIES

The catechist handbook states that all student registrations will be handled through the parish faith formation office.

APPLICATION POLICIES

The process of applying for a volunteer ministry position in faith formation is covered in this section.

CALENDAR

At the beginning of each academic year, a calendar is provided to the catechist listing program dates, holidays, possible make-up dates for weather cancellations, and class times. This calendar may be included in the catechist handbook. Class cancellations are made only for significant reasons such as dangerous weather conditions. The manner in which parents, bus drivers, crossing guards, school principals and other concerned persons will be informed of cancellation of sessions is stated in the catechist handbook.

CAMPUS SAFETY

During all catechetical sessions, the catechetical leader, coordinator or hall monitor should be present in the building. There must be more than one adult in the building when classes are held. After all students are in the building, the doors may be secured. Exits may be locked from the outside with a crash bar so that students may exit in an emergency.

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

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

These inspections are not the responsibility of the catechetical leader; however, the safety of both children and staff are of utmost concern. The catechetical leader and ministry staff is advised to do a visual check of the building and premises during the catechetical year. The need for repairs should be noted and passed on to those responsible for maintenance.

In addition, catechists should arrive in their classroom at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start of class and remain in the classroom until the last student is picked up.

CANDLES

Parish policy on lighting candles in the classroom is stated here. If candles are allowed, they are to be used during prayer services and extinguished immediately. It is advised that only catechists be allowed to light the candle and students should remain a safe distance away from the candle.

CATECHIST RECORDS

Catechist application forms, references, criminal history checks, copy of proof of identification, certification records, evaluation forms and attendance records should all be kept in a confidential file for each catechist.

CHILD ABUSE LAWS

Religious Educators have a moral and legal obligation to report any and all suspicions of child abuse. In cases where abuse by a family member is suspected, they may contact the New York State Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.342.3720. If a catechist suspects abuse by clergy, staff or a volunteer, the guidelines in the Diocesan Child and Youth Protection Policy should be followed. Contact the Diocesan Safe Environment Office at 315.470.1421.

COMMUNICATION

Procedures by which parents, catechists and catechetical leader contact each other should be clearly described in the catechist handbook.

Communications to the parents should be in writing, mailed or emailed, unless they can be handed directly to the parent by a staff member. Written communication from the catechist to the parents must **first be approved** by the catechetical leader prior to mailing.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information the catechist receives in regard to the student or their family must remain confidential and is only given in the context of ministering to the child. Telephone numbers, addresses, medical conditions, etc., must be held in strict confidence.

Being a role model and trustworthy adult for children and youth is an important dimension of the catechist's responsibility. This may well result in a young person's seeking advice and counsel from the catechist. The catechist handbook should outline the limits within which such confidentiality should take place, i.e. before any confidences are received, the catechist should tell the young person that he/she will respect the person's confidence except when there is a danger to life, health or safety. The catechist handbook makes clear that a catechist must reveal to the proper authorities any knowledge received which would result in harm to someone, even if a promise of confidentiality has been given.

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The catechist handbook also explains that the assignment of keeping journals carries with it serious risks. If that assignment is given, the catechist must clearly state the same limits on confidentiality as given above. The catechist has the obligation to read all that is written in the journal, even those sections marked confidential or “not to be read.” This should be also clearly stated in giving the assignment.

It is vital that catechists privately share any and all concerns about students with the catechetical leader.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

The catechist handbook makes clear that any printed materials that are copyrighted may not be duplicated without permission from the holder of the copyright. The following exceptions may be made:

- A catechist may duplicate a single copy to use in preparing or in teaching his/her class.
- A catechist may duplicate a short printed item for each of the students in class, but the distribution must be limited to that particular class and time period, and the copies must include the notice of copyright.
- Music for use in class or program liturgies may not be reproduced without securing the permission of the holder of the copyright. The Diocesan Liturgy Office has the copyright policies for the major publishers of liturgical music.
- Audio-visual materials, such as videotapes, DVD’s, some internet materials, are also protected by copyright laws and may not be copied for classroom use.

CUSTODIAL RIGHTS OF PARENTS

The catechetical leader should be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent, as these pertain to the child’s participation in the program as well as release from the program. Both parents usually have the right to information about their child. Written documentation of orders of protection, etc., should be kept on file and are usually valid for six months. Catechists should be kept informed of pertinent information.

DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER

Specific concerns about individual students should be handled in a confidential manner. Anything written

about a student, parent or other catechetical minister should be factual, to the point and without biases. As issues and concerns arise, comments and concerns about students, parents, or other catechetical ministers should be shared with the catechetical leader in a private setting where others may not hear.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The catechist handbook gives basic instructions for maintaining good discipline and group management. It mandates that under no circumstances should physical contact be used as a form of discipline. The Catechist Handbook also stresses that humiliation must never be used as a form of discipline.

The catechist handbook states that the parish has the right to remove a student from a group setting.

DISMISSAL

The parish policy for dismissing students should be outlined in this section. The Registration Form should clearly indicate those who have permission to pick up the student at the conclusion of catechetical sessions. Catechists are made aware of this information.

DISMISSAL OF A CATECHIST

Paid employees and volunteers may be dismissed for just cause. The procedure is the same for both categories. Some reasons for considering the dismissal of a catechist are:

- Consistently demonstrating failure to maintain control in a group or catechetical session.
- Consistent failure to follow diocesan or parish guidelines or curriculum.
- Consistent resistance to the leadership, directives and guidance of the catechetical leader.
- Excessive absence from the program.
- Behavior that fosters divisiveness and a spirit of negativity among the other catechists and staff;
- Physical or mental incompetence in carrying out the supervision and educational responsibilities of a catechist.
- Life style that seriously and obviously violates Catholic morality.
- Alcohol or illegal drugs before or during catechetical sessions.
- Inappropriate social networking.
- Sexual advances to students.

Allegations of child abuse or molestation must result in immediate suspension. Any allegations of child abuse or molestation must be reported to the catechetical leader who will inform the authorities, pastor and Regional Director of Faith Formation and the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator.

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

Regrettably, the catechist may be hurt or angered by dismissal, but the catechetical leader must remember that the formation in faith of the students is a priority. If the catechetical leader finds it necessary to dismiss a catechist, it is pastorally important to help the catechist find aspects of the faith formation program or the parish at large where his/her gifts may be used more effectively.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of the catechetical leader to make certain that all catechists know exactly what to do in an emergency. These instructions are given orally, but are also written in the catechist handbook.

There should be a brief, clear statement of emergency procedures, including fire and bomb threats. Fire and police telephone numbers should be posted in various conspicuous places on the premises. In each area where catechetical sessions are held, a diagram of emergency exit route is on display.

At least once a year a fire drill is held, making use, insofar as possible of the procedures known to the children from their public school drills.

The route to be used in evacuating the children is posted in the room where the session is regularly held and also included in the catechist handbook.

Fire Department personnel should assist the catechetical leader in determining the safest evacuation routes.

Each catechist should be aware of a secondary evacuation route should it be necessary.

Instructions given to catechists include the following: Ensure that all students are out of the room and then lead them to the assigned place of safety, have the last person out of the room close the door, bring the attendance register and use it to verify that all those in your charge are safely out of the building, appoint a staff member whose responsibility is to check the bathrooms and to evacuate any students in those rooms, appoint a staff member to assist each disabled student in the program. This is always an adult other than the catechist.

The catechetical leader's immediate responsibility is to see that the facility has been completely evacuated. It is advised that the catechetical leader keep a record in his/her office of the date on which the drill occurred and the number of seconds/minutes that it took to evacuate the building.

If a bomb threat is received by telephone or in writing, the following procedure is recommended: inform the police department immediately and accept the advice of the police with respect to the action to be taken. A record of each evacuation of the premises is kept on file.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips must be approved by the catechetical leader and/or pastor prior to mentioning to students.

Permission slips with pertinent information must be completed by parent/guardian. No child will be allowed to participate in field trips, retreats, or service projects away from parish campus without this information. Permission slips should be kept on file for 3 – 5 years following the event.

HEALTH & SAFETY

This section of the catechist handbook includes procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, first aid kit location, bodily fluid clean up process, notification of caregiver, policy on candles in the classroom, accident reports, etc.

LOCATION OF SESSIONS

See diocesan guidelines for information about location of catechetical sessions.

Continued on next page

LOYALTY TO CHURCH

The catechetical minister is expected to support, represent the parish and live by the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the expectations of support for directions given by staff and administration.

MEDICAL CONDITION OF STUDENT

The catechist should be informed about any student who has a special medical condition, which may present itself during the catechetical session. Particular concerns would be those that may be encountered during the teaching/learning environment such as: allergies, asthma, auditory or visual impairment, seizures, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, autism spectrum disorder, etc. The catechist should be reminded that this information is confidential and to be used with discretion.

MEDICATION

No medication of any kind (including both prescription and over the counter) should be administered to or taken by the student during the parish catechetical program. If a child must take medication during the catechetical session, parents must provide a written request with directives to the catechetical leader. The student will be dismissed from the catechetical session and be administered the medication by the catechetical leader or coordinator. Catechists must never give students medication from their own supply.

MINISTRY

- **Description**

This section may include a description of each volunteer ministry position, ie: catechist, substitute, aide, hall monitor, attendance officer, bus monitor, etc.

- **Rights**

This section may include simple statements which verify the importance of each position and what the parish is offering, e.g. on-going adult faith formation, days of prayer, etc.

- **Responsibilities**

This section may include statements of expectations for each position, such as time of arrival for sessions, meeting attendance, educational updating etc.

PHILOSOPHY/GOALS

The catechist handbook should include a statement of goals that informs its readers of the vision of faith formation in the parish.

RIGHT TO AMEND

It is recommended that the catechist handbook include a statement declaring that if at any time the parish finds the need to change or update policy, catechist will be informed.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Parish programs must be in conformity with safe environment policies.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Resources available to those working with students who have special needs, as well as procedures to follow should a catechist need assistance with students, may be listed here.

SUPERVISION

Children and youth participating in parish catechetical programs, must be supervised by a responsible adult (18 years or older). This is true during activities sponsored by the program as well. Students should not be left in a classroom alone.

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

This supervision is also necessary upon children's arrival and departure and their going to and from locations of sessions, lavatories, and other destinations on parish campus.

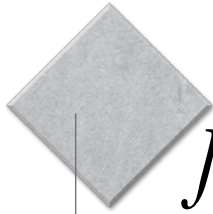
The catechist handbook specifies the responsibilities of the adult supervisors and details the procedures to be followed in fulfilling these responsibilities.

If, in an emergency (e.g. an accident or sudden illness), a catechist must leave a group unsupervised for a few minutes, the catechist must first instruct the students on how to behave in the catechist's absence. The catechist handbook gives guidance on the content of these instructions.

The catechist handbook should state that supervision is not provided before or after the times specified in the handbook.

SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS

The catechetical leader is responsible for supervising all volunteers.



Job Description

ELEMENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A PARISH CATECHETICAL LEADER

SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS of the catechetical leader vary from parish to parish and are subject to the size and scope of the program as well as the number of staff members. In cooperation with the pastor, other staff members, the parish pastoral council and appropriate boards, the catechetical leader is responsible for the overall direction and administration of one or more aspects of the parish catechetical programs. In order to carry out this ministry, it is essential that the catechetical leader be competent in theology, educational methodology and administration. Suggested elements and examples of how they might be implemented include:

1. Statement of Purpose

Reasons for hiring a catechetical leader that flow from the purpose of religious education/faith formation/catechesis in the parish community.

- promoting catechetical ministry as an essential ministry of the parish in collaboration with other ministries, to build up the Body of Christ.

2. Responsibilities

Delineation of the major areas of responsibility of the catechetical leader.

- articulation of a vision for comprehensive parish catechesis based on the major catechetical documents of the Catholic Church
- development, review and evaluation of programs, mission statement, long and short range goals and objectives in curricular areas
- recruitment, screening, supporting and advocating for catechists, and, if necessary, dismissal of a catechist
- supervision and evaluation of catechists and others under one's supervision
- development and monitoring of the catechetical budget
- provision for catechist training and on-going faith formation opportunities for staff according to the diocesan certification process.

3. Relationships within the parish

Delineation of those individuals and groups in the parish who are affected by the work/role of the catechetical leader.

- collaboration and networking with pastor and/or pastoral leader in implementing diocesan and parish policies
- cooperation with the parish education committee, the parish pastoral council, the liturgy committee, the school administration (if applicable) and other groups in support of a unity of ministries within the parish
- awareness of ethnic and cultural sensitivity in all catechetical efforts
- communication with parents and other adults, adolescents and child learners in a manner that creates an environment of welcome and hospitality,
- promotion of a family perspective in all appropriate areas of parish life
- communication with the broader parish community on issues involving faith formation.

4. Relationships outside the parish

Delineation of those groups and offices that have a bearing on the role of the catechetical leader.

- implementation of diocesan policies and guidelines regarding faith formation
- response to requests from regional and diocesan offices for reports, surveys and program evaluation
- promotion of and participation in regional and diocesan programs and in-service opportunities for catechetical personnel
- networking with other parishes, ecumenical groups, public schools and other civic groups
- regularly attends regional catechetical leaders' meetings
- regularly attends conferences, workshops and retreats for ongoing formation.

5. Accountability

A clear statement of those to whom the catechetical leader is accountable for the execution of the above responsibilities (pastor, parish ministerial supervisor, etc.) and those who are accountable to the catechetical leader (catechists, secretary, etc.).

6. Evaluation

A clear statement of the means by which the parish will evaluate the achievement of the above stated responsibilities.

- presentation to the pastor/pastoral leadership/pastoral council by the catechetical leader of a yearly evaluation of the total program
- presentation of a year-end report on the faith formation budget to the finance committee of the parish pastoral council
- presentation to the pastor or ministerial supervisor of an accounting of how one has achieved the goals and fulfilled the responsibilities set forth in the job description
- response of the pastor or ministerial supervisor to all of the above, which is shared with the catechetical leader orally and in writing. A copy of this evaluation is then sent to the Regional Director of Faith Formation.

7. Qualifications

A statement of the personal and professional qualifications that the parish desires in the catechetical leader, including diocesan certification, continuing education and regular attendance at regional meetings and diocesan events.



"And those who have taught many people to do what is right will shine like the stars forever."

Daniel 12:3