SECTION 1

SCOPE OF CATECHESIS WITHIN THE PARISH

G. **Program Evaluation** **Pg. 55**
The Appropriate Use of Testing

SCOPE OF CATECHESIS WITHIN THE PARISH

The scope of catechesis is diverse. Catechesis as a lifelong process is addressed to children, young people and adults. It must consider the needs of all people: the active Catholic, those who are less active, and those who intend to enter the Catholic faith as adults or children.

Diversity in catechesis includes adaptations based on age, culture, abilities, life circumstances and life experience. The language and culture of the people need to be considered. The Springfield Diocese is diverse in its ethnic make-up. Urban and rural, large and small parishes each require different approaches. Likewise, people's work situations vary from agricultural to manufacturing to business and professional. This diversity calls for creativity and adaptability in planning and implementing catechetical programs in the parish.

In this section we will address catechesis for various groups. Particular focus will be placed on:

- ➢ **Adult Formation**
- ➢ **Catechesis of Children and Youth**
- ➢ **Family Catechesis**
- ➢ **Catechesis for People with Special Needs**
- ➢ **Immediate Sacramental Preparation**

Also, contained within this section of the text is information pertaining to the following:

- ➢ **Legal Concerns in the Catechetical Setting**
- ➢ **Program Evaluation**

A. Adult Formation

> *"Adult catechesis concerns persons who have a right and a duty to bring to maturity the seed of faith sown in them by God. It is addressed to individuals who are charged to fulfill social responsibilities of various types and to those who are also prey to all kinds of changes and crises, sometimes profound. The faith of adults, therefore, must be continually enlightened, developed and protected, so that it may acquire that Christian wisdom which gives sense, unity, and hope to the many experiences of personal, social, and spiritual life."* (GDC 173)

Introduction: Principal Form of Catechesis

Parish life is enhanced when adult parishioners are informed and articulate about their faith and the life of the Church. The presence of ongoing adult education is a factor in parishes having effective faith formation programs for their children and young people.

Every major catechetical document of the last twenty years, both from the Vatican and from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, emphasizes that the education of adults is at the center of the Church's educational ministry. Saint Pope John Paul II has clearly stated that adult education is "the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibility and capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form" (CT 43). (See also TJD 430, NCD 32 and 188)

Every parish should have ongoing, systematic catechesis of adults: "It is not only legitimate, but necessary to acknowledge that a full Christian community can exist only when a systematic catechesis of all its members takes place and when an effective and well-developed catechesis of adults is regarded as **the central task** in the catechetical enterprise" (ACCC 25). It must have its own distinctive place within the overall pastoral plan of a parish, since it aims at making adults constructive participants in the life and mission of the community (ACCC 29).

Success in adult education does not necessarily depend on large numbers. Rather it is determined by the effect that it has on the lives of those who do participate. Further, those who are connected to a gospel way of life through effective adult education also affect those around them in their homes, their communities and work places. One well-formed adult Catholic may influence many others simply by his/her lifestyle. Numbers, then, are not the measure of successful adult faith formation.

In fact, adult education seems to be most effective when it is carried out in small groups and when it is practical and helpful for people's real lives. One program does not fit all. A variety of programs, techniques and settings with the expectation of smaller numbers at each will, in the long run, attract more participants and have a larger impact.

The tasks of adult catechesis as outlined in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (175) are:

- To promote formation and development of life in the risen Christ
- To educate toward a correct evaluation of the socio-cultural changes of our societies in the light of faith
- To clarify current religious and moral questions
- To clarify the relationship between temporal actions and ecclesial action
- To develop the rational foundations of the faith
- To encourage adults to assume responsibility for the Church's mission and to be able to give Christian witness in society

Adult catechesis in the parish must take a variety of forms to meet the needs of the people to whom it is directed. Sound principles of adult education, as well as the real needs of the adults must be considered in order for adult catechesis to be effective. This section will state adult education principles, consider the variety of groups to whom the catechesis is addressed, and offer a sampling of formats and learning methods, and resources.

Adult Education Principles

Adults learn best...

1. when they are treated with respect, as self-directing persons

2. when the learning situation is related to their past experience

3. when they have participated in the planning of the learning activity and set their own goals

4. when they are physically comfortable and can socialize with those in the learning group

5. when they are with their peers, freely learning in groups

6. when there are opportunities for a variety of learning activities

7. in a problem-centered situation, when a question needs resolving or a task needs doing

8. when they can see progress, immediate results, and some rewards for the time they put into learning

9. when they evaluate themselves

These principles are more fully developed in James DeBoy's book, *Getting Started In Adult Religious Education*.

Examples of Various Types of Programming and Learning Models

- Small faith sharing groups
- Parenting programs/marriage enrichment
- Ministerial training and enrichment
- Video/discussion programs
- Speaker/lecture programs combined with discussion
- Pot-luck supper with a speaker
- Panel discussions or small forums on particular issues
- Coffee klatches and prayer breakfasts
- Parish retreats
- Independent study/learning

The possibilities are endless. **Be creative**.

Types of Resources

A variety of resources can be used. Consider contacting parishes in your area or the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation to borrow materials. Here are some possibilities:

- Video programs
- Faith sharing programs
- Bible study programs (multimedia)
- Reflections for groups based on the Sunday readings
- Structured programs of learning
- Speakers

The Parish Library

In addition to planned programs, it would be beneficial to have a small parish library of books, magazines, and on-line media resources that could be a helpful means of reaching those adults who wish to do some independent learning.

The library needs to be easily accessible to use at convenient times, and placed in a well-trafficked area. One person who coordinates the overall use, maintenance and updating of the collection is essential for a successful library.

Implementing Adult Education in the Parish

Adult education programs are most successful when planned by a team of people. The team should consist of adults representing all ages, genders, lifestyles and segments of the parish. The team works in conjunction with the pastor and may report to the Pastoral Planning Council. Others can be recruited as needed to work on specific tasks, e.g. publicity or hospitality.

A planning process for the team is outlined below.

Step1: Determine the needs of the parish.

Identify what adult education is already taking place e.g., parent meetings for sacramental preparation, RCIA, Bible study groups, etc. Who are the adults that are not being reached by any of these programs?
Survey the parish to determine needs and interests by interviewing various parish groups or making a questionnaire available at weekend Masses. A sample is provided at the end of this section. Adapt it to your circumstances. Be creative in designing the survey. Take into account that adult faith formation can include Christian parenting, dealing with aging parents, business and medical ethics, scripture study, faith sharing, Catholic beliefs and teachings, and much more!

Step 2: Set goals.

Goals are based on the expressed needs of the parishioners and of the parish as a whole. Goals are statements of what we want to accomplish. Both short and long range goals give direction to the planning process.

Step 3: Research needs and plan programs that will fulfill them.

Be creative. Develop a variety of programs to meet diverse needs and lifestyles. Include a variety of time frames, i.e. day and evening programs, one "shot"-one hour programs or a miniseries. Coffee hours that include a video or directed discussion are attractive to many people.

Designing effective adult faith formation programs requires planning, creativity and flexibility. Consider adult education principles, the people to whom it is addressed and various types of programs and resources. The planning team also needs to consider the real lives of people when scheduling. Use single session programs, mini-series, as well as longer term programs particularly for those who wish to build small faith sharing groups.

Vary the times. Have programs on different days of the week, as well as some morning and some evening sessions. Many parishes find it helpful to offer the same program twice, either on different nights or a morning and an evening session to accommodate people's schedules.

Step 4: Publicize the programs.

Bulletin notices, parish newsletters, Mass announcements, parish and diocesan websites are a good starting point, but not enough. Consider brochures with a professional appearance can be a more effective approach. They may be mailed or inserted in the parish bulletin. Take advantage of the local media, i.e. newspapers and radio announcements, or social media outlets such as My Parish App. Extend your publicity to neighboring parishes. Personal contact with individuals and groups is most effective. The more creative you are in your approach in promoting your program, the greater the response.

Step 5: Implement the program with style!

Be organized, yet flexible. Make prayer and hospitality a part of every program. Arrange your space in a way that is comfortable and conducive to learning for adults.

Step 6: Evaluate.

Ask the participants for input. Did the program meet their expectations?

Were their goals accomplished? What was positive? What could have been done differently? The ultimate question is: How did the program help the participants to live out the gospel in their daily lives?

Although the above planning guide is aimed at single parishes, it may be effective for two or more parishes to combine either single programs or all programs. This is certainly appropriate when parishes are already linked in other ways. In these instances, it is essential that the planning team include members from all participating parishes. Further, parishes can coordinate with others by making their parishioners aware of pertinent programs in other parishes and even within the community.

There may be certain situations when it is also appropriate to plan programs ecumenically. Common goals and needs, as well as responding to events in a particular community, would determine the kinds of programs. Social concerns and Christian parenting are examples of topics for this kind of collaboration.

Good adult education requires teamwork, planning, flexibility and creativity. The parish needs to recognize that it exists in a community. Sometimes events of the local or broader world community call for a response from adult Catholics. Good adult education will help Catholics, not only learn how to be better Catholics, but also how to translate their faith into action in the social, political and economic areas of their lives.

Parish Adult Education and Interests Survey

This survey is to gather information from our adult parishioners as to their needs and desires to live in, increase understanding, and to share the Catholic Faith. Please fill out this survey to help our Parish Adult Education Team plan programs that meet your specific needs and interests. Thank you.

1. Submitter's Information. (Please check one in each row that applies to you.)

Sex: _____ Female _____ Male

Age: _____16-20 _____21-35 _____36-50 _____ over 50

Marital Status: ___ Single ___Married ___ Separated ___ Divorced ___Widowed___

2. What topics of the Catholic Faith would you be interested in learning more about? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Sacraments
- ☐ Liturgy
- ☐ Spirituality
- ☐ Prayer
- ☐ Scripture (Bible) Study

- ☐ Catholic Morality & Ethics (conscience formation, medical ethics including Pro-Life issues, business ethics)
- ☐ Social Outreach/Justice
- ☐ Defending the Faith (Apologetics)

- ☐ Evangelization
- ☐ Family Life (marriage, parenting, aging, bereavement, addiction, family communications)
- ☐ Vocations

Other issues or topics you might be interested in? _____

3. When is it best for you to participate? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Daytime
- ☐ Evening

- ☐ Weekdays
- ☐ Weekends

4. What is the best way to communicate these learning opportunities with you?

- ☐ Parish Bulletin
- ☐ Parish Website
- ☐ Parish Social Media

- ☐ E-Mail
- ☐ Robo-call (where available)
- ☐ US Mail

- ☐ Other

  _____

5. What has kept you from participating in previous Parish Adult Faith Formation programs?

- ☐ I was not aware of any opportunities
- ☐ Work/ family commitments take up my time
- ☐ I am in need of childcare
- ☐ Too expensive

- ☐ I am in need of transportation
- ☐ Accessibility issues
- ☐ I study on my own
- ☐ I am not interested in the topics offered

- ☐ Other:_____

6. I would be interested in helping with an adult faith formation Program. _____Yes _____No

Final Comments: What other suggestions can you offer to help the Adult faith formation Team plan interesting and quality programs?

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for answering this questionnaire. If you would like to be included on our mailing list, please write your name and address below.

Name: _____ Preferred Phone number: _____

Do you text? _____ Yes _____ No

E-Mail Address_____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

B. Catechesis of Children and Youth

Catechesis is understood as the "totality of the church's efforts to make disciples" (CCC 4) is more than teaching about our faith. It is both a ministerial and pastoral activity of the church. Through the ministry of catechesis children and youth should experience the love of God. They need to feel welcomed, appreciated and loved. The catechetical program is the place in which children and youth most come in contact with the church. In the catechetical setting children and youth interact with each other and the adults of the community on an interpersonal level. A positive experience will lay the foundation for them to grow in knowledge and love of Christ and his Church.

Introduction: Systematic and Formal

Catechesis takes place within the overall pastoral activity of the Church. It is not isolated from other aspects of parish life. Through catechesis, children and youth are prepared to participate more fully in the communal, liturgical and apostolic life of the Church. Inviting children and youth to actively participate in social and recreational activities helps them become more a part of the community. Liturgies with children, whether in the context of the catechetical program or Sunday worship, can help them further develop an appreciation of the liturgy. The catechetical program should provide children and youth with opportunities to participate in service within the parish as well as the broader community. It need not create new avenues of service, but rather tie in with those already in place. While catechesis prepares children and youth for the entire pastoral mission of the Church, those activities, in turn, enrich their experience and knowledge of God and the Church.

Quality catechesis for young people, pre-school through high school, requires an overall plan and structure. The needs of each age level differ in terms of curriculum, resources and even scheduling based on student ability and maturity. Also consideration needs to be given to children and youth with special needs to assure integration into the program. A well-organized and systematic program brings unity, cohesiveness and a sense of purpose to the catechetical endeavor. This requires a curriculum that encompasses the whole program.

What do we mean by curriculum? In its strictest sense, it refers simply to the content to be learned, i.e. the course of study to be followed in each class as well as the entire course of study from pre-school through high school. For the purpose of catechesis, the curriculum includes other activities which support that course of study e.g., retreats, service projects, social and community building activities, and prayer and liturgical experiences. The four major and necessary dimensions of any catechetical curriculum are **word** (message), **worship**,

service and **community**. Each of these components must be integrated into the entire planning process in order for catechesis to be both formational and educational.

Certain tools and structures need to be put in place to support this curriculum and integrate catechesis with liturgy, service and community activities. Key "tools" for religious educators are textbooks and other supplementary resources such as audio-visuals, workbooks, supplies of paper, pencils, etc. The structures include meeting space, schedules, coordination with liturgical and other activities of the parish, and models such as summer bible schools. The use of texts, resources and structures will be addressed in this section. Personnel resources are addressed in a separate section.

Resources

Texts

The primary resource used in catechesis is the text. The text is not the program itself. It is only a tool to assist the students and the catechists in the learning process. However, the text is a necessary tool for each class. It provides a systematic foundation for the building of the curriculum.

What to look for in a text

There are a number of texts available for use in faith formation programs. How do the parish catechetical leaders determine which to choose? First, the text must be USCCB approved to be in accord with Diocesan policy. The following characteristics and qualities are key considerations in choosing or evaluating a text:

The Series as a Whole...
- Gradually develops the core teachings of the Church.
- Presents the teachings of the church in proportion to their importance within the total body of teachings.
- Presents the teaching of the church in a logical manner appropriate to the age level and experience of the students.
- Develops all the catechetical dimensions of word, worship service and community.
- Provides additional resources for parent/family involvement.

The Individual Text...
- Presents Jesus Christ as the central mystery of our faith.
- Fosters a sense of community through shared activities, discussion and opportunities for celebration and social interaction.
- Relates the message of faith to the church community.

- Offers opportunities to experience a variety of prayer forms.
- Encourages students to reflect on and participate in service appropriate for their age level.
- Presents a broad cultural representation; e.g. various races and cultures, both genders and various family groupings.
- Is clear and easy to follow.
- Provides a balance between information to be read and learning activities to be experienced.
- Have visual appeal and a variety of graphics.

The Catechists' Manual...
- Provides adequate background material for the catechist to understand doctrinal concepts in each lesson.
- Provides clear, easy-to-follow lesson plans.
- Suggests a variety of learning activities to help students integrate the message into their lives.
- Suggests additional resources, such as stories and audio visuals to supplement the lessons.

The above suggestions are adapted from *How To Choose Catechetical Textbooks: Process and Criteria* published by The National Conference of Catechetical Leadership, 1996.

Supplementary Resources

Supplementary resources enhance catechesis in many ways. They should never be considered luxuries, but rather essentials for learning to take place. First, they provide a variety of learning methods and reinforcement of concepts. Second, they involve the students in such a way as to counteract boredom and discipline problems. Third, those that are meant to be taken home help to extend the limited classroom time into the home. Supplementary resources can be categorized under four types: those specifically connected to the text being used; additional audio-visuals; print resources; and those supplies used in the learning process, such as pencils, papers, craft materials, etc.

Resources corresponding with texts typically include items such as activity booklets; take home materials, black line masters and parent/family resources. Some publishers also make available unit tests, posters, music and/or videos to correspond with specific lessons. Videos that describe the program for catechists and parents/guardians are also common. While many of these materials are provided for elementary programs, junior high and high school programs are very limited in what they offer for supplementary materials. Mentor and/or sponsor materials are often provided, particularly for Confirmation programs.

It is important that resources corresponding with text be made available to catechists and used to the fullest extent possible. These resources help to reinforce a lesson or concept, enable learners to remember it better, and integrate it into their lives. It is crucial that any family/parent materials be used as indicated by the program. These help to bolster communication between the catechist/coordinator and the parents/guardians, as well as between the parents/guardians and their children. Further, they often serve as a form of adult education for the parents/guardians.

Another resource that nearly all publishers provide is a scope and sequence chart, which outlines the entire curriculum of the program. This provides catechetical leaders and catechists with a visual sense of the whole picture. Catechists are able to see how their content and topic fits into and relates to the rest of the program. It is essential that catechists be aware of this so that they are comfortable with focusing on their own topic and not tempted to spend time teaching that which is being addressed at another grade level.

Note: Textbooks and most workbooks are meant to be consumable, especially at the elementary level. This means that students should be allowed to write in them and take them home at appropriate times. Each student should have his/her own textbook to keep. Further, it is inappropriate and may be illegal to buy one workbook and copy the pages for the students, except where copying is specifically allowed by the publisher. In the long run it is often less expensive to buy the workbooks, rather than copy them. In light of the fact that purchasing textbooks for students to keep is expensive, it is appropriate to charge a minimal registration fee to cover the cost of the books and materials. The parish should provide books and materials for those who cannot afford them.

The most frequently used **audio-visual resources** are DVD's and music. They can be used for a variety of purposes: to provide additional information or to provide the information in a different form; to stimulate discussion; to provide an experience that helps to relate the lesson to the students' life experience; or to enhance prayer (especially the music).

Here are a few suggestions to maximize the effectiveness of audio-visual resources.
- Choose AV's that relate to the lesson.
- Choose age appropriate AV's.
- Decide where to use them in the lesson.
- Make use of guides that are often provided with them.

- Make connections between the AV and the lesson.
- Never use them just to fill time.
- Avoid overusing or using them too frequently.

It is worthwhile to purchase some of the more frequently used resources for the parish making them easily accessible to the catechists. Having these readily available also enhances the learning environment.

Other **print resources** can also be used to complement a lesson. Prayer books, story books and activity books are helpful to have on hand for catechists. Many teachers' manuals suggest those that might correspond with the text.

There are certain **supplies** that are considered staples and necessary for effective catechesis. Paper and pencils should be readily available for all catechetical sessions. If possible, there should be one central place where catechists have access to items such as:
- Bibles
- construction paper
- markers, crayons and chalk
- poster paper
- scissors, glue and/or paste
- used magazines and newspapers
- fabric, felt, ice cream sticks and other craft materials

Other items to have on hand are CD players, DVD players, and televisions. In smaller programs, one of each may be enough. However, in larger programs, more may be needed so catechists do not have to wait to use them.

Web sites are common resources for catechists. Access to computers with these capabilities, are a valuable asset to a parish catechetical program.

It is the responsibility of the parish to provide these resources. However, parishes that do not have the financial resources to purchase all of them can take advantage of creative approaches to acquire them without cost. Parish organizations may be able to fund a particular item. Local businesses may also be asked occasionally to donate supplies. Finally, parents and other parishioners are often very willing to donate a few items.

Used wisely, supplementary resources can make a big difference in the effectiveness of catechetical programs. They help to bring life to the catechetical process. Children and young people are more likely to feel a sense of excitement and enjoyment while learning their faith. Catechists can take advantage of the creative teaching activities suggested in their manuals. Parents/guardians will

also benefit from them, particularly those designed for their needs. Investment in supplementary resources pays off with a vibrant catechetical program.

Structuring for Effective Catechesis

Catechesis is most effective when it is well planned, includes several components, and is done in the spirit of evangelization. A welcoming atmosphere leads to a sense of belonging and incorporation into the community. Catechesis carried out in the context of evangelization prompts us to ask the questions: What are the most effective ways to draw people into the mystery of Christ? How do we create a welcoming atmosphere?   What structures and settings will best support this evangelizing catechesis?

Considerable planning and effort need to go into structuring catechetical programs that form our children and youth in faith. Catechesis is most effective when a variety of ways are provided to engage them in the formation process. The primary component of any catechetical program is the instructional period. However, our most impressive and meaningful learning experiences often occur in other settings, such as liturgies, retreat or prayer times, service projects, family activities and other supportive programs. Vacation bible schools and special seasonal programs are examples of supportive programs that enhance faith formation. Catechetical structures which go beyond the instructional setting are more likely to succeed. It is essential when planning catechetical programs that all these components be included in the overall structure.

Given that parents/guardians are the primary catechists, it is essential that opportunities be built into the program to help them become involved in their children's faith formation. Parents/guardians are both recipients of catechesis and catechists in their own right. Parent/guardian programs form another important component of the overall structure.

This section offers guidelines and practical suggestions for:

> ➢   Scheduling
> ➢   Supportive Programs and Activities
> ➢   Environment
> ➢   Alternate Models
> ➢   Home Study Option

Scheduling

When scheduling catechetical programs, all components must be built into the schedule so that parents/guardians, children and youth, and the entire parish understand that each part is essential to the entire catechetical process. Most published programs, particularly on the elementary level, offer 20-30 one-hour lessons over the course of a year, inclusive of special lessons for liturgical seasons and saints as well as review lessons. This by itself is not enough.

The Office of Faith Formation recommends that the parish offer a minimum 25-30 hours of time focusing on the instructional component per year. Additional opportunities need to be provided to help children and youth develop a faith relationship with Christ in the context of the church community. Ways to do this are outlined in the next section. This invites a challenge to re-think faith formation. Faith is "caught" as well as taught. Therefore, those opportunities that provide the context in which faith can be caught, such as retreats, liturgies, family activities, and service projects are not additions to the catechetical calendar. They are as much a part of the calendar as the instructional components.

Scheduling of catechetical programs is challenging and must be creative. Many factors need to be considered for effective catechesis. Schedules must be family friendly. Consideration should be given to how they will accommodate families in relationship to other parish and community events. This may mean that parish leadership needs to look beyond their own schedules and convenience in deciding when classes and other catechetical activities will take place.

There is no one way of scheduling programs that is right for all parishes. What works in one parish may not work in another. The busy lives of parishioners make creativity a necessity. Include catechist meetings, training sessions and

opportunities for interesting activities.

Here are some helpful criteria for scheduling...

Do long range planning. Create a yearly calendar that includes <u>all</u> components of the catechetical program, such as liturgical experiences, service projects, retreats, etc. Long range planning gives a sense of importance and priority to catechesis, as well as helps the parish and families to avoid conflicts in other schedules and frequent schedule changes.

Communicate your schedule. Parents/guardians, catechists, youth, parish secretary and other parish organizations including your Pastoral Planning Council should have a copy of the schedule for an entire year. Avoid surprises e.g., telling parents/guardians one week ahead of time that all third graders are to attend the 10 o'clock Mass next Sunday will create stress and anxiety. In communicating the schedule, particularly with parents/guardians and youth, <u>be explicit in terms of expectations</u>, and be prepared to send reminders.

Know your families. What are their lifestyles? Are there any cultural or ethnic traditions that may affect their own schedules?

Be particularly sensitive to the lives of adolescents. Their life situation is very different from that of elementary children. "The most successful catechesis is that which is given in the context of the wider pastoral care of young people, especially when it addresses the problems affecting their lives" (GDC 184). If possible, sessions should be held separately from those of the children. "The varied learning needs, expanding freedom, and social/cultural situations of adolescents suggest that catechetical planners offer a variety of learning formats, schedules and techniques"(CAC p.9). Flexibility and creative scheduling are especially important for them. Consider scheduling options, such as biweekly, full day, monthly, weekend and weeklong sessions.

Know your community. When are school-related activities most likely to be scheduled, such as music, sports, theater and open houses? What other events occur on a regular basis in the community? Get a copy of the school calendar before planning for the coming year. Try to work with the school and sporting schedules, not against them. This will also help to bolster regular attendance.

Know your parish. What are the other organizations and committees in your parish? What are their schedules? What major events, liturgical or social, take place in your parish? When are parish facilities reserved for special groups? Work with other groups in the parish in order to avoid conflicting schedules. A master calendar for recording all parish events is a good way to accomplish this. It must be accessible and kept current. It is especially important to consider the liturgical calendar of the parish so that the faith formation calendar supports it,

rather than conflicts with it. The parish faith formation calendar needs to be integrated into the life of the parish.

Know your Diocese and Region. Often times there are programs in your region of the diocese that will benefit your children or catechists. In order to take full advantage of these opportunities, schedule them right into your yearly calendar. It is recommended that you communicate with the Diocese about all activities going on in your parish. Check the Diocesan Parish Packet weekly for Diocesan events.

Be flexible. While making every effort to fulfill the schedule, be willing to make adaptations when necessary for the common good. For instance, if some unforeseen event arises in the community or parish after the schedule has been published causing a conflict, try to revise the schedule accordingly, particularly if it would affect a large number of people involved in your program. Communicate any changes immediately. Also, it is unrealistic to expect all children and youth to participate in every event scheduled for them. Where possible, provide alternative ways to make-up important sessions that are missed. Be particularly sensitive to situations involving illness, separated households or family crisis.

Be creative. Finding creative and alternative ways of scheduling may help to alleviate some of the difficulties in meeting the above need. No schedule will satisfy all the parties involved. There may be some very legitimate reasons that some children and youth cannot fully participate in the program as scheduled. Provide some options from which participants can choose. For example, some parishes could offer a choice of weekend or after school sessions for children. Older youth may appreciate a choice of a Sunday evening or Monday evening session. Another option is to work with neighboring parishes in an exchange program. In this way, if a student cannot participate in his/her home parish program, he/she would be welcome in another's program. Be sure that you have received permission from their Pastor and Catechetical Leader. Flexible and creative solutions can be found for meeting most scheduling needs. Another consideration in scheduling is the volunteers. Creative and flexible scheduling provides a greater range of opportunities for catechetical volunteers, as well as the families involved. It is often necessary to schedule a program based on the availability of the volunteers.

Scheduling can be a very complex task. However, good planning with attention to people's needs gets a more positive response from participants. Moreover, it will save time in the long run. Planning and scheduling that takes place in the spring and summer months will result in a program that runs more smoothly during the year. Finally, the effort that is put into good scheduling gives a sense of importance and seriousness to the catechetical endeavor.

SCHEDULE PLANNING CHECKLIST

Have you...

♦ Involved

☐ Pastor
☐ Catechists
☐ The parish staff

♦ Coordinated with other schedules of

☐ Your families
☐ Your community
☐ Your parish
☐ Your diocese and region

♦ Provided for contact hours

☐ At least 25-30 hours of the formal instructional component
☐ Additional hours of other components including Mass

♦ Included all components and supportive programs

☐ Retreat/prayer opportunities
☐ Liturgical opportunities
☐ Service components
☐ Family/parent/guardian activities
☐ Seasonal activities
☐ Other supportive programs
☐ Catechist training/meetings

Supportive Programs and Activities

To be effective, the formation of children in their faith needs to extend beyond the instructional component. New and different ways to touch the lives of the children and their families must be explored. Creativity is essential. Opportunities which provide for community building, liturgical and other prayer experiences, service and alternative learning experiences assist children in integrating their faith into their lives as well as building a more committed and meaningful relationship with God and the worshipping community.

Suggestions for Supportive Programs and Activities:

Retreat/Prayer Opportunities - Children of all ages can benefit from days/afternoons/evenings of reflection. Diocesan approved overnight retreats may be provided for older children. These help children to grow in their prayer life and their relationship with God. They also provide time for longer periods of sharing and in-depth experiences with the children.

Liturgies - Help children and youth to understand and make connections to liturgy by actively involving them in liturgies and providing liturgical services aimed at their age level. Also, taking children to liturgical functions provides teachable moments.

There are a variety of practical ways to help children understand and make connections to the liturgy.

Involve them in special liturgies as readers, ushers/greeters, choir members, altar servers and banner makers. Those liturgical functions are to be assigned according to their giftedness and with appropriate training. Keep in mind that these are liturgical ministries not to be done for show.

Take them to special liturgies and devotional services; e.g., Baptisms, Confirmations, Ordinations, Weddings, the Easter Triduum, parish celebrations of Anointing of the Sick, Stations of the Cross, public recitation of the rosary, etc. They are teachable moments. Preparation and follow up catechesis will help them to integrate these experiences.

Provide special Masses aimed at their age level. Some could be done apart from Sunday liturgies to celebrate special events; e.g., the opening of the school year or graduations. Others could be liturgies with children on occasional Sundays.

Celebrate a Teaching Mass separate from the regular parish Masses in

which the parts of the Mass are explained.

Consider providing occasional Children's Liturgy of the Word at one Sunday Mass. Before the proclamation of the Word begins, the children are dismissed with their ministers to another place where they celebrate their own liturgy of the Word including a homily and intercessions. "Then, before the Eucharistic liturgy begins, the children are led to the place where the adults have meanwhile been celebrating their own liturgy of the Word" (DMC 17). It is important that any lay ministers of children's liturgy of the Word be appropriately trained to keep this a liturgical experience as opposed to a classroom one. It would be well worth the parish's efforts to invest in this as well as train willing personnel.

When planning liturgies with children or Liturgy of the Word with children, refer to the *Children's Liturgy of the Word.*

Penance Services – With approval of your pastor, offer penance services for children and youth on an annual or biennial basis. These are most effective when planned for age grouping such as elementary, junior high, and high school.

Intergenerational Programs - Any programs in which families or other intergenerational groups interact for formational, service or social purposes.

Family Retreats - These could be provided in a day or weekend format either on or off parish premises. This is a wonderful opportunity for families to learn to pray and share their faith together.

Family Activities - These can be social/educational events built around a theme or a project, such as making advent wreaths together. Children and parents may be separated for part of the program, but come together for specific activities or prayer. Have families visit nursing homes, bringing gifts during Advent or Christmas. Senior citizens make wonderful prayer partners with children. Involve older children or adults working with younger children on specific projects or service activities or in mentoring.

Service Projects - Service projects should be integrated into the program at all age levels as they flow from the curriculum. Although some service projects may be designed specifically for the children or youth, it is advisable at times to connect with those already in place in the parish. Service projects may be carried out by families and other intergenerational groupings. This will help children to understand service as integral to the

Christian life rather than as special projects.

Vacation Activities - Vacation Bible School or other programs provide opportunities to combine learning, recreation, crafts and other activities in a less structured and more relaxed atmosphere from the instructional mode. Consider the many published programs available, inter-parish programs or even an ecumenical approach. These also create opportunities for volunteers to serve at a time other than the school year or to use their talents in non-instructional ways.

These are just some possible ways to supplement and support the instructional components of your programs. Special liturgical seasons are opportunities for many of these. Sample resources are available at the Office of Faith formation to assist in planning these and other programs. Be creative! The Office of Faith Formation or area Catechetical Leaders can help develop and assist with designing supplemental programs.

Environment

The setting for catechesis affects its outcomes. A setting that is physically comfortable, aesthetically appealing and allows for flexibility of arrangement of furniture creates an environment that is most conducive to learning. It is important that meeting spaces have proper lighting, comfortable seating and temperature, and are safe. Keeping in mind that catechesis needs to be evangelizing, the setting in which it takes place must present a sense of caring and welcome. A crowded, poorly lit or cold room does not create a welcoming atmosphere. A place that can be decorated appropriately with posters and children's artwork contributes to an evangelizing atmosphere. Places such as stairwells or hallways are inappropriate.

Since catechesis concerns itself with forming people in their faith, not just information, meeting spaces should be such as to avoid giving the impression that this is just another subject to learn. Places that allow for movement, interaction and prayer experiences lend themselves to formational catechesis. Preferred settings are those where children can sit in a circle, work at tables or even sit on a carpeted floor at times of prayer. It is ideal to have a special place in each meeting space for prayer which can be arranged with a Bible, battery operated candle, crucifix and other symbols that might be used.

Worship space is not an appropriate setting for instruction. Although it is certainly appropriate to use the worship space for liturgies and prayer services, they do not lend themselves to good catechetical methodology. The fact that the church is the place of worship and needs to be respected as such limits its use for good catechesis. Finding the right setting for catechetical activities can often

present a challenge for parishes. Be creative. If there are not appropriate facilities on the parish premises, other possibilities exist, such using other facilities in the community.

Scheduling may need to be adapted according to availability of spaces. For instance, a parish may have to spread its catechetical programs over a period of days in order to avoid excessively large groupings. It may be appropriate to bring large groups together.

In parishes where there is a Catholic school, it is important that the school be perceived by all as parish property and therefore available for use in the faith formation program. Catechists need to be given some freedom in arranging furniture appropriately, and using the chalkboard and audio-visual equipment. On the other hand, the catechists and others involved must be sensitive to the fact that the building is used primarily as a school. Furniture and all items used should be appropriately re-set after catechetical activities.

Children in the parish faith formation programs should be treated as being just as important as those in the Catholic schools. It is inappropriate to compromise their environment or resources in favor of Catholic school children. Open communication between school and catechetical personnel is the key to avoiding conflicts.

Alternate Models

Alternate models are always developing and emerging which differ from the traditional instructional mode based on age grouping. These focus on a developing curriculum. Some examples are: intergenerational programs; lectionary based programs; in-home programs in which parents/guardians, under the supervision of a coordinator or director of religious education, teach their children at home. Other models can be found. Make sure that they are USCCB approved before implementing them in your program.

While all of these models have some merit, they are often lacking some essential component of effective catechesis or require a great amount of organization and expertise to implement effectively. On the other hand, these models are sometimes appropriate for some segments of your parish. The Office of Faith Formation requests that parishes work with their consultants when considering new models or any major changes to their programs.

Home Study Option

Home Study Option refers to faith formation that takes place in individual families apart from the formal catechetical program. Parents/ guardians take the

responsibility of teaching their children at home. While recognizing the rights and duties of parents/guardians to educate their children in the faith according to the teaching handed on by the Church (cf. Can. 226), parishes are to discourage this model as the exclusive one for a child. Home study lacks the communal aspect of catechesis called for in catechetical documents. The *General Directory for Catechesis* (158) points out that for catechesis to be effective, the community is to be the concrete reference point and focus for one's faith journey. Home study often deprives the child of interaction with other children in the parish and of opportunities to take part in prayer experiences designed for their age.

However, for certain family and individual reasons, some parents/guardians do choose home study for their children. Oftentimes, they also home school their children for their academic formation. Those who do home school their children and/or use the home study option for their faith formation are to abide by the Diocesan Policy Relative to Home Study Option for Catechesis. (See *Guidelines* section 4F.) This is not to be considered a long-term situation, but a temporary one, giving permission for the home study option for one year at a time.

Planning for and implementing effective catechesis for children and youth require commitment, creativity, cooperation and courage on the part of the parish staff. A well-trained catechetical leader provides the vision, structure and coordination of catechesis in the parish. Catechists are key persons in the process, the ones who work directly with the children and youth. They need training and ongoing support. Finally, parents/guardians play a crucial role in the formation of their children. It is important that the parish staff not only cooperates and work with them, but that they offer parents/guardians the support and catechesis that they need to fulfill their role as the primary educators of their children.

The section on catechetical leadership and personnel further outlines the various roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the catechetical enterprise.

C. Family Catechesis

"The Christian family has a unique identity and mission as the "domestic church", a household of faith, hope, and love. As a believing community, the family lives in relationship with God and is guided by Christian values. As an evangelizing community, the family witnesses to the Good News in its relationships with others.

Fulfillment of the mission of the family calls for responsibilities on the part of both the family and the parish. The family has a responsibility to foster catechetical and spiritual development of its members so that it can accomplish its mission.   The parish has a responsibility to provide opportunities and resources for this catechetical and spiritual development. We need to be sensitive to the changing family and be willing to meet them where they are at.

Family involvement in catechesis is referenced in this document in several places:

➢ Adult Formation
➢ Supplementary Resources
➢ Structuring for Effective Catechesis
➢ Scheduling
➢ Supportive Programs and Activities
➢ Home Study Options
➢ Immediate Sacramental preparation:
    Confirmation
    Reconciliation
    First Eucharist

Family involvement in immediate sacramental preparation is integral to these programs, particularly in the form of parent sessions and family activities.

Everybody is part of a family. Attending to the catechetical needs of families goes beyond the traditional understanding of family as parents/guardians and children. It includes single parent/guardian and blended families.

Many adults live in households without children, but are still connected to families. They include groups such as single adults, "empty nesters", the elderly, grandparents, widows and widowers, the divorced and separated. Each of these groups has specific catechetical and spiritual needs in context of their families.

It is important to collaborate with other parish ministries when addressing

family catechesis, such as family life commissions, adult education committees, and RCIA teams. Pastoral ministers are often the people who are connected with families in time of transitions and/or crises. Often they are in a unique position to identify needs of families.

D. Catechesis for People with Special Needs

The parish has the same responsibility to provide for the faith formation of those with special needs as for all its members. All persons regardless of age or ability have a right to be integrated into the Church and to be accepted as contributing members. The value, worth and dignity of those with special needs are to be recognized. They are invited to full participation in faith formation and sacramental preparation.

For people with special needs, "education in the faith, which involves the family above all else, calls for personalized and adequate programs. It is necessary that the community be aware of such catechesis and be involved in it. Demands of this catechesis require a special competence from catechists and render their service all the more deserving." (GDC 189).

Inclusion of people with special needs in the program benefits all involved. As participating members of the community, they enrich the parish. The following ideas are offered to help parishes with this inclusion process:

- Inquire of the individual what adaptations or supports would be helpful.

- Discuss with parents/guardians or caregivers the person's abilities, communication skills, learning style, mobility, behavioral problems, medical information, etc. This will help to determine what type of special supports will be needed.

- Prepare the catechetical space so that it is accessible and lends itself to necessary adaptation.

- Solicit the help of the individual(s) in setting up the space in a way that would be comfortable for all.

- Request the parent's permission to contact a student's public or private school teacher to help plan classroom strategies.

- Maintain communication between the DRE, catechist, parents or caregivers, aides, and volunteers to insure that all involved share responsibility.

- Provide training for the catechist or aide who will support the special needs student.

- Plan to have the necessary supports available before the student is welcomed into the class.

- Assist the catechist to prepare other students to accept the special needs student as one of their own and to appreciate the unique gifts he or she brings to the group. This is a valuable opportunity for young people to learn to respect people with disabilities.

The Bureau For Exceptional Children and Adults of the Diocese of Springfield (Jericho) offer assistance to parishes in creating the inclusion process. Other catechetical leaders who have worked with people with disabilities may also provide valuable insight.

E. Immediate Sacramental Preparation

This section addresses those segments of catechesis that are designed for immediate preparation for the sacraments that fall under the auspices of the Office of Faith Formation: First Penance; First Eucharist; and Confirmation. Immediate sacramental preparation provides introductory catechesis on the meaning of the sacraments, signs, symbols, rituals, and graces conferred. It also spiritually prepares one to celebrate the sacrament with faith and the commitment that the sacrament calls forth.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and its adaptation for children are addressed in a separate document included with this Handbook (Section 3).

While it is not the purpose of this document to address immediate preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Holy Orders or Anointing of the Sick, there are times within the parish catechetical mission when extensive catechesis on these sacraments is appropriate. Criteria and information on infant Baptism, marriage and Anointing of the Sick preparation is available at the parish level. Assistance with catechesis for the Sacrament of Holy Orders is available from the Diocesan Office of Vocations. Sacramental catechesis should be integrated into the parish faith formation curriculum at all levels. It is part of the curriculum in most series of catechetical texts.

General Principles for Sacramental Preparation

The following principles are essential to sacramental preparation. Although suggestions will be offered for each of the sacraments, there are central elements of sacramental preparation and celebration that apply to all.

The parish is responsible for providing preparation for the sacraments.
Preparation and celebration of the sacraments should take place in the parish in which the candidate worships, except when the celebration of Confirmation is combined at the request of the Bishop. While Catholic schools' curriculum may teach the content of the sacrament, the spiritual, communal and liturgical formation is the concern of the parish. Guidelines for children in Catholic schools can be found in Section 4. This includes special liturgies, retreat/prayer experiences, special communal activities, service projects, and parent/family sessions. Also, while combined parishes or combined parish programs may prepare children together, the sacraments are to be celebrated in one's home parish. In the event that one does go outside one's parish of worship, the parish in which the sacrament will be celebrated should notify and consult with the home parish.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults provides the model for all sacramental catechesis, particularly for the initiation sacraments. As a model, the RCIA places catechesis in the context of the faith community and the liturgy. The primary modes of catechesis are reflection on the Scriptures from the Liturgy of the Word and on the liturgical rites, with our Catholic Tradition being presented in light of the Word and the liturgy. Borrowing from this model, catechesis in all sacramental preparation has liturgical elements and is grounded in Scripture. As the community is responsible for the catechesis of catechumens, the community takes responsibility for all sacramental preparation particularly the initiation sacraments.

USCCB approved texts and resources specifically designed for sacramental preparation are to be used. Texts for immediate preparation will give guidance in developing overall preparation for reception, not simply catechesis about the sacrament. For example, the second grade text of any basal series provides information about the Eucharist. However, it is not sufficient for preparation for First Eucharist. Supplementary materials are needed for the catechist to prepare children adequately for this sacrament. A variety of texts and resources are available for each of the sacraments. Contact the Office of Faith Formation for recommended texts that are best suited for your parish.

Preparation includes more than imparting knowledge and more than rehearsals or practice. It should integrate the four dimensions of catechesis: word, worship, service and community. It should assist the candidate to be disposed spiritually to receive the sacrament.

Catechesis for immediate sacramental preparation is basic, introductory and age appropriate. One does not have to acquire a full knowledge of the faith in order to celebrate a sacrament. Rather the candidate must have a fundamental understanding of the sacrament and the meaning of its celebration at a level appropriate for his/her age. Yet it must be received in faith. Catechesis on each of the sacraments continues throughout life. Incorporation into the life of the parish and the church is ongoing.

Depending on the sacrament, initial preparation may extend anywhere from a few weeks to several months. The measure of the preparation's value is not in its length, but in how well and thoroughly it attends to the principles named in this handbook.

The following sections will offer specific suggestions for sacramental catechesis in light of these principles.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

This section is a companion piece to the *Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (Section 4A of this handbook). The intent is to help parishes implement the guidelines.

Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation provides an opportunity for children to focus on God's mercy and forgiveness and their own experience of forgiving and being forgiven. Because forgiveness always takes place in relationship with others, especially within the family, it is also a prime opportunity for families to reflect on how forgiveness and reconciliation are experienced and celebrated in the home.

Preparation for First Reconciliation involves both children and their parents/guardians and extends to their entire family. It provides an opportunity for community building and adult catechesis on the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This can be an evangelizing time that may lead some parents/guardians to their own celebration of reconciliation with the Church.

Timing

Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation generally takes place in the fall for second grade students who will also be preparing for First Eucharist. The Diocese of Springfield recommends that the celebration of First Reconciliation take place before or during the season of Advent.

Occasionally older children need to be prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The preparation of these older children may take place separately from the second grade students. Keep in mind Safe Environment guidelines when working individually with children. However, parents/guardians of these children will benefit from being included with the preparation of parents/guardians of the second graders. Planners and facilitators of meetings need to be attentive to their special circumstances. If their preparation is completed, it may be appropriate to include older children in the same communal celebration of the Sacrament with the younger children.

Other children who need preparation for First Penance are those who were baptized into another Christian tradition and are now preparing for reception into full communion of the Catholic Church, and those who have been fully initiated into the Catholic Church through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* adapted for children. These would follow the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 252 – 330. (See also the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the RCIA in the Diocese of Springfield*, 55-61, and 66).

Catechesis

The primary content of catechesis for children preparing for their first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is outlined in #5 of the *Guidelines for Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (Section 4A). Most major texts designed for preparation for this sacrament include these topics. It is important that such catechesis be presented in a way that the children can understand at their level. The catechesis of forgiveness must also be connected with their daily lives.

Activities and concepts which support effective catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation may include:
- God's call to us to be holy
- An understanding of reconciliation as an opportunity for all of us to grow in
  relationship between ourselves, God and with others
- Understanding sin as attitudes and ways of acting as well as individual acts that hurt others and diminish our relationship with God
- Stories from Scripture such as The Good Shepherd or the Prodigal Son
- Opportunities to reflect upon times in which the children have been forgiven by others at home, school, and play
- Identifying situations in their home, school, or recreation where they need to forgive someone else
- show examples of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- A simple prayer of contrition

  The Act of Contrition can be either a simple formal prayer or their own words. The important point is that the prayer expresses their sorrow for wrongdoing and an intention to change. Whether the prayer is a formal or informal one, it should be simple, short and in language that reflects the child's age and experience. Praying an act of contrition in the context of catechetical sessions will give them confidence and familiarity with these prayers. During the Rite of Reconciliation, the child may use a printed form of the prayer.

While children should be encouraged to confess individual sins, they should also be encouraged to confess ongoing attitudes and actions that separate them from loving relationships with others and God. An examination of conscience provided for their age level will be helpful preparation for the actual celebration of the sacrament. Most sacramental preparation texts include an examination of conscience as well as prayers of contrition appropriate for the children's age.

Sacramental catechesis is different from other catechetical endeavors; its focus is to prepare one to celebrate the sacrament, as well as to teach about the

sacrament.   Guidelines for Children attending Catholic schools can be found in Section 4. Any communal or liturgical activities at the parish that prepare families and children to celebrate the sacrament should be inclusive of parish faith formation children and those children in Catholic schools, and all parents/guardians.

Parent /Family Involvement

Parent/guardian and family involvement in First Reconciliation is an integral part of the preparation process. Parents/guardians need to be informed of the particulars of the preparation process: the time and place of catechetical sessions for the children, time and place of parent sessions, date and time of the First Reconciliation celebration, as well as how and what the children are being taught. It is important to communicate with parents/guardians through a variety of ways: emails, bulletin notices, take home materials, and group or one-to-one meetings with them.

It is highly suggested that there be a minimum of two parent meetings. An initial meeting would focus on the details of the program and the role of the parents and the family. One or more meetings should be held to assist parents in their own growth and understanding of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and offer practical suggestions to help the parents work with their children in preparing them for the Sacrament.   It may be necessary to offer options in order to accommodate their schedules.   These meetings create prime opportunities to invite parents into deeper participation in the parish community, in their own faith lives, and in the faith lives of their children.

In addition to providing information, effective parent/guardian meetings will include the following:

- Prayer - especially focused on their role as Christian parents/ guardians or on God's mercy
- Reflection on their own experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation - keep in mind that this needs to be done sensitively, since some may not have celebrated the Sacrament for some time or have had negative experiences. A private reflection process and/or small group discussion may be appropriate.
- Reflection on their own experience of forgiveness or the lack of it in their lives
- Presentation on the Sacrament of Reconciliation which may include:
    - God's loving mercy
    - An understanding of sin
    - A brief history of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
    - The Church's teaching on the Sacrament
    - A brief review of how the Sacrament is celebrated

- Ways in which they can practice and celebrate forgiveness in their homes
- Specific suggestions for helping their children prepare for the Sacrament

It is important that parent/guardian meetings provide a positive experience of Church by providing meaningful prayer experiences, holding them in a comfortable space and possibly creating opportunities for socializing and refreshments. Such an experience will heighten their relationship with God and may encourage those who have been away from the church to return. (See Section 1A "Adult Education Principles" in the *Adult Education* section of this document.)

Celebration of the Sacrament

It is important that the children's first experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation be a positive one. While recognizing sorrow for sin, they can experience God's love and mercy. A positive celebration of the sacrament will help the children to see its value and encourage them to celebrate it often. The parish has the responsibility to prepare children for First Reconciliation. However, the parish does not have a right to insist that they receive the Sacrament.

- A communal penance service with individual confession is recommended for the first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This format best reflects the vision of the Sacrament. The effect of sin on the entire community is realized in this form of celebration. It is also the most comfortable for children. Surrounded by their peers and their families, they experience the strength and encouragement of each other.
- It is important that the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for children include their families, extending even to grandparents, aunts, and uncles. All present should be invited to celebrate the Sacrament. This is a powerful sign to the children of the importance of the Sacrament and that we all need to seek God's forgiveness and mercy.

Sacramental Records

Reconciliation is not a Sacrament of Initiation. Therefore, while it is not necessary to record each child's participation in the celebration, the parish office of Faith Formation may keep its own records.

Ongoing Catechesis and Celebration of the Sacrament

Catechesis on and celebration of Reconciliation continue as lifelong endeavors. Catechesis is to be reinforced and developed at all age levels so that

the Sacrament is understood and celebrated in a manner congruent with one's life. Regular celebration of Reconciliation can be encouraged through Reconciliation services connected with the catechetical program during Advent and the penitential season of Lent.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist

This section is a companion piece to the *Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of the Eucharist* (Section 4B). The intent is to help parishes implement the guidelines.

The Eucharist is the center of the life of the Christian. Participation in the Eucharist unites us more closely to Christ and his Church and nourishes us to live as his disciples. Preparation for First Eucharist provides a special opportunity for growth in one's relationship to Christ and the community and for understanding the centrality of the Mass for our lives as disciples of Christ.

Timing

Catechesis for First Eucharist generally takes place during the second grade. When it does, catechesis for First Reconciliation should precede it, allowing for sufficient time for each Sacrament. A common practice is First Reconciliation preparation in the fall and First Eucharist preparation in the winter/spring. The diocese recommends that the celebration of First Eucharist take place during the Easter Season.

Other options for preparation and celebration are possible, such as summer or family programs. Parishes wanting to design other models should consider the following:

- Distinct and separate preparation for each Sacrament
- The importance of coming together as a community
- The needs of the families
- The readiness of the child
- Appropriate catechesis

Older children who have been baptized Catholic may also need preparation for First Eucharist. Their preparation takes place through a separate process appropriate to their age level. However, the same principles and elements would apply. Parents/guardians of these children may benefit from participating in some of the parent/guardian sessions of the second grade children. Planners and facilitators of meetings need to be attentive to their special circumstances. It may be more appropriate to celebrate their First Eucharist at a separate liturgy, such as Easter Sunday, any Sunday during the Easter Season or the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Children who have been validly baptized in a Protestant tradition would prepare through an adaptation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.*

Baptized Catholic adults are to be prepared for First Eucharist according to The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. (Section 3C, 55-61 *and* 62-69)

Catechesis

The primary content of catechesis for children preparing for First Eucharist is outlined in section 4B #5 of the *Guidelines for the Preparation for the Sacrament of the Eucharist.* Most major texts designed for preparation for this sacrament include these topics. It is important that such catechesis be presented in a way that the children can understand at their level. Further, catechesis is formational and multi-dimensional, involving word, worship, service and community.

Concepts which support comprehensive catechesis for First Eucharist may include:

- The meaning of the Mass and the importance of their active participation in it
- The various parts of the Mass and their significance
- Congregational responses of the Mass incorporated into their prayer times
- The relationship between the Eucharist and the call to social justice
- Biblical stories such as that of the Last Supper and Jesus eating with his disciples and friends
- The children's experience of special meals and family traditions

Activities which support this comprehensive catechesis may include:

- Sharing a meal
- Special liturgies with their families and/or the entire community focusing on concepts such as sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking and celebrating
- Family gatherings around a meal
- Bread making, banner making and other activities with families
- Retreats/days of prayer

Sacramental catechesis is different from other catechetical endeavors; its focus is to prepare one to celebrate the Sacrament, as well as teach about the Sacrament. Catechesis for First Eucharist prepares one for continuing initiation into the community and the Church. Guidelines for children attending Catholic schools can be found in Section 4. This means that all children participate together in the above named activities and that the parent/family involvement described below combines all parents and families.

Parent/Family Involvement

The celebration of First Communion brings many people to parish programs who may no longer participate fully in the life of the Church. This offers

a prime opportunity for evangelization. Parents/guardians should be welcomed with the utmost sensitivity to their circumstances and allowed the space to re-examine their personal relationship with God and the Church.

Parent/guardian and family involvement in the children's preparation for First Eucharist is integral to the process. Parents/guardians need to be informed of the particulars of the preparation process: time and place of catechetical sessions for the children, time and place of parent/guardian sessions and any family programs, date and time of the First Eucharist celebration, how and what the children are being taught, parents'/guardians' responsibilities.

It is important to communicate with parents/guardians through a variety of ways. It is highly suggested that there be a minimum of two parent/guardian gatherings. An initial meeting could focus on the details of the program. One or more sessions should be held to further develop the parents'/guardians' understanding and appreciation of the Sacrament and their role in preparing their children.

Parent/guardian and family gatherings can take on a variety of formats:
- Sharing a meal
- Retreat
- Baking bread together
- Service projects

Effective parent/guardian meetings should include the following:
- Prayer – especially focused on their role as Christian parents/guardians and Eucharistic themes
- Time for socializing and building community, including sharing a meal, retreats, baking bread together, service projects
- Presentation and reflection on the Eucharist which may include:
  - Historical development of the Eucharist
  - Scriptural reflections on the Eucharist
  - Eucharist as the Lord's Supper, the gathering of the community, etc.
  - The presence of Christ in the community, the word, the Eucharistic species, and the presiding minister
  - Ways to incorporate the concepts of the Eucharist in the home

Many of the informal activities will provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere especially for those families that are finding their way back to the Church.

It is important that parent/guardian meetings take place with pastoral sensitivity, especially to those who do not regularly participate in the Eucharist and to parents/guardians of another faith. Care should be taken to make this an evangelizing moment and avoid alienating individuals. This is an opportune time to encourage and invite them into deeper participation in the Eucharist. All meetings should incorporate the principles of good adult education. (See section 1A the "Adult Education Principles" in the *Adult Education* section of this document.)

Celebration of the Sacrament

Since Eucharist is an initiation sacrament, ideally it should be celebrated on Sunday with the parish community to which the child belongs. This can be accomplished by:

- A First Eucharist celebration at a Lord's Day Mass for all the children receiving the sacrament for the first time
- A First Eucharist weekend in which this celebration takes place at more than one or all of the Masses
- Individual First Eucharist at any Mass determined by the family in consultation with the program director and/or pastor

Individual parishes will need to discover which option is best for them. Larger parishes might find it difficult to accommodate the numbers for the first suggestion. They may do better to use the second, which does require more planning on the part of the staff. The third option allows the parents/guardians greater responsibility in determining the right time for a child's First Eucharist, but creates more administrative work for those responsible for record keeping.

In the case of combined parish programs, catechesis for First Eucharist may take place in the larger program, but the actual celebration of First Eucharist should take place in the home parish. It is also appropriate that it take place during the Easter Season or on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. The readings and prayers for these Masses lend themselves to the occasion.

If First Eucharist is celebrated at a Lord's Day Mass, the Sunday readings are to be used.

Participation of children in liturgical roles, such as readers, gift bearers, and musicians should be considered in light of their gifts and talents. It is important that these be viewed as ministerial roles and that appropriate training and preparation be provided. Participation by the parents/guardians in these roles is

also encouraged. Music should be chosen that reflects the occasion and in which the entire congregation participates.

The central focus of this celebration is the participation in and reception of the Eucharist within the worshipping community. Therefore, excessive concern for dress codes, seating plans, and other activities and devotions may distract from the integrity of the Eucharistic celebration. Local traditions may be respected, but should not detract from the focus.

Sacramental Records

It is important that someone take responsibility for obtaining baptismal records and seeing that the celebration of First Eucharist is noted in the parish First Eucharist register. Consult with your pastor regarding who will have this responsibility.

Ongoing Catechesis and Celebration of the Sacrament

Catechesis on the Eucharist and celebration of this Sacrament continue as lifelong endeavors. Catechesis is to be reinforced and developed at all age levels so that the Sacrament is understood and celebrated in a manner congruent with one's life. Participation in the Eucharist can be encouraged through special liturgies connected with the catechetical program and involving young people in the liturgy of the community.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

This section is a companion piece to the Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation in section 4 C. The intent is to help parishes implement the guidelines.

"Preparation for Confirmation aims at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit... in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of the Christian life. To this end, catechesis... should strive to awaken a sense of belonging... to the universal Church as well as the parish community (Cf. CCC 1309)."

Timing

The Sacrament of Confirmation is to be celebrated no earlier than the spring of the 9th grade year or fall of the 10th grade year. Adult Confirmation will be treated separately at the end of this section.

Catechesis

Catechesis of youth preparing for Confirmation provides opportunities to minister to them in a variety of ways that encompass the catechetical elements of community, word, worship and service. Scheduling may best be done on a different time frame than that of the regular Faith Formation program, highlighting the special nature of this time.

The outline for catechesis presented here is for those who have participated **regularly** in faith formation. Many times young people present themselves for Confirmation preparation after an extended absence from a catechetical program. A period of evangelization and catechesis is often necessary before these young people participate in the Confirmation preparation program.

Community
A sense of belonging to the local parish community should be encouraged through interaction with the community and involvement of the parish in the preparation process. The following are some suggestions.
- Stress participation in the **regular** worship of the community.
- Actively involve Confirmation candidates in social and fundraising activities.
- Involve young people as representatives on parish boards, particularly the parish council and education boards.
- Arrange for informal visits or dinners with the parish priest, DRE/CRE/ARE, youth ministers or other pastoral leaders.
- Invite members of various ministries, committees and organizations to share with the candidates their experiences of parish involvement.

- Foster ways for the parish to be aware of and involved in the preparation of the candidates through bulletin notices, special liturgies, commitment Masses, presentations, parish receptions and prayer partners.

<u>Word</u>

The message of our Catholic Tradition forms and nourishes the lives of the candidates. The following comprise the key elements or content of catechesis:

- The gifts of the Spirit
- What it means to be a disciple of Christ
- The relationship of Confirmation to Baptism and Eucharist
- Its character as an initiation sacrament
- The signs, symbols and effects of the Sacrament
- A deeper understanding and appreciation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

<u>Worship</u>

Active involvement in the worship of the community, especially the Sunday Eucharist as the source and summit of the Catholic life, should be encouraged. The worship component of Confirmation preparation should include the following:

- Special worship events of the community
- Lent and Holy Week liturgies
- Reconciliation services.
- Attention to private prayer
- Retreat or prayer experiences such as days/evenings of reflection
- Consider attending The Diocesan Chrism Mass /Transfer of Oils

<u>Service</u>

The concept of service as integral to Christian life is to be promoted. It must be clear that apostolic works are not a requirement for Confirmation, but a mandate for Christian living. Fostering this concept of service can be accomplished through:

- Well planned group projects, followed by group reflection
- Participation in regular ongoing service in the parish in liturgical or social settings (e.g., as musicians, ushers, youth leaders, etc.)
- Service to the poor and needy
- Ministry with younger children or with the elderly only with a Safe Environment trained supervisor
- Participation in fund raising for special causes
- Involvement in service with other faith communities

Sacramental catechesis is different from other catechetical endeavors; its focus is to prepare one to celebrate the sacrament, as well as teach about the sacrament. Catechesis for Confirmation prepares one to celebrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of the Christian life. In light of this, it takes place in one's home parish. Youth

attending Catholic schools should be incorporated in their home parish for the celebration of Confirmation. Catholic schools' curriculum should be concerned with teaching about the sacrament and includes immediate preparation for it. This means that all youth participate together in the above catechetical process and that the parent/family involvement described below combines all parents/guardians and families.

Parent/Family Involvement

Activities need to be provided that promote and encourage the involvement of parents/guardians and families of the candidates for Confirmation. Parents/ guardians should be made aware of all aspects of the program as well as their children's responsibilities. Providing information and ideas for supporting their children may be beneficial. Most importantly this is a prime moment to deepen their understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Leaders of the Confirmation program should seek a variety of ways to communicate with parents/guardians. Emails, bulletin announcements and parent/guardian meetings provide the most effective means of communication. An orientation meeting at the beginning of the preparation process would be in order to focus on the details of the program. Catechesis for the parents/guardians on the Sacrament of Confirmation could be included in this meeting or an additional one. Parent/guardian meetings may include:

- Prayer
- An explanation and calendar of the program with clear expectations for their children's participation
- Ways to support their children in the process
  Praying for them
  Talking with them about their Baptism
  Helping them choose a sponsor
  Participating in service projects and special liturgies with them
  Acting as witnesses to Christ by regular participation in the liturgical and communal life of the parish and living the gifts of the Spirit
- Catechesis on the Sacrament of Confirmation:
  Reflection on their own experience of the Sacrament
  A brief history of Confirmation
  Theology of Confirmation and its relationship to Baptism

As with all adult meetings, adult education principles as outlined in the *Adult Education* section of this document should guide these sessions.

Sponsors

Sponsors have a unique opportunity for assisting the faith development of the confirmation candidates. Since the candidate usually chooses them, they are often the most appropriate people to act as spiritual guides. Their active

involvement can be a great asset to the candidate and the program. While some parishes involve sponsors in every aspect of preparation, this may be impractical for others. The sponsor's role is most effective when he/she is involved in activities such as those suggested for parents/guardians, and spends private time with the candidate. As with the parents/guardians they also would benefit from a meeting in which they receive resources to explain their role and suggestions for fulfilling it. Although the ideal is to have a separate meeting for them, they may be included in the parent/guardian meeting.

In addition to the requirements for sponsors listed in the *Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation,* other criteria to be encouraged in choosing a sponsor is that the person:
- Live in harmony with Catholic values and practice
- Feel comfortable sharing faith with the candidate
- Be readily available and willing to take on this responsibility

Discernment for Readiness

A discernment process takes place prior to the reception of Confirmation to determine the candidate's readiness for this sacrament. Readiness is based on the canonical norms as listed in Sec 4C of the guidelines for this sacrament. Participation in the liturgical and communal life of the church and adherence to its values are to be considered. This process indicates one's disposition to receive the sacrament and ability to renew his or her baptismal promises.

This discernment may lead to a decision to delay the celebration of the sacrament. Such a decision should not be taken lightly. While the parish has the right and responsibility to make expectations of candidates, pastoral sensitivity is required.

Furthermore, the decision to delay Confirmation involves two parties: the candidate and the community. The decision should be made in consultation with the candidate, the parents/guardians, the sponsor, and the parish leadership. No one person should assume the right to make that decision alone.

In the event that an adolescent has already been confirmed at an earlier age or that Confirmation is delayed, formation into the Christian life continues, and efforts are to be made to incorporate the young person into the life of the community. This can be accomplished through involvement in youth ministry, ministerial programs and other educational opportunities.

Celebration of the Sacrament

The celebration of the Rite of Confirmation should be a joyful occasion that takes place in the context of the community. When it is celebrated outside a

regular Sunday liturgy, the members of the parish should be encouraged to participate. They may participate by proclaiming the readings, bringing forth the gifts and participating in the choir. Readers should be those who are gifted for this ministry.

The Bishop's directives for celebrating the Rite are mailed annually to each parish.

Sacramental Records

It is important that someone take responsibility for obtaining baptismal records prior to the celebration of Confirmation.

Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is to be noted in the parish baptismal register, as well as in the confirmation register. Also, information on Confirmation should be forwarded to the parish of one's Baptism. These tasks usually fall to the secretarial staff under the supervision of the pastor or the catechetical leader.

Adult Confirmation

Adults seeking Confirmation fall into two general categories: those who will be prepared through an adaptation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,* and those who will prepare through an adult Confirmation process. These are determined by the candidate's background. For the first category, refer to the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Sec 3C: "Preparation of Catechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist". Those who had no subsequent catechesis or involvement in the church following First Eucharist may also follow this route. (See also the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the RCIA in the Diocese of Springfield*, (3C)

Those who have been baptized and received First Eucharist and continued catechesis are to be given appropriate catechesis and be confirmed by the bishop. The amount of time given to their catechesis depends on the extent to which they are already catechized. Those who have had little catechesis since their First Communion will require more extensive catechesis and even evangelization. They may benefit from participating with others in the pre-catechumenate of the RCIA. However, they do not continue with the catechumenate. They may also take advantage of other adult education programs in the parish. The following recommendations are for those who have been catechized for most of their youth as well as those who had little catechesis but have participated in the pre-catechumenate or other catechesis designed for them.

Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation for these adults corresponds to that of high school students preparing for the Sacrament. Although it may not be as lengthy, it should include the four dimensions of word, worship, service and community. The content is the same as that of the adolescents. Participation in a retreat or focused prayer experience is also encouraged. Catechesis for these adults uses adult methodology and principles. (See the *Adult Education* section 1A.)

The parish takes responsibility for providing this catechesis. The preparation for adult Confirmation begins when the candidate expresses interest in anticipation of Confirmation during the Easter Season. Every effort is to be made to keep the Confirmation preparation and celebration parish based. If it is impossible for the parish to provide this catechesis, they may be combined with other adult Confirmation candidates in another parish.

Adults may be confirmed with the young people at the parish celebration. Other options are for them to be confirmed at Saint Michael's Cathedral on Pentecost or to participate in another Confirmation celebration in the diocese. Although these latter options separate them from the parish community, they may

be appropriate for those who are concerned about being confirmed before their marriage or serving as godparents or sponsors for someone else.

<u>Special Notes:</u>

Names

There has been a tradition of taking a new name for Confirmation. This is not called for in the Rite nor in Canon Law. Candidates may use their baptismal name or choose another appropriate name (Can. 855). Having the candidate investigate the chosen name can be a catechetical moment.

Confirmation and Marriage

The relationship of Confirmation to marriage often arises. For your convenience, we are quoting the relevant Canon here: "If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage" (Can.1065.1).

The Sacrament of Baptism for Children
(Infants and Children below Catechetical Age)

This section is a companion piece to the *Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism for Children* (Sec 4G). The intent is to help parishes implement the guidelines.

"Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word." (CCC 1213)

Baptism begins the ongoing process of faith, of God's call and our response to God's call in love. This response involves God, the individual, the parents, the godparents and the faith community together.

The liturgical Rite of Baptism for Children offers the opportunity for children below the catechetical age of 7 years to begin their initiation into the Roman Catholic community of faith. Parents make this choice for their child. Thus, the faith of the parents is a vital concern for the Church as they accept the responsibility of forming their child in the practice of faith. Older children are to be led through the stages of Christian initiation leading to their celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. (See Section 3: *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the Diocese of Springfield,* 55.)

F. Legal Concerns in the Catechetical Setting

Parish faith formation programs have many legal obligations and concerns, particularly because parish programs care for people, especially children. This section of the handbook is not designed to provide expert legal advice. Its purpose is to point to potential areas of concern for parishes. It is important that parishes educate themselves in greater depth than is offered here on some of these issues. Also, it may be important to look into particular issues with qualified legal advisors.

Negligence and Liability

Most legal concerns focus around *negligence* and *legal liability*. It is important to recognize that liability suggests a lack of intent – one need not mean to cause harm, but because of some negligence it happened. In order for legal liability for negligence to be found, there must be four factors present: duty; violation of duty; proximate cause; and injury. They can be briefly defined relative to the parish's catechetical setting as follows:

Duty: The person charged with negligence must have some responsibility for the care and safety of the one injured. That means that the parish and its catechists may have a duty to care for the safety of children and youth entrusted to their care on parish property, during certain times.

Violation of Duty: The duty, as defined, was not fulfilled. Here a "reasonableness" factor is in place – what would be reasonably expected of someone in this position at this time?

Proximate Cause: The violation of the duty was the proximate cause of injury.

Injury: In order for a case of legal liability to be found, injury must have happened because of negligence.

Example: A parish may accept the responsibility to care for the safety of children during their arrival and dismissal. This is their *duty*. One way the parish would see to its duty would be by monitoring the lot before and after the scheduled meeting times. The parish would also have drop off and pick up procedures that maintain safety and that everyone knows. However, if the parish does not have a good dismissal policy or the parish fails to administer its policy well, then the parish is not fulfilling its duty, and may be considered in *violation of that duty*. Let us suppose that a child is *injured* during dismissal (e.g., hit by a car). Let us further suppose that the incident is linked with lack of clear procedures or lack of appropriate administration of the procedures during dismissal. Then the *violation of duty* may be seen as the *proximate cause* of the *injury*, and the parish

may be found legally liable for negligence.

In general terms this means parishes are responsible for the care and safety of those in their care, while they are in their care. So parish leaders, both pastoral and catechetical, as well as catechists should create and maintain an environment of safety. This pertains to the catechetical setting (e.g., buildings and grounds) as well as behaviors (e.g., discipline and emergency care).

It would also be recommended that catechetical leaders be aware of their coverage under liability insurance. *The Diocese of Springfield's insurance program extends coverage to volunteers who are authorized to perform work on behalf of or at the direction of the Diocese and/or Diocese' members... Coverage would include General Liability, Automobile Liability and Professional Liability (not including specific fields such as medical professional, architects and engineers, and other fields of expertise specifically excluded in the program).*

Summary Recommendations for Catechetical Leaders
These recommendations are grouped for easier reference, but catechetical leaders need to read and be aware of all of them. There is overlap between certain groups.

Professionalism of the Catechetical Leader
1. Create a parish program/catechist handbook that includes parish policies. Ask those who are to read it (parents/guardians or catechists) to sign a statement (e.g., "We have read and agree to be governed by these policies.") prior to their participation in the program.
2. Keep some kind of logbook of incidences, so that if your professional competency is ever questioned, you will have a written record of what you did and what you intended to do
3. Permanent records on all children and youth should be kept accurately. Pertinent information should be collected and updated annually. That information may include, but is not limited to: emergency phone numbers; medical concerns; information concerning non-custodial parents. As a general rule information about a child should only be shared with authorized persons. This may include the child's catechist, and non-custodial parent (unless there is a court order denying access), but it does not allow for free access to anyone interested.
4. Pay attention to situations of non-custodial parents.
5. Keep attendance records for all classes. Attendance records may become legally significant documents, and should be kept indefinitely.

Catechists and Other Volunteer Staff
6. Interview all volunteers to determine suitability for positions. It is necessary for parishes to do criminal background checks and provide safe environment

training for all catechists and Faith Formation volunteers. Parishes are not required to accept the services of all who apply. Leaders have the right and responsibility to place only volunteers who are best suited for the position.

7. Familiarize catechists with all rules and regulations of the program/parish. This may be done through the catechist meetings and/or use of a parish handbook as mentioned above (#1).

8. As a precautionary measure, it is good practice to have two adults working together with groups of youth, as team catechists or as catechist and aid. No adult should ever be alone with a student. Classes and groups should be visible and never in isolated locations. This is for the protection of both the catechists and the children and youth.

Behavior and Discipline

9. Establish rules of behavior and formulate policies for carrying out disciplinary measures.
10. Be sure to make the rules known to those affected. Posting and/or printing rules is a good idea.
11. Be sure young people understand the rules and the consequences for not following them. Enforce program and parish rules consistently.
12. Before disciplining a person explain what was done that merits a penalty and allow the individual some opportunity to explain the behavior.
13. If it is necessary to make a statement about misconduct or performance, be sure comments are specific, behaviorally oriented, and verifiable. Written records of such statements should be kept on file in the parish.
14. Corporal punishment is neither an appropriate nor an effective means of disciplining. It is contrary to a Christian educational philosophy. Also, use of corporal punishment may open the parish to civil or criminal lawsuits. Further, disciplining of children and youth should be done privately so as not to cause embarrassment, but not in an isolated location.   This is valuable for the protection of both the parish and the children and youth.

Safety
15. Take reasonable precautions to insure the safety of those in your care. Be aware of any unsafe building or other conditions, and address appropriately.
16. Do not leave young people unattended. If necessary, ask another staff member to monitor your group.
17. Create procedures for dismissal of children and youth, and policies for early dismissal.
18. Create procedures for emergency situations, including evacuation drills. Provide basic supplies and training for first aid.

Mandated Reporting of Abuse
Paid and volunteer catechists are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are persons who, as required by law, must file a report with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) when he/she has responsible cause to believe a child is being abused, neglected, or both. For more information on your responsibilities as a mandated reported, please review -*Child Abuse Neglect Reporting: A Guide for Mandated Reporters* (https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/08/28/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf).

How to file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF):
Mandated reporters (1) must phone in an oral report immediately by calling the local DCF area office (please see below) where the child lives or the Child-at-

Risk Hotline at (800) 792-5200 after 5:00 p.m. during weekdays or on weekends, (2) must file a written report with DCF within 48 hours (forms are available at https://www.mass.gov/files/2017-06/child-abuse-reporting-form.pdf), and (3) may also notify local law enforcement authorities.

Western Massachusetts DCF Area Offices:

- DCF Robert Van Wart Area Office
  112 Industry Avenue, Springfield, MA 01104
  (413) 205-0500

- DCF Springfield Area Office
  140 High Street, 4th Floor, Springfield, MA 01105
  (413) 452-3200

- DCF Holyoke Area Office
  261 High Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
  (413) 493-2600

- DCF Greenfield Area Office
  143 Munson Street, Unit 4, Greenfield, MA 01301
  (413) 775-5000

- DCF Berkshire Area Office
  75 Eagle Street, 2nd Floor, Pittsfield, MA 01201
  (413) 236-1800

Additional Resources for Mandated Reports:

- For on-line mandated reporter training (free) please go to
  http://51a.middlesexcac.org/

- The Diocese of Springfield Office of Safe Environment and Victim
  Assistance is available for consultation at 413-452-0624. However, please
  note, it is your responsibility to file a report with DCF when you have
  reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected.

Permission slips

Both service projects and other field trips may require leaving the parish property. When this occurs it is important to make parents/guardians aware of the plan and seek their permission. Although permission slips do not completely safeguard a parish from liability, they do help inform parents/guardians of the particulars. In that way, the value of the permission slip is that the parish knows that parents/guardians are aware of what is happening, when, where and with whom and have agreed to their child's participation. *In Section 5 page 1 is the model that the Diocese of Springfield recommends for parish use.*

Parish catechetical staff and volunteers should never be providing transportation for students in their personal vehicles. Check with the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation regarding approved transportation options.

It is important to include, in a cover letter, as many pertinent details as possible (date, time, location, transportation arrangements, etc.). Student consent and release forms (next page) should be carried with the Catechetical Leader at all times.

The parish should also look to their liability coverage in such situations. This would include considering who is covered (e.g., volunteer chaperones), under what circumstances and activities (e.g., field trips) and where (e.g., off parish). The main concern is to see to the safety of all involved. Parishes need to be mindful of their responsibility in this and plan appropriately.

G. Program Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of our catechetical programs can help to determine their effectiveness in forming Catholics who not only understand their faith, but live it. A parish should identify its weak areas in catechesis and work to improve them, while affirming its strong points. It is appropriate to evaluate the program in order to determine how well it helps its participants in their understanding and practice of the faith.

The following are some general principles that address religious literacy and evaluation of our catechetical programs:

- Catechesis is a lifelong process. Religious literacy and Catholic identity must be fostered with our adults as well as with our children and youth. Since it is at the adult level that our Catholic faith can be fully understood and lived, adult education must be a priority.
- Religious literacy and especially Catholic identity for children and youth are achieved by having the entire parish community working together. It is unrealistic to expect a catechetical program to accomplish this alone. Participation with their families in the liturgical and communal life of the Church provides the primary foundation for Catholic identity for children. Effective means of inviting families into the full life of the Church need to be developed.
- Faith is not an academic subject. The purpose of catechesis is to foster life lived in relationship with Jesus Christ. This is expressed through participation in the Catholic worshiping community and through application of Catholic values to our everyday lives.
- Following the principles outlined in this document will assist parishes in building religious literacy and Catholic identity in their communities. While these cannot be fully realized with our children and youth, fostering ongoing adult faith formation will impact the development of Catholic identity and religious literacy in our communities.

The Appropriate Use of Testing

There are a number of ways to evaluate a parish Faith Formation program. Testing of students should not be used as an evaluation tool of the entire program, or for the catechist to evaluate his/her own effectiveness. It can be used as a teaching tool only. However, the testing of individual students for the purpose of grading them or testing their faith is inappropriate, since one's relationship with God cannot be measured or graded.

Many text series include unit tests. The primary purpose of these tests is to determine to what extent the content has been understood and integrated into the

lives of the students. The catechist can then use the results of this testing to reinforce any concepts that may not have been understood.

Testing also provides a teaching tool. By administering the test and then going over the results with the students, they can see for themselves where they may have misunderstood a concept. While using a process of feedback from the catechist and/or the entire group, individual students can make their own adjustments in their understanding of the concepts.

Testing as an evaluation tool or teaching tool can be done without grading. As an evaluation tool it helps catechetical program coordinators see where concepts need further explanation or development. As a teaching recall tool, it helps people to become aware of what they do or do not know and to appreciate the depth of their understanding.

For parents/guardians, the results of testing or any review work can be a source of communication with their children and/or with the catechist. Any work that is brought home helps parents/guardians to see how their children are learning and understanding their faith. It can lead to family conversation about their faith.

These are the appropriate uses of testing in a catechetical program. Testing for program evaluation or as a teaching tool should be used sparingly and not be the focus of the catechetical sessions.

SECTION 2

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CATECHESIS

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CATECHESIS

In order to attain successful catechesis the parish needs to make a concerted effort to establish it as a high priority. This requires an understanding of catechesis as one of the central tasks of the community. Key elements to successful catechesis include the identification, formation and empowerment of leadership and personnel, as well as financial commitment to the entire catechetical endeavor. Providing these elements often requires some creative approaches.

This section will develop:

- **The Parish Commitment to Catechesis**
- **Leadership and Roles**
- **Financial Commitment**
- **Creative Possibilities**

A. The Parish Commitment to Catechesis

"The Church is bidden by God and by events…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)

The parish plays a primary role in the formation and expression of our common faith. Apart from simply providing a place of worship, Catholics look to the parish for support and nourishment of their faith. Therefore, the parish has a responsibility to provide for this in a meaningful and comprehensive way to its entire people.

The parish is a catechizing community. Every program within the parish bears catechetical value and implications as does the way each member lives and expresses his/her faith. It is important that there be awareness that these programs and their activities express the Gospel.

Structured catechesis requires the involvement of many people and groups – especially effective leadership.

The parish should commit financial resources to provide for both material needs and the formation and support of personnel. A specific budget that encompasses all aspects of catechesis for the entire community supports this commitment.

B. Leadership and Roles

Adult Parishioners

> *"Every disciple of the Lord Jesus shares in this mission [to witness and share the word of life about the reign of God faithfully]. To do their part, adult Catholics must be mature in faith and well equipped to share the Gospel, promoting it in every family circle, in every church gathering, in every place of work, and in every public forum. They must be women and men of prayer whose faith is alive and vital, grounded in a deep commitment to the person and message of Jesus."* (OHWB, Intro., p. 1)

In a general way the whole adult community within a parish is the leader in providing quality catechesis. It is they as a group who set the standard and expectations for a parish's catechetical effort by living as true Disciples of Christ and to form youth and newcomers in the faith.

- As the adults lead, the children and youth shall follow
- As the adults model and witness, the catechumens and candidates will see
- As the adults grow in commitment and understanding, the lay and ordained ministries will develop

> *"To grow in discipleship throughout life, all believers need and are called to build vibrant parish and diocesan communities of faith and service."* (OHWB, p. 2)

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians should be both catechizers and the recipients of catechesis. As catechizers, their most powerful means of forming their children in the faith is through their own example of living out the gospel in their daily lives, and through attention to their own formation. In a more specific way, they catechize through their children by praying with them, sharing stories of our faith and Tradition, and conversing with them about issues of faith.

"By means of personal contact, meetings, courses and also adult catechesis directed toward parents, the Christian community must help them assume their responsibility of educating their children in the faith" (GDC 227). There are many ways that the parish can give them this help. Useful information and ideas can be provided at parent meetings. In addition, some published take-home materials that provide assistance are:

- Parent/family pages from text series
- Adult information that correlates with the concepts the children are learning
- Suggestions for seasonal activities for Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter
- Suggestions for family prayers and traditions
- Ideas for service opportunities

Parishes should make every effort to communicate regularly with parents/guardians. This communication will help keep them informed of the parish program for children and youth, as well as encourage them in their role as educators of their children. Emails, take-home materials, family gatherings and telephone calls are all appropriate means of communication. Should a serious issue develop with a particular child, a telephone call and/or private meeting with the parent/guardian is most appropriate.

As primary religious educators of their children and valued members of the community, parents/guardians should be treated with a spirit of welcome and hospitality. While many parents/guardians may not be actively involved in parish life, they bring their children to parish programs because their faith still holds value for them. This is an opportune time to reflect the love and hospitality of Jesus, to find ways to include them that are not intimidating. This may mean involving them in activities that will make them feel comfortable, and address questions and concerns that will make it easier for them to return to active participation. Pastoral sensitivity is required at all times.

Catechists

Catechists are those called to "facilitate communication between the people and the mystery of God, between subjects amongst themselves, as well as with the community" (GDC 156).

Catechists minister to adults, youth and children in a variety of parish settings: adult education, RCIA, sacramental preparation, school age catechesis, youth ministry, family programs, and ministerial training programs. For effective catechesis within these settings, catechists must possess certain fundamental qualities. They should be:
- Persons of faith and prayer
- Witnesses to the gospel
- Models of the faith
- Willing sharers of their faith

Recruitment
The vocation of catechist is rooted in one's baptismal commitment to participate in the "priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry of Christ" (LG 31). It is the Holy Spirit who provides the gifts for catechesis and calls one to this ministry. The parish discerns and affirms this call.

While the entire community takes responsibility for recruitment, certain individuals and groups play a more critical role in this process. They include the pastor/administrator, the parish catechetical leader, and the education commission of the parish pastoral council. The following principles should guide this process:
- Recruitment is an ongoing process.
- The call is based on one's giftedness for catechetical ministry.
- Discernment is necessary in order to determine giftedness, ability to make a commitment, and one's role in this ministry.

Ideally, there should be an application process. A sample application form is given in Section 5 of this handbook.

As catechesis is the responsibility of the entire parish, the calling forth of potential catechists requires a multi-faceted approach. The parish leadership needs to apprise and educate the community as to its responsibility in providing catechists. The following are some practical suggestions for calling forth potential catechists:
- Personal contact
- Announcements from the pulpit
- Bulletin notices
- Invitation through parish media

A brief job description made available in conjunction with the above recruitment process will help to clarify the expectations of a catechist. It should include the role and responsibility of the catechist, time commitment, and training opportunities offered and required.

A process that includes a written application and personal interview with the catechetical leader and/or pastor or administrator should take place with each potential candidate to discern her/his suitability for catechetical ministry. In addition to identifying the fundamental qualities of catechists already mentioned, the interview may clarify the following:
- Candidate's commitment to the Church and its teachings
- Importance of the Eucharist and participation in the community
- Catechetical or related experience
- Requirements for and commitment to initial and ongoing formation
- Mutual expectations
- Ability of the candidate to make the time commitment
- Roles and responsibilities of the catechist
- Policies or procedures of the specific program

Personal references should be requested, especially if the leadership does not know the candidate.

Each parish should create a handbook for catechists that should also be made available for the candidate to review. This handbook could include the role of the catechist, expectations, policies and procedures, legal issues relative to catechesis, and opportunities for training.

It is good practice to encourage the candidate to make a commitment of at least two years to the program. It takes a full year for most inexperienced catechists to be adequately trained and develop the skills for effective catechesis. This first year can be viewed as an apprenticeship. For most catechists, it is in the succeeding years that the fruit of their training and experience is most fully realized.

There is no legal requirement to accept all people who volunteer (See Section 1: *Scope of Catechesis – Legal Concerns*). It is important to affirm the qualities that the candidates have and to thank them for their time whether or not they actually commit to becoming catechists. If a candidate demonstrates potential as a catechist, but there are concerns about one's ability or comfort level, a team teaching approach may be suggested. The candidate may also be encouraged to participate in the program in another capacity such as:

- Office assistant
- Hall or parking lot monitor
- Refreshment provider
- Assistant with arts and crafts, music, and other creative activities

Training and Ongoing Formation and Support

It is the expectation of the diocese that all catechists be trained. This could be provided through the individual parish or through the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation.

Minimal training should be provided to new catechists before they enter into a catechetical setting. The catechetical leader or other appropriate member of the parish staff must take responsibility to see to an initial orientation session and training. Various resources may be used. As a service to their customers, publishers of texts often provide consultants to give basic training for effective use of their texts at no cost. The staff at the Office of Faith Formation is also available to parishes upon request. Minimal training should include:

- The concept of this ministry as a vocation
- An introduction to catechesis and its processes
- Introduction to the curriculum
- Overview of the resources being used
- Age-appropriate lesson planning skills
- Policies and guidelines
- Encouragement for more intensive training, giving information on when and where training is available

Training is to be followed by ongoing formation that may be offered in the parish, region or diocese. Ongoing formation includes all of the above topics, with increasing depth as well as theological topics. These may include:

- Faith development
- Theological subjects (Trinity, Christology, Creed, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, Morality, Mary and the Saints)
- Evangelization
- The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
- Prayer and ways of praying with others

Support and Recognition

In addition, other opportunities for support and enrichment should be provided in the form of catechist meetings and gatherings on a regular basis. These sessions may include:

- Shared prayer and/or faith sharing
- Opportunities to share common concerns/issues
- Updates in theology or catechetical issues
- Planning for major events
- Opportunities for social interaction and/or recreation
- Inclusion in an annual evaluation process

It is important to affirm and recognize catechists both publicly and privately. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Presenting them with appropriate gifts
- Holding special events for them, such as an appreciation party or dinner
- Calling attention to their special efforts in the parish bulletin or newsletter
- Sending cards on special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, or crisis times in their lives.

There are also national, regional, and diocesan opportunities for recognition. Nationally, Catechetical Sunday is celebrated annually on the third Sunday of September. This is an excellent opportunity to recognize and commission catechists for their ministry. Resources from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) for celebrating this event are made available through the Office of Faith Formation.

On the Diocesan level, St. Pius X awards celebrations are held in various regions of the diocese each year. This offers an opportunity to recognize committed and outstanding catechists from each parish. (See Section 3: *Guidelines for the St. Pius X Awards.*)

Careful attention to the recruitment, training and support of catechists is essential to effective catechesis. Catechists who receive the training and support they need are more likely to stay with a program for a longer period of time. A cohesive group of catechists who have a sense of community among themselves will provide a witness beyond words to the children and adults with whom they exercise their special ministry.

Education Commissions

Purpose and Role

The Education Commission acts primarily in an advisory capacity to the pastor/administrator, the catechetical leader, and the Parish Pastoral Council in matters related to catechesis. The guidelines state that "the purpose of this commission is to coordinate the educational effort of the whole parish. The education commission carries out its mandate primarily in the coordination of the programs sponsored by the various bodies charged with some aspect of the parish educational effort. It initiates and carries out on its own only those programs not being addressed by organized parish-based educational groups" (p. 13). Those tasks that it initiates or carries out on its own may include:

- Assisting the pastor/administrator in choosing the leadership people for catechetical ministries and/or creating job descriptions
- Seeing that these ministers are properly compensated and/or recognized
- Seeing that catechetical ministers receive proper training and support
- Helping to develop budgets for catechesis
- Acting as an advocate for total parish catechesis
- Mediating any difficulties between educational endeavors and other parish organizations

The Education Commission also acts as a liaison between the parish pastoral council and the various groups charged with specific areas of catechesis. These groups may include:

- *Adult Education Teams* that promote and oversee adult formation programs for the parish and provide inspirational and educational reading materials for parishioners. This team may need to coordinate its planning with that of other commissions, especially Family Life and Spiritual Life. (See Section 1 *Adult Formation*.)
- *Religious Education Executive Boards* that advise the catechetical leader for school age children and youth in establishing policies and budgets and providing resources for catechists. This board also assists in recruiting catechists and other volunteers and carrying out other aspects of the catechetical efforts. This board should consist of parishioners of various ages, making sure that parents and catechists are represented. This board would have its own set of by-laws specifying its mission, frequency of meetings, and the make-up and terms of its membership.
- *RCIA Teams* that oversee the implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, which includes the catechumenate adapted for children, with the RCIA coordinator. This diversified team would see to catechesis, liturgical rites, sponsors, hospitality, etc. (See the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the RCIA in the Diocese of Springfield,* 1-5.)
- *Sacramental Preparation Teams* that oversee baptismal preparation and adult Confirmation. These may work in conjunction with or be part of the RCIA team, adult education team, and the school age religious education boards.
- *Catholic School Boards* in those parishes that have Catholic schools. Connection of the school with the life of the whole parish is important.

The Education Commission and its sub-groups also need to work closely with other commissions, such as Family Life and Spiritual Life. The relationship with the Finance Council is of primary importance in order to realize adequate funding for total parish catechesis.

Membership

Membership on the Education Commission is drawn from Parish Pastoral Council members and non-members. Key people on the commission are the catechetical leader(s) and the school principal as ex-officio members, and representatives of any groups that have responsibility for any aspect of catechesis. It is essential that all of the above groups be represented on the education commission in order to coordinate all aspects of catechesis in the parish. It is also important that membership include people from the community at large as the recipients of catechesis.

It is advisable that term limits be established for members of the Education Commission and its sub-groups. This promotes greater involvement of the entire community and prevents stagnation of any group. It also encourages people to participate, knowing that their service is limited. An example of appropriate term limits would be that one serve for three years with eligibility for one more three-year term.

Catechetical Leaders

Successful catechesis in a parish requires much time, effort, coordination, and expertise. It would be difficult to implement the vision put forth in this handbook without **trained and competent leadership** which has the knowledge, skills, on-going formation and time to devote to the catechetical needs of all the members of the parish. Therefore, each parish needs a designated leader or leaders whose primary parish responsibility is to coordinate its catechetical endeavors. Each designated leader should be recognized by the Office of Faith Formation in accordance with its current guidelines.

Role

The catechetical leader is first and foremost a *minister.* This ministry "seeks to promote communion with Jesus Christ" (GDC 30) for individuals and the community. As catechesis touches people in their everyday lives, it requires pastoral sensitivity and ministry to their needs. The catechetical leader often comes in contact with individuals and families in very personal ways. Therefore, the catechetical leader should be a person of pastoral sensitivity, attentive to and approachable by the diverse population of the parish. He or she must also honor the practice of confidentiality.

The catechetical leader should ensure the centrality of *catechesis in the development of the parish.* He or she should constantly remind the community of its responsibility to provide comprehensive and quality catechesis for life-long learning. This mode requires familiarity with catechetical documents, understanding of catechetical theory and practice, and knowledge of diocesan and national policies for catechesis. The catechetical leader needs to raise the question constantly of how the parish's decisions and activities may be catechizing its members about what it means to be Catholic as well as ask how these decisions affect the catechetical ministry.

The catechetical leader serves as a *theological resource person*, particularly for catechists, as well as for individuals within the community. He or she is the one who addresses theological questions from catechists as they arise out of their teaching experience. The catechetical leader is also responsible for shaping curriculum and choosing resources that accurately and adequately reflect our Catholic Tradition. Thus, the leader must be well grounded in that Tradition.

Finally, the catechetical leader is an *administrator*, coordinating all the catechetical programs of the parish. The administrative responsibilities are comprehensive. They include recruitment, training, and support of catechists, record keeping, and budgeting for catechetical needs. A necessary aspect of this administration is communication with those directly involved in catechesis and the various segments of the parish as well as the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation. These tasks require both organizational and interpersonal skills, as well as knowledge of catechetical theory and practice.

Job Description

When deciding upon a title for a parish catechetical leader, experience should be considered as well as educational background or certification in catechetical leadership and theology. The following are guidelines for job descriptions referenced in the National Catechetical Directory (Chapter 8, section 5).

The ideal is that each parish (or grouping of parishes) have a professional *Director of Religious Education* who has overall responsibility for all catechetical efforts of the parish. This position requires a person who holds a Master's Degree in religious education or a related field, such as pastoral ministry, religious studies, or applied theology. The director of religious education needs an extensive understanding of theology, catechetical theory and methodology, and leadership skills that includes the ability to delegate effectively. If a group of parishes hire a DRE jointly, it may be necessary (given the logistics of the program) also to have an assistant at each site. This assistant, working in concert with the DRE, would be responsible for the proper functioning of the program.

The *Coordinator of Religious Education* normally has responsibility for one or more areas of religious education, such as adult formation or catechesis for children and youth. The coordinator often works with the director or the pastor in implementing his or her area of the catechetical program. There may be more than one coordinator in the parish to facilitate the various catechetical programs. Ideally, this person holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religious Studies and Education, or has achieved its equivalency through regional and diocesan training and continuing education on the college level. For those who have a Bachelor's Degree in another field, the catechetical leadership track of the diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program would also prepare one to serve as a coordinator. The coordinator of religious education requires considerable competencies in theology, catechetical theory and methodology, especially relating to the area of catechesis for which he or she is responsible, as well as leadership skills.

An *Administrator of Religious Education* has limited responsibility for organizing a particular area of catechesis and works in cooperation with the pastoral staff. This role is proportionate to the skills and training of the individual. The administrator of religious education needs an introductory knowledge of theology, catechetical theory and methodology as relates to his or her area of responsibility, and some organizational skills. One can be certified as an administrator of religious education through successful completion of the catechetical leadership track of the diocesan Lay Ministry Formation program. At the very least, this person should have some experience as a catechist and have completed catechist certification in conjunction with the Diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program. The position of administrator of religious education should be considered a temporary measure as a person continues to work toward advanced degrees, or until a qualified director or coordinator can be obtained.

Some parishes take a *team approach* to meeting their catechetical needs. This involves two or more coordinators and/or administrators of religious education. Each has the responsibility for a particular area of catechesis (e.g. adult education, catechesis

for children and/or youth, or RCIA). They work closely together with each other and the pastor to see that total parish catechesis is accomplished. For example, there may be several coordinators, one for each area of catechesis. This team approach requires regular meetings of those involved for coordination and planning. Collaboration is key to the effectiveness of this model. It is critical that each of the catechetical leaders has training and competency in his or her area of responsibility, as well as a minimal knowledge of the other areas. This model may be effective in that it makes use of the talents and skills within the parish and takes into account people's time limitations. However, parishes need to be aware of potential pitfalls of this model: lack of one designated leader who calls the team together; lack of a comprehensive and cohesive approach to parish catechesis; the absence of the expertise and direction of a well-trained professional director or coordinator of religious education.

All catechetical leaders should be:
- Persons of faith and prayer
- Witnesses to the gospel
- Models of the faith
- Willing sharers of their faith
- Gifted ministers
- Willing participants in ongoing formation for this ministry

Compensation and Support

Because of their educational background, competency, and time commitment, directors and coordinators of religious education should be adequately and appropriately remunerated for their work, as well as having access to other paid benefits such as health insurance, vacation and continuing education. Many administrators of religious education often put in a considerable amount of time and should also be paid accordingly. At the very least, the administrator is to be reimbursed for all expenses and have training and continuing education paid by the parish.

Included are job descriptions for catechetical leadership. It is strongly recommended that the parish develop its own job description relative to its situation and to the experience, training, and responsibilities of the particular catechetical leader.

It is important that the parish make a commitment to the well-being of the catechetical leader. This means that the job description and expectations must be realistic and that adequate support in terms of resources and auxiliary personnel be provided. It is recommended that duplicate parish responsibilities be avoided, such as combining the positions of director of religious education and youth minister. It is nearly impossible for one person to fulfill two positions without one of them receiving inadequate attention or without causing excess stress to the individual. The director or coordinator of religious education should also have access to resources, such as a comfortable working space, secretarial help, and janitorial help, so that he or she can concentrate on providing comprehensive quality catechesis in the parish. Certain times of the year are more demanding on the catechetical leader, requiring a greater expenditure of time and

energy than at others. It is reasonable and fair that, in recognition of this, there be flexibility in the work schedule.

The catechetical leader also needs to take responsibility for his or her own well-being. The person should avoid taking on extra tasks within the parish that are not directly related to the job description or that someone else could do. It is important to take time off in terms of vacation or retreat, for example. Attention to one's physical, spiritual and mental well-being is an asset to catechetical ministry.

Hiring

When seeking a director/coordinator/administrator of religious education, parishes are encouraged to communicate and work with the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation. The office can assist the parish in identifying individuals for this ministry, in developing appropriate job descriptions and compensation, and in seeing to the proper formation of catechetical leaders. **The Bishop of Springfield would like all parishes (or groups of parishes) in the diocese to have an appropriately qualified and compensated catechetical leader, as outlined in this document, to oversee this very important ecclesial ministry. Certification in Catechetical Leadership is required and offered through the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation.**

It might be possible that some parishes share a catechetical leader. This requires a carefully agreed upon plan for commitment and time. It is recommended that parishes work with the Office of Faith Formation to facilitate this process.

Professional Interaction and Development

Once a person has been identified and/or hired for catechetical leadership, it is important that the individual meet with the diocesan faith formation staff. The purpose of this is to familiarize him/her with diocesan services and policies and opportunities for formation and support, and to develop a working relationship with diocesan personnel.

The catechetical leader interacts with many groups within the parish. As a member of the parish staff, the director/coordinator of religious education attends regular staff meetings. The staff normally includes professional personnel such as priests, deacons, pastoral associates and pastoral ministers. He or she also is an ex officio member of the Parish Pastoral Council and its Education Commission. Catechetical leaders must communicate and interact with other groups such as the school, youth ministry, and Spiritual and Family Life Commissions.

Networking with other catechetical leaders provides support and a context for the sharing of ideas and resources. This can best be accomplished through membership in professional organizations, such as our diocesan Parish Religious Educators (PRE). This association links catechetical leaders with each other, with diocesan offices and the various parishes in the diocese. Its purpose is to provide a supportive community that seeks to update and inform its membership through its regularly scheduled gatherings and programs. Also, regional gatherings of coordinators provide a valuable form of networking.

It is critical that all catechetical leaders participate in ongoing professional development and formation. Programs are offered through the diocese, Catholic colleges, regional and national catechetical organizations. Periodic involvement in regional and national conferences (e.g., East Coast Conference, Institutes with the North American Forum on the Catechumenate) is invaluable experiences for the catechetical leader. These programs provide professional, educational, and spiritual development. Catechetical leaders are urged to participate in such events. The parish should financially support their participation.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Director of Religious Education
1. Initiate, organize and implement programs designed to meet the religious education needs of the total parish, e.g.
    a. develop educational programs for adults and children
    b. develop sacramental programs
    c. coordinate (or work with the Parish RCIA Team toward) the implementation of RCIA
    d. recruit and train or provide for the training of volunteers to implement all catechetical programs
    e. provide programs for support and spiritual growth for those involved in parish religious education
    f. prepare schedules and communicate these schedules to appropriate individuals and groups
    g. maintain appropriate records of programs and their participants
    h. select appropriate educational resources

2. Maintain familiarity with educational resources such as:
    a. programs and/or texts
    b. audio visual materials
    c. supplementary materials needed for effective implementation of catechesis

3. Maintain familiarity with official catechetical documents of the Church.

4. Prepare the budget for religious education.

5. Communicate and cooperate with the pastor and parish organizations, which include:
    a. meeting on a regular basis with the pastor and parish staff
    b. attending all meetings of the religious Education Commission and/or Board
    c. attending all meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council
    d. convening the Religious Education Executive Board and
    e. communicating with the parish community

6. Organize and maintain an efficient office, which is accessible and responsive to the needs of parishioners.

7. Evaluate existing programs and make recommendations for revision or expansion of programs.

8. Prepare an annual report for the Parish Religious Education Board and/or Parish Pastoral Council or Education Commission.

9. Participate in ongoing professional development through reading and participation in workshops, seminars, and catechetical institutes.

10. Understand diocesan policies in order to develop parish polices which are consistent with diocesan policies.

Coordinators of Religious Education

1. Organize and implement part or all of the catechetical programs of the parish (as determined by agreement with the coordinator and the pastor or staff), e.g.
   a. recruit and provide for the training of volunteers who assist in the program
   b. provide regular meetings for catechists for support and formation
   c. recommend to the parish director of religious education (or pastor) texts, programs, audio-visual materials and appropriate supplies to be used in the program
   d. prepare schedules and communicate them to appropriate individuals and groups
   e. maintain records of programs and participants
   f. prepare (or collaborate in the preparation of) the catechetical budget

2. Communicate and cooperate with the pastor, the parish director of religious education and parish organizations to include:
   a. meeting with the pastor (and director) and staff on a regular basis
   b. participating in all meetings of Parish Religious Education Commission
   c. convening the religious education board
   d. participating in all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
   e. communicating with the parish community

3. Maintain an efficient office that is accessible and responsive to the needs of parishioners.
4. Evaluate all programs relevant to the specific area of responsibility assumed and make recommendations for revision and/or expansion of programs.
5. Prepare and present an annual report to the Parish Board of Religious Education and/or Parish Pastoral Council or Education Commission.
6. Maintain familiarity with diocesan policies relevant to the specific area of responsibility assumed.
7. Participate in ongoing formation through reading and attendance at catechetical workshops, seminars and institutes.

Administrator of Religious Education

1. Organize a particular segment of the religious education program in cooperation with the pastor (and/or the coordinator or director of religious education) to include:
   a. scheduling catechetical sessions and communicating that schedule to appropriate individuals and groups
   b. recruiting volunteers and seeing to their training and formation
   c. maintaining a supply of resources for catechists
   d. seeing that appropriate records are maintained
2. Cooperate and communicate with the pastor and appropriate groups to include:
   a. meeting regularly with the pastor
   b. participating in Parish Religious Education Board and/or Commission meetings
3. .Participate in training and formation for catechetical ministry.

DIRECTORS/COORDINATORS/ADMINISTRATORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Qualifications - Skills/ Competencies - Responsibilities

	Director (DRE)	Coordinator (CRE)	Administrator (ARE)
Education/Experience	MA Degree in Religious Education or related field* 1 year as a Coordinator	BA Degree in Religious Studies and Education _or_ BA Degree plus LMF Catechetical Leadership certification 3 years as a parish catechist	LMF Catechetical Leadership certification 1 year as a parish catechist
Skills/Competencies	Management/ Leadership Organization Goal setting Delegation, evaluation, communication Public relations Theological reflection Teaching	Leadership Organization Goal setting Delegation, evaluation, communication Theological reflection Teaching	Leadership Organization Spiritual reflection Teaching
Responsibilities: Ministerial	Sharing faith and knowledge with individuals & groups Listening & responding pastorally	Sharing faith and knowledge with individuals & groups Listening & responding pastorally	Sharing faith with individuals & groups Listening in time of need
Advocacy	For effective total parish catechesis	For effective total parish catechesis	For specific programs**
Theological	Serve as resource for catechists and individuals/groups Evaluate & choose resources Train catechists	Serve as a resource for catechists Evaluate and choose resources Oversee training of catechists	Work with pastor to choose resources Advise catechists of training opportunities
Administrative	Develop all catechetical programs & calendars Oversee keeping of records Recruit catechists Budget all programs	Develop some or all catechetical programs & calendars Keep records for these programs Recruit catechists Budget programs	Organize specific programs** See to keeping records for and scheduling of specific programs Recruit catechists

* "related field" denotes religious studies, theology, or pastoral ministry
** "specific programs" denotes those for which the catechetical leader is responsible

SAMPLE CATECHIST APPLICATION FORM

Name_____

Address_____

Phone: (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Other activities in which you are currently involved (work/volunteer)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Previous catechetical experience (grade/age level and parish)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Catechetical training or workshops attended

_____
_____
_____
_____

Special interests/skills

_____
_____
_____
_____

Availability of Days	Morning	Afternoon	Evening

☐ CORI   ☐ Vertus   Grade Level Assigned _____

Pastors/Administrators

"Experience bears out that the quality of catechesis in a community depends very largely on the presence and activity of the priest." (GDC 225). It is the pastor or administrator who bears the responsibility for seeing that comprehensive catechesis is carried out for adults, youth and children. Successful catechesis in a parish requires much time, effort, coordination and expertise. Therefore, the pastor or administrator shares this responsibility with others: catechetical leaders, catechists, and education commissions and boards.

> *"The function proper to the presbyterate in the catechetical task arises from the sacrament of Holy Orders. … The ministry of the priest is a service which forms the Christian community and coordinates and strengthens other charisms and services. They work to see that the faithful are properly formed and reach true Christian maturity. Priests foster the vocation and work of catechists and assist them in carrying out a function which springs from Baptism and is exercised in virtue of a mission entrusted to them by the Church." (GDC 224)*

The role of the pastor in the catechetical endeavor then, is primarily that of ensuring that the catechetical needs of the entire Christian community are met, including the evangelization of those who are seeking entrance into the community. He does this by calling forth the gifts and talents of those in the community, identifying catechists and leaders, and empowering them to carry out the catechetical plans and programs of the parish with him. The immensity of the task of catechesis is such that the pastor cannot do it alone.

It is essential to effective catechesis that the pastor hire a qualified and competent catechetical leader to help him in his role as educator in the faith. (See the previous section on "Catechetical Leaders".) It is important that he meet regularly with the catechetical leader for planning, coordinating and addressing any issues or questions that arise. This leader also participates in staff meetings along with other professional members of the pastoral staff.

The Office of Faith Formation is available to assist pastors in carrying out their catechetical responsibilities.

Diocese

"In the Diocese catechesis is a unique service performed jointly by priests, deacons, religious and laity, in communion with the Bishop". (GDC 219)

"The diocesan catechetical office is the means which the Bishop as head of the community and teacher of doctrine utilizes to direct and moderate all the catechetical activities of the diocese". (GDC 265)

The Bishop

It is the Bishop who bears primary responsibility for catechesis within the diocese. He carries out this responsibility through his preaching, by putting forth a vision of catechesis, and by setting catechetical standards. It is he who provides the "overall direction of catechesis in the particular Church" (GDC 223). He delegates the day-to-day practical concern of catechesis to the Office of Faith Formation. The policies, programs, and services of that office are carried out under the auspices of the Bishop. At both the diocesan and the parish level, all those who serve in catechetical ministry do so in collaboration with the Bishop.

The Office of Faith Formation

The Office of Faith Formation of the Diocese of Springfield (OFF) is missioned for advocacy, service and formation for quality catechesis for all ages.

As an *advocate*, it acts as the Bishop's delegate in making catechesis a priority and putting forth a diocesan vision of catechesis that is reflected in its policies and guidelines. It acts as an advocate for pastors and parish leaders in their roles of implementing catechesis in the parish. The OFF advocates that quality catechesis is made available to adults, youth, and children of the parish, as well as those in the wider communities who are seeking a renewed or new relationship with God and the Church. The OFF is a place where all involved can bring their catechetical concerns.

In its role of *service,* the OFF provides consultation for parish leadership and other agencies in planning and implementing catechetical programs for adults, youth and children. General reading materials about our Catholic faith and spirituality are available for borrowing by interested persons.

A major component of the service of the OFF is *formation* for catechetical ministries. Training and enrichment programs are provided for catechists and catechetical leaders in all areas of catechesis: adult education and RCIA, and catechesis for children and youth. A certification program for catechists and catechetical leaders is provided through this office.

The Office of Faith Formation relates to other agencies and groups. It works collaboratively with other diocesan offices, such as the Offices of Latino Ministry, Youth Ministry, Permanent Deaconate, and Catholic Schools. The staff attends to its own continuing education and enrichment, as well as its relationship to the wider Church. This relationship to the wider Church is attained through involvement in regional and national

organizations e.g., the Diocesan Leaders for Evangelization In New England, the National Conference of Catechetical Leaders, and the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.

Parish catechesis is carried out under the auspices of the Bishop and the OFF, providing catechesis according to the diocesan vision, policies and guidelines. The parish benefits by taking advantage of the catechetical services provided by the diocese. Catechetical leadership in the parish works closely with the OFF in planning and implementing its catechetical programs.

C. Financial Commitment

The pursuit of excellence in catechesis is reflected in a financial commitment that recognizes the parish catechetical endeavor as a priority. The parish makes a serious effort to identify the broad spectrum of catechetical needs and develops an adequate budget to meet those needs. While some parishes have more resources available to them than others, all parishes have a responsibility to assure that specific funds are made available for catechesis, even as they assure funding for other necessary or required expenses.

Importance of Financial Commitment to Total Catechesis

A specific budget for catechesis makes a strong statement to the entire parish community about the value of catechesis. It is a concrete expression of the parish's commitment to form adults and children in the faith. It is a tool for planning that assists parish leadership in implementing comprehensive catechesis for each year. A catechetical budget gives leaders and catechists clear parameters for the available financial resources and encourages them to plan and prioritize spending.

Sample Budget

Items to be considered in a parish catechetical budget include but are not limited to:

- Catechist training
- Adult education programs
- RCIA catechesis
- Teaching materials such as texts and their supplements
- Audio-visual materials
- Speakers
- Subscriptions to professional journals
- Catechist appreciation and support
- Supplementary programs such as retreats, Vacation Bible School, etc.
- Hospitality (refreshments, etc.)
- Supplemental catechetical supplies
- Office supplies, postage, etc.

A major component of a catechetical budget is salaries and benefits for the catechetical leader(s) and staff. These are being listed separately since most parishes put salaries into a separate category. Benefits would include:

- Health insurance
- Pension
- Continuing education and formational experiences for the catechetical leader(s)
- Conference expenses for the catechetical leader(s)
- Mileage expense for meetings and conferences
- Dues for professional memberships

Each parish is unique. There is no one budget that fits all. It is important that the catechetical leaders and Finance Council work closely in designing a budget that fits into the budget structure of the parish.

D. Creative Possibilities

It is often advantageous for parishes to combine resources in order to provide a better catechetical program. This can be accomplished through implementing specific aspects of catechesis on a regional basis or by parish clustering that includes most or all of the catechetical programs. Some factors to determine the suitability of such combined programs would include:

Geographical proximity and a positive relationship
Small parishes that have limited resources
Similar ethnic demographics

The primary consideration is to provide the most effective catechesis that maintains the basic elements of word, worship, service and community. Larger is not necessarily better. Class size, especially for children and youth, should include no more than 12 participants. It is important that those involved in combined programs do not lose a sense of community and parish identity. While financial considerations are an important factor, they are not the highest measure of whether such combinations will be successful. It is also important that all involved parishes make a clear commitment in terms of sharing resources and planning.

Regional Programs

Regional programs are those in which one or more catechetical programs are shared by one or more parishes. Some possible combinations are:

- ***Adult education programming***. - This can be a very beneficial inter-parochial activity, whether through lecture series, small group experiences or parish missions. It is especially helpful when one parish does not have the financial resources to pay speakers or the facilities to host programs.

- ***Adult sacramental preparation***. - Collaborating with local parishes to prepare adults for Confirmation is especially beneficial when there are small numbers in each parish.

- ***RCIA catechesis***. - While some RCIA formation may take place in a combined setting*, it is essential that all rites, including the weekly dismissal rite and breaking open the Word, be done in the parish in which the catechumen or candidate will be initiated.* (See the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the RCIA in the Diocese of Springfield*, paragraphs 92-96 for further suggestions.)

- ***Ecumenical and interfaith programs for adults***. - Programs focused on topics such as social justice, mutual understanding and dialogue, and local issues are most appropriate. It is essential that these take place under sound leadership with ecumenical sensitivity.

- ***Catechist training and updating***. - These especially lend themselves to regional gatherings. They provide opportunities for catechists to interact with each other and share ideas.

- ***School age catechesis***. - Either some or all aspects are combined. For sacramental preparation, the catechesis and parent involvement may happen jointly, but the liturgical celebrations should take place in the child's home parish.

- ***Supplementary programs such as retreats and Vacation Bible School.***

SECTION 3

GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS IN THE DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

Guide to Abbreviations

Can   *Code of Cannon Law*, 1983

Gd.   Refers to other sections of these Guidelines

GI   General Introduction to the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,* 1988

NS   National Statutes for the Catechumenate, 1988

R   *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,* 1988

Introduction

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) is the church's rite for initiating adults into the mission of Jesus Christ through communion with the Roman Catholic Church. It is celebrated in a series of periods (formation) and steps (liturgies) that unfold gradually over time. **"From September 1, 1988 the use of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is mandatory in the dioceses of the United States."** (From the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, dated March 18, 1988, promulgating the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.)*

The primary concern of the RCIA is the conversion of an individual to God within a community context. Such conversion is the work of God in which we, the church, participate.

In response to the provision in the RCIA for bishops "to lay down norms according to local needs" (R 34), the Diocesan RCIA Steering Committee presents these *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults in the Diocese of Springfield*.

These guidelines, containing commentary and recommendations, are designed to help in implementing and interpreting the catechumenate in the Springfield Diocese. They include adaptations for children of catechetical age. The guidelines and recommendations that follow are not intended to be a presentation or explanation of the RCIA. **There can be no substitute for reading the official document, the** *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,* **promulgated by National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States in 1988**.

A. Persons Involved in the Process

Team Formation

1. Initiation into full membership in the church is the responsibility of all the baptized (R 9; GI 7). Individual Catholics, the local parish and the diocese share the support and formation of catechumens and candidates. Although the pastor is charged with implementing and overseeing the RCIA, it is strongly recommended that parishes organize an RCIA team.

2. Team members should be trained in their respective areas of involvement through study of the Rite, reading commentaries on the RCIA, and participating in diocesan and regional workshops and institutes. It is highly encouraged that team members, especially the coordinators, participate in the diocesan RCIA Catechist Training Workshops or their equivalent. Shared prayer and scripture reflection are a necessary element in the formation of team members so that they can authentically model and invite catechumens and candidates into these activities. Ideally, members of the team are comfortable with faith sharing and have good listening and group dynamics skills.

3. The leadership and composition of the team will necessarily vary from parish to parish. With that in mind, the following roles can be identified as <u>vital</u> to the RCIA:

- The **pastor or a parochial vicar** who serves as spiritual guide and resource and presides over the major rites;
- A **director or coordinator** who is actively involved in organizing the process and coordinating the work of various team members;
- **Catechists** who are formally trained in catechetics, especially adult learning models and the lectionary.

In addition, it is <u>helpful</u> to have on the team:

- A **liturgy coordinator** who prepares the various liturgies of the *Rite* in conjunction with the celebrant and parish musicians;
- **A spiritual director** who acts as a spiritual guide and resource to the catechumens and candidates as well as the team;
- **A coordinator of sponsors** who acts as a liaison between the team and the sponsors;
- **Hospitality people** who assist in preparing a welcoming environment for all activities;
- **A coordinator of catechumenate for children** who acts as liaison to the larger team;
- **Other team members** who assist and support in the overall implementation of the Rite.

The make-up of the team varies according to parish circumstances. The ideal is that the coordinator's sole responsibility is Christian initiation. It may be expedient to divide the responsibilities between coordinators, particularly in parishes where volunteers carry out this ministry. In terms of team members, it is ideal that each of the above team tasks is handled by one person. However, some roles may be combined and fulfilled by one person according to the parish's available talents and the needs of the parish catechumenate. See Appendix A for job descriptions for Christian initiation ministers.

4. Initially, as the team first organizes itself, it needs to set goals and establish communication with the parish staff, the Parish Pastoral Council and the entire parish community. To get started, a team needs to attend to:

- The training and formation of its members;
- Organizing itself according to tasks and responsibilities;
- Educating and informing the parish community about the *Rite*;
- Establishing a calendar of its own activities as well as a time line for beginning the precatechumenate and potential dates for celebrating the rite of acceptance and/or welcome.

5. The ongoing tasks of the team include:

- Establishing an atmosphere of hospitality and openness in the parish to provide a basis for evangelization;
- Ongoing formation of the team members;
- Evaluation of the entire parish RCIA process;
- Discernment with and for those who approach the various steps of the *Rite*.

As the team grows and progresses with its implementation of the *Rite*, the roles and responsibilities of its members may change and expand. Periodic discernment of the gifts and level of commitment of the members needs to take place. All of the above needs to be carried out in a spirit of prayer and open communication with each other, the candidates and the parish staff.

Sponsors and Godparents

6. The introduction to the *Rite* (R 10, 11) makes a distinction between the sponsor and the godparent. The sponsor accompanies the candidate through the rite of acceptance and the catechumenate period. The godparent accompanies the catechumens through the rite of election, the periods of purification and enlightenment, the celebration of initiation and the period of mystagogy. Actually, it works best when one person serves both roles. In the case of candidates for full communion, the sponsor serves through the entire process, since there is no need for a godparent.

7. **The role of the sponsor** is an active one that includes:

- Presenting the inquirer to the parish community at the rite of acceptance/welcome;
- Participating with the catechumen/candidate at all the liturgical rites of the catechumenate;
- Offering support and encouragement for the candidate;
- Witnessing to the candidate's moral character, faith, and intention;
- Providing a link to the parish community;
- Assisting in the discernment process of the candidate.

In order to fulfill these roles adequately it is presumed that the sponsor will regularly participate in catechetical sessions with the candidate/catechumen.

8. **The role of the godparent** which begins with the rite of election and continues throughout the candidate's baptismal life is clearly outlined in the *Rite* (11). As with the sponsor it includes active involvement with the elect, while offering support and encouragement.

9. Sponsors may be chosen by the parish RCIA team and/or the candidate, although both the team and the candidate need to be involved in this choice. Godparents are chosen by the catechumen and approved by the pastor. Since the role of the godparent is one defined by canon law, he or she must be fully initiated in the Roman Catholic Church, not a parent of the candidate, and be living a life consistent with the faith and responsibility of a godparent (GI 10.2). Pastoral needs suggest that the same standards would apply to sponsors. Since both the sponsor and the godparent act as witnesses to the Christian faith, this example should be evident in a life of prayer, participation in the liturgical life of the parish, and a life of gospel values.

10. There are a variety of ways for choosing sponsors. Sometimes the sponsor may be a friend of the candidate, possibly even the one who initially brought him/her to the faith. Or, the candidate may know someone in the parish and would like to invite that person to act as his/her sponsor. On the other hand, the parish may have a pool of sponsors from which an appropriate one would be chosen for each individual. In any event the sponsor must be a member of the parish and know the candidate sufficiently to present him/her to the community at the rite of acceptance. Therefore, it is recommended that potential sponsors participate to some extent in the inquiry period. Both the sponsor and the candidate should be agreeable to the choice which is made with the approval of the RCIA coordinator, sponsor coordinator, or team, as well as the pastor. Pastoral experience has shown that it may not be in the best interest of the candidate to choose a spouse or fiancé(e) as the sponsor.

11. Both sponsors and godparents must understand their role, have a basic understanding of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, and be willing to make the commitment to serve in this role. Appropriate training should take place that includes methods of sharing faith and discernment. The sponsors and godparents also need to

be familiar with the rites in which they will have a part. It is they who rehearse with the presider, not the candidates, so that they can lead the candidates through the liturgy. This allows the candidates to fully experience the liturgies without concern for details, such as, where to sit, when to stand, what to do.

Identification of Individual Needs of Catechumens and Candidates

12. Although the RCIA is designed specifically for unbaptized adults, the reality is that adults with particular spiritual needs and/or at various stages of the initiation process, as well as children, are approaching the Church seeking membership or spiritual nourishment and support. In order to respect each person's unique background and differing needs, special provisions have been included in the *Rite*.

13. Following is a list of the various categories of people who may approach the Church and the section of the *Rite* that would apply to them:

    a. **Unbaptized adults**, i.e., not baptized in either a Catholic or Protestant Church. See *Rite*, Part I.

    b. **Adults baptized in another Christian denomination.**1
See Rite, Part II, Nos. 4 and 5.

    c. **Adults baptized in the Catholic Church who were never catechized**, i.e., who never received instruction or upbringing in the Catholic tradition, and never received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. See Rite Part II Nos. 4 and 5.

    d. **Unbaptized children age 7 or older.**2 See Rite, Part II, No. 1.

    e. **Children age 7 or older baptized in another Christian denomination.** See NS 19.

    f. **Unbaptized adults in exceptional circumstances,** e.g. sickness, old age, change of residence, long absence for travel. See Rite, Part II, No.2.

    g. **Persons in danger of death.** See Rite, Part II, No. 3.

14. While the individuals described above may have some similar needs and may be able to take part in some parts of the RCIA together, it is important to respect the differences among them. It is especially important to acknowledge and respect the valid Baptism of those seeking to join the Roman Catholic Church from other Christian churches. Rites designed for the unbaptized catechumen cannot be celebrated with a baptized candidate without adaptation as provided in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Appendix I.

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1 The baptisms of the mainline Protestant churches are accepted as valid. Please contact the Chancellor's Office if there is any doubt.

2 Canon 97.2: "Before the completion of the seventh year a minor is called an infant and is held to be incompetent. With the completion of the seventh year one is presumed to have the use of reason."

15. Following is a list of <u>various circumstances and needs which the RCIA was not designed to address.</u> A pastoral process should be established in the parish to meet these needs. Please contact the Diocesan Consultant for Adult Education and RCIA for suggestions, guidance and assistance.

> a. **Children age 7 and older baptized in the Catholic Church** who are uncatechized and never received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. The liturgical rites of the RCIA are not designed for   children in this category.
> b. **Catechized Catholics** who wish to complete their initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation.
> c. **Alienated but fully initiated adult Catholics** (received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) who wish to return to the Church.
> d. **Fully initiated adult Catholics who seek updating or spiritual support.**

16. We need to recognize individual differences in the backgrounds and experiences of the candidates. The pastor or his delegate from the parish RCIA team needs to speak with each person seeking membership in the Church to assess his or her religious background and understanding, familiarity with the Catholic tradition, and family situation. With a spirit of welcome and hospitality, this initial assessment should be done very early in the precatechumenate. A sample questionnaire is provided in Appendix B of this section to guide this initial meeting.

17. Christian initiation impacts an entire family system. RCIA team members must be sensitive to family situations. If family members of candidates or catechumens are not Catholic and/or are not supportive of the individual's decision to seek initiation into the Catholic faith, efforts should be made to allay their fears. Candidates and catechumens from such families need particular support and attention.

B. Stages and Rites

Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

18. Evangelization is the responsibility of all the baptized. It is a parish's response to the mission of the church and demonstrates an ongoing effort to invite others to join the journey in an atmosphere of hospitality and openness. The goal of the precatechumenate is to help inquirers to realize an initial awareness of God's saving presence in their lives and their readiness to follow Jesus Christ.

19. In this stage, the catechist helps the inquirers make connections between their life stories and the sacred scriptures. Thus the role of the catechist is to formulate questions and to develop a process that leads the inquirers to a deeper awareness of God's presence in their lives. (See Appendix C, "Model Catechetical Session.")

20. This period could last anywhere from a few weeks to a few years depending on the background and readiness of each individual. For example, individuals baptized and active in another Christian denomination may need only a few weeks, while those from non-churched or non-Christian backgrounds may need an extensive precatechumenate. **Pastoral experience has shown that this period is critical in the formation of these individuals and must not be rushed.**

21. Early in the precatechumenate it is important to conduct a personal interview with each candidate to determine one's sacramental status, any previous church affiliation, and whether there are any marriage issues to be resolved. (See Appendix B, "Inquiry Interview.")

22. If there are any irregular marriage situations, they should be addressed promptly with pastoral sensitivity. Where there is a need for an annulment, begin the annulment process as soon as possible. Although one may enter into the catechumenate period while an annulment is pending, that person may not celebrate the rite of election or the Sacraments of Initiation until the annulment is granted. If a marriage needs to be convalidated (properly witnessed and accepted by the church), that should take place during the catechumenate period before the rite of election. It is important that the RCIA coordinator work with the parish priest and, if necessary, with the Diocesan Tribunal when there are marriage issues to be resolved.

23.   Before the rite of acceptance or welcome is celebrated, sufficient time should be set aside for the inquirers to enter into a process of discernment with the catechumenate team and sponsors. Part of this discernment process should include a personal interview with each individual with the pastor or coordinator with regard to his or her readiness to move to the next stage. See *Rite* (42) for the prerequisite for celebrating the rite of acceptance or welcome.

STEP ONE: Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

24.   This is the first of the rites celebrated publicly marking the completion of the precatechumenate stage. As the *Rite* suggests, this celebration may take place on two or three dates during the year at a weekend liturgy. In choosing these dates, the following should be considered:

- The readiness of the candidates (See Gd. 23.)
- Sunday readings appropriate for the rite
- The liturgical season (avoid the seasons of Advent and Lent)

25. This celebration needs to be well prepared. The catechumens must understand the commitment they are making. The congregation needs to be informed ahead of time of its role, particularly the first time it is celebrated. The rite should be rehearsed with the presider, the sponsors (but not with the potential catechumens or candidates), the music minister and any other ministers who will be involved. Adaptations are encouraged where the *Rite* allows, such as the exhortations of the presider, the general intercessions and allowing for responses of the candidates in their own words. Consideration must be made to maintain the integrity of the rite and the symbols: e.g., the movement, the full signing of all the senses and the presentation of the Word.

26. After the celebration of the rite of acceptance, the names of the catechumens are to be inscribed in the register of catechumens (R 46).

27. When there are candidates for full communion participating, a combined rite should be used (R 505-529).

28. If there are only candidates for full communion, the rite of welcoming the candidates is used (R 411-433).

Period of the Catechumenate

29.   The period of the catechumenate is a prolonged period of formation in Christian life, to last a minimum of one full year and may extend for two or three years (NS 6). The duration of this period depends on the progress of the individual and may vary for each catechumen. This period may be abbreviated for candidates for full communion who are at least partially catechized and have participated fully in the life of their church, whether Catholic or another Christian tradition.

30. This formation process is achieved through:
- Catechesis which is gradual, suitable and accommodated to the liturgical year
- Growth in a sense of Christian community through the support and witness of the entire community
- Celebration of appropriate liturgical rites

- Participation in the apostolic mission of the church e.g., by acts of charity and Christian witness

31. The primary text is the lectionary. Catechesis during this period follows the order and structure of the liturgical year. Other resources are used to expand on the issues and doctrine that arise out of the scriptures and the liturgical year. (See Appendix C, "Model Catechetical Session".)

32. Catechumens are expected to participate together in the Sunday Liturgy of the Word, after which they are to be dismissed ritually to break open the Word with a catechist. The rite of dismissal at Sunday Mass is a powerful experience for the catechumens and the community. It calls for those who remain to consider the meaning of the Eucharist in their lives and to give witness to their faith. Candidates for full communion are also encouraged to participate in the dismissal rite since they cannot come to the table; and this is a prime catechetical moment. (See Part II, Sections 4 and 5 of the *Rite*.)

33. The anointing of catechumens should take place at least once during this period and may be repeated as needed for God's help and strength. Blessings and minor exorcisms are also to be celebrated periodically, as will benefit the catechumens. It is desirable that these be celebrated within the context of a celebration of the Word or catechetical session.

34. When the catechumenate is lengthy, the presentation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may take place during this period. These are normally celebrated during the period of purification and enlightenment.

35. Before the rite of election is celebrated, a discernment process should take place similar to that before the rite of acceptance (Gd. 23). The catechumens are expected to have undergone a conversion in mind and in action and to have developed a spirit of faith and charity (R 120).

STEP TWO: Rite of Election

36. The rite of election celebrates the Church's recognition of the readiness of the catechumens to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. "This step is called the enrollment of names because, as a pledge of fidelity, the candidates inscribe their name in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation" (R 119).

37. The rite of election is normally celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent for those who will be received into the Church during the Easter solemnities. This rite marks the beginning of the final and more intense preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation.

38. The Diocese of Springfield celebrates one combined rite of election of catechumens and of the call to continuing conversion of candidates who are preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church (R 547-561).

All adult catechumens are expected to participate in this diocesan celebration with their godparents. All candidates for full communion are also strongly encouraged to participate in this rite along with their sponsors. Children in the catechumenate process and their godparents are encouraged to participate as well.

39. This solemn rite is the focal point of the Church's concern for the catechumens. **It is the Bishop who presides at the rite of election, normally held at the Diocesan Cathedral.** Only with serious exception and with permission of the bishop is this rite to be celebrated in the parish**.**

40. At the parish level, a rite of sending should be celebrated prior to the rite of election (preferably on that Sunday, but if pastoral need requires, it may be celebrated the Sunday before). This rite emphasizes the support of the local community before going forth to the larger diocesan community. Refer to the *Rite* for an adapted rite for candidates for full communion (R 434-443), and also for a combined rite for catechumens and candidates for full communion (R 536-545).

41. In the Diocese of Springfield, the catechumens sign the book of the elect at the diocesan celebration. Therefore, they do not sign a book in the parish. In recognition of their Baptism, candidates for full communion do not sign the book of the elect.

Period of Purification and Enlightenment

42. "The period of purification and enlightenment is a time of intense spiritual preparation that occurs during Lent' (R 138-139). The focus of this period in the RCIA is twofold: the proximate preparation of the elect for the Easter sacraments through prayer and penance, and the challenge to the local community to enter more deeply the cycle of the paschal event through the witness of the elect and their conversion journey. During this period there are certain rites that help bring about this purification and enlightenment: scrutinies, presentations of the Creed and Lord's Prayer, as well as the preparation rites for initiation."[3]

43**. An integral aspect of this stage is the celebration of the scrutinies**. It is required that all three be celebrated, one each on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. When the elect are present, the Cycle A readings are used throughout the Easter Season, since the prayers and catechesis are directly linked to these readings. To avoid confusion for the congregation, most missalettes now include or at least refer to the Cycle A readings during the weeks that the scrutinies are celebrated. Permission from the bishop is required to dispense with any of the scrutinies, and only for very serious reasons. (See Appendix C, "Model Catechetical Session on the Scrutinies".)

44. The scrutinies are not celebrated with the candidates for full communion. Rather, they participate with the rest of the baptized in praying for the elect. An optional penitential

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[3] Thomas H. Morris, *The RCIA: Transforming the Church*
(Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989) p.108.

rite may be celebrated for the candidates for full communion on the Second Sunday of Lent (R 459-471).

45. The presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer are to be celebrated at a liturgy with at least some of the community present. These presentations may have been anticipated during the catechumenate (Gd. 34).

46. Parishes are strongly encouraged to celebrate the preparation rites on Holy Saturday. It is suggested that these rites be celebrated in connection with Morning Prayer, a growing practice in many parishes.

STEP THREE: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

47. This is the liturgical rite by which the elect complete their initiation through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. It takes place during the parish celebration of the Easter Vigil.

48. The priest who confers Baptism upon an individual is authorized to confirm that individual in the absence of the Bishop (NS 12; Can 885.2).

Period of Mystagogy

49. "Sacramental initiation does not end at the Easter sacraments. The RCIA provides for the final period, the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy (that is, reflection on the mysteries). The neophytes, along with the community, reflect together on the celebration of the Easter mysteries - the paschal event - and begin the process of making it a full and active part of their lives. The neophytes continue to gather weekly, supported by the community and their godparents, until Pentecost."[4]

50. The neophytes (the newly initiated) continue to participate together with their godparents in Sunday Masses throughout the Easter Season. The Cycle A Readings are recommended for the Masses with neophytes.

51. Catechesis continues to focus on the Liturgy of the Word, as well as reflection on how the neophytes will participate in the life and mission of the Church. The neophytes need to discern their own particular gifts and how they will use their gifts to serve as disciples in the local and larger community. However, it is not recommended that the neophytes become involved in catechetical or liturgical ministries during the first year. Rather, they are encouraged to participate in works of charity, as reflected in the corporal works of mercy.[5] (See Appendix C, "Model Catechetical Session".)

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[4] Morris, p. 134.

[5] Mt 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me."

52. The *National Statutes* call for the period of mystagogy to continue until the first anniversary of the neophytes' initiation (NS 24). Monthly meetings for support, catechesis and social activities are recommended. In addition to gathering together as a group, the neophytes need to be integrated into catechetical, social and outreach activities of the parish.

53. **Suggestions for Neophyte Gatherings and Activities**

- Gather them for catechesis on Holy Days of Obligation, as well as other days in the Sanctoral Cycle e.g., Feast of the Assumption, All Saints/All Souls Day, Feast of Peter and Paul the Apostles (June 29), Vincent de Paul (Sept. 27).
- Invite neophytes to witness to their experience at Sunday Mass or other parish events.
- Invite them to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at an Advent Penance Service.
- Extend a personal invitation to participate in parish adult education programs, social events, and opportunities for spiritual development.
- Extend a personal invitation to join parish societies and organizations.
- Connect them with people doing outreach ministries, such as, prison ministry, visiting the sick, working in the soup kitchens.
- The sponsors and/or godparents should keep in touch with them on a regular basis throughout this period.

C. Adaptations

54. The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is to be followed for all who seek to join the Catholic Church. However, certain adaptations are made for children of catechetical age and adults who are already baptized Catholic but never completed their initiation, and for adults and children validly baptized in another Christian tradition.

Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age (R 252-330)

55. Unbaptized children who have attained the age of reason [seven years (Can 97)] and children baptized in another Christian tradition should be led through all the stages and rites of Christian initiation leading to their celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Gd. 13, d and e) and/or reception into full communion with the Catholic Church.

56. The children seeking initiation may come through the urging of their families or of their own volition. Children under the age of fourteen must have parental consent to enter this process. Parents/Guardians of children between the ages of 14 and 18 must be informed of their children's intentions. Great sensitivity must be used when dealing with the families of children who are journeying in the faith and they must be urged to be involved with the process as much as possible. Here are some suggestions for parent/guardian involvement:

- Participation in parent/guardian meetings recommended four times a year in preparation for the rites as children move from one stage to the next
- Regular participation at weekly liturgies and at the RCIA celebrations
- Take-home materials for parents to work with their children

57. Parents/Guardians, godparents, sponsors, catechists and the entire parish community should support children in the RCIA process. Peer companions from the parish can and should be encouraged to join the process as a support to the participants.

58. Frequently, unbaptized children or those who were baptized in another Christian tradition surface in the parish religious education program or the Catholic school. Either they themselves or their parents/guardians request initiation into the Catholic Church. Their preparation for initiation should take place in a catechumenate process apart from the religious education grade level program or the Catholic school. It may be appropriate to remove them from the parish grade level program, but not from the Catholic school religion classes, while in the preparation process. However, it is the parish, not the school, which bears the responsibility of preparing for initiation sacraments. Some of their peers from the parish or school should participate with them in a supportive role. After their initiation, they are to be integrated into the parish religious education program or continue in the Catholic school religion program. Mystagogical catechesis continues in this setting.

59. "The Christian Initiation of children requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed in proportion to their age and the assistance of the education they need" (R 253). According to their age children should be able to demonstrate a relationship with Jesus as the heart of the Christian experience. The children should also be able to demonstrate a personal prayer life, an acceptance of the Christian moral life and a relationship with the community.

60. The catechesis and the liturgical aspects of the process for children need to be adapted according to their age and needs. Children benefit from experiencing all of the rites including the rite of acceptance/welcome, the rite of election, the scrutinies, the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and any mystagogical celebrations. Although the *Rite* suggests that only one scrutiny must be celebrated and an adaptation is provided, (R 294, 297), it is recommended that children participate in the adult celebration of all three scrutinies. It is important that appropriate catechesis precede and follow the scrutinies. When the adult rite is used, the language should be adapted accordingly. Initiation should take place at the Easter Vigil.

61. The length of preparation for children will depend on the individual. While the catechumenate should never be rushed, neither should it be unduly lengthened when dealing with children.

Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist
(R 400-472; NS 25-29)

62. The status of baptized but uncatechized Catholic adults differs from that of catechumens since by Baptism they are already members of the Church. Although their catechesis may be shared with catechumens to some extent, their Baptism must be constantly recognized and affirmed. Their special status should always be differentiated from the catechumens, particularly when celebrating the rites. (See R, Part II, Section 4 "Optional Rites for Baptized Uncatechized Adults" 411-472; Appendix I: "Additional Combined Rites".)

63. Those who have had any catechesis or participation in the Church since their First Eucharist, although they may have been away from the Church for some time, are considered candidates for Confirmation. The adaptation found in Part II, Section 4 of the *Rite* is not intended for them. **Although adult Confirmation candidates do need a preparation period, there should be a separate program for this.** (See Diocesan Handbook Section 1E "Immediate Sacrament Preparation: Adult Confirmation"). This adaptation is intended for baptized, uncatechized adults preparing to complete their initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Some people may have received Eucharist, but have not had any further catechesis or connection with the Church. This adaptation may also extend to these people, being careful to adapt the rites further to reflect their status as people who have already been in communion with the body of Christ.

64. Uncatechized adults preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist will benefit from an extended period of formation, similar to that of catechumens. The adapted rites for them will strengthen them in this formation process, as well as mark the stages of their progress. Participation in the dismissal rite is encouraged for these candidates, but may not be required of them since they do have a right by Baptism to participate in the Eucharistic Prayer. Each candidate should have a sponsor for support and guidance and to present the candidates for the rituals (See Gd. 7.).

65. Although they may be received into the Church at any time depending on their readiness, it is preferable that their final phase of preparation coincide with the Lenten season and they complete their initiation at the Easter Vigil. These candidates are also expected to participate in the rite of election of catechumens and the call to continuing conversion with the Bishop on the First Sunday of Lent. A penitential rite on the second Sunday of Lent may be celebrated in place of the scrutinies which are intended for the unbaptized only. The presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may be celebrated with these candidates if these rites have not been part of their experience.

66. The celebration of the penitential rite may serve as a context for further preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.   This sacrament is to be celebrated with the candidates prior to and distinct from the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist

67.   Ordinarily priests do not confer the sacrament of Confirmation upon baptized Catholics. (See exceptions: NS 28.) **Therefore, priests must request from the Bishop in writing the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, it is best to request this faculty before the rite of election or several weeks before their scheduled celebration of the sacraments.** The specific reasons for requesting this faculty must be clearly stated for each candidate.

68. In this diocese, the faculty to confirm Baptized adult Catholics who have participated in the RCIA process will be granted to the priest in either of the following situations:

> If they have not received Eucharist or Confirmation and are uncatechized.
>
> *or*
>
> If they have received First Eucharist but have not participated in the sacramental life of the Church or had any further catechesis since that time.

69. Those who have completed their initiation into the Church through Confirmation and Eucharist are to participate in mystagogy along with the neophytes.

Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church
(R 473-504)

70. The Rite of Reception into full communion may be celebrated at any time during the year, preferably at a Sunday Mass. No greater burden than necessary is required for the establishment of unity and communion. Those who have been validly baptized, catechized and actively involved in another Christian faith need little preparation. While continuing conversion is important, their preparation should focus on the Catholic way of life. It should include catechesis and an opportunity for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (See NS 36.)

71. Candidates for full communion are encouraged to participate in the adapted rites as found in Part II, Section 4. They participate in the Diocesan rite of election and continuing call to conversion if they are going to be received into the Church during the Easter season.

72. Uncatechized candidates for full communion require a lengthier period of preparation similar to that of uncatechized baptized Catholics. Their spiritual and catechetical formation will benefit greatly from the celebration of the adapted rite for those preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist. The presentation of the Creed and the Our Father are appropriate celebrations if these have not been part of their tradition.

73.   The duration and context of preparation will depend on the candidate's previous experience as well as his/her participation in dismissal catechesis and the various optional liturgical rites. Previously baptized but uncatechized Christians will benefit from catechesis and liturgical rites along with the catechumens. **However, these candidates are never to be confused with the catechumens**. Their special status is always recognized especially in the celebration of the liturgical rites. (See R Appendix 1: *Additional (Combined) Rites.)* Opportunities should be afforded to them to affirm and reflect on their Baptism, particularly during their immediate preparation for Confirmation and Eucharist.

74.   Although all candidates may benefit from dismissal catechesis, it should be encouraged rather then forced upon them. Those who are previously baptized and catechized and/or have participated in the liturgical assembly for a long time especially should be consulted about their participation in dismissal catechesis. Their wishes should be respected.

75. All validly baptized Christians (See Gd. footnote 2), are to be confirmed by the priest who celebrates their reception into the Church.

76.   After their reception, they are also encouraged to participate in mystagogical activities.

D. Preparation for Liturgies and Rites

77. Preparation for the liturgies and rites of the catechumenate are integrated into the catechetical sessions and necessary for a full and meaningful experience for the candidates. The foundation for celebrating the rites well begins with a thorough knowledge and understanding of each of the rites: what they signify and their impact on each if those present; e.g. the catechumens and candidates, sponsors, presider, RCIA team, liturgical ministers and the congregation. It is vital that those who are preparing the ceremonies have a thorough understanding of the prayers, texts, ritual actions and movements in order to provide a rich and deeply spiritual experience for all involved.

78. Experiencing the various ritual celebrations is intended to lead both the participants and the congregation toward growth in faith. Those in attendance are prompted to reflect upon their own faith, their own growth, and their own transitions. One cannot underestimate the powerful witness of the catechumen and candidate to all who are present at the ceremonies.

79. Appropriate music that stimulates and involves the community is to be encouraged. Resources are available from parish hymnals, as well as specific music for Christian initiation.

80. Required Rites
>   Rite of acceptance/welcoming
>   Rite of election
>   Scrutinies
>   The celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil

81. **Minor Rites whose use is recommended**
>   The minor exorcisms
>   Blessings
>   Anointing with oil of catechumens
>   The rite of sending
>   Presentations of the Creed and Our Father
>   The preparation rites on Holy Saturday

See Appendix D for a quick reference to which rites are celebrated with the candidates.

Process of Preparation for the Rites

82.   **Discernment:** To ensure that the catechumen or candidate is truly prepared, careful and prayerful discernment must be exercised by all involved through the various transitions in the RCIA process (Gd. 23, 35).

83. **Prayer**: The presider prayerfully reviews the texts, gestures, movements, etc. to reach a level of familiarity that will lead to a deeper understanding of each celebration. Then the rites may be appropriately adapted (Gd. 25).

84. **Coordination/rehearsal**: The director of the RCIA process is responsible for all of the preparation necessary for the proper and meaningful administration of the rites. This includes preparing the catechumens/ candidates and their sponsors for those aspects of the rite that they need to know, consultation with the scheduled presider, and coordinating and possible rehearsing with those in ministerial roles who will execute the ceremony; e.g. presider, music ministers, lectors, coordinator of altar servers, ushers, etc.

85**. Explanations**: Prior to the celebration of the rites, the community needs to be informed about the nature and purpose of the rite. It is important that the congregation understands their role and expectations for participation in the ceremonies. This could be done through an announcement prior to the start of the liturgy. Ceremony programs are a good way to ensure full participation.

Proper Presiders for Each of the Rites

86. The regular presider for the rite of election is the Bishop of the diocese. For serious pastoral reasons, the pastor of the parish may celebrate the rite of election. The norm, however, is that the Bishop of the diocese preside.

87. For the other major rites (acceptance/welcoming, the scrutinies), the presider is a priest or deacon. Also, the priest or deacon does the anointing with the oil of catechumens.

88. The minor exorcisms and blessings may be done by a priest, deacon, or catechist.

Celebrating the Rites

89. Appropriate settings are to be considered. Most of the rites are celebrated in the church itself during a weekend liturgy. The ideal settings for the minor exorcisms and blessings are a special Liturgy of the Word for the catechumens, at the end of the catechetical sessions, or at the dismissal rite at the end of the Liturgy of the Word at the Sunday Eucharist.

90. Ritual gestures in each of the rites most effectively reveal their meaning when they are administered properly, not hurriedly, nor over dramatically. Each of the gestures carries within its nature the possibility of the purpose of the gesture in God's plan to be revealed. For example, during the rite of acceptance/welcoming, as each of the senses is signed, a rich, full Sign of the Cross done with a whole hand will better show how that particular sense now belongs to Christ, rather than a quick gesture done with the thumb or forefinger.

91. Similarly, as each of the rites is celebrated, the ritual gesture must be done carefully, thoughtfully, and with purpose. Each of these moments has a very specific gesture which, for the most powerful impact, must be performed with purpose and understanding. The primary ritual gestures proper to each of the rites are as follows:

•   Rite of acceptance/welcoming - the signing of the senses with the cross;
•   Anointing with the oil of catechumens - the anointing gesture;
•   Minor exorcism - the laying on of hands;
•   Blessing of the catechumen - extending the hands over those to be blessed;
•   Rite of election - the signing of the book of the elect;
•   Scrutinies - the gathering of the catechumens with heads bowed for prayer of the community;
•   Easter Sacraments: Baptism - pouring the baptismal water; Chrismation (Confirmation) - anointing with sacred chrism; Eucharist - the procession and reception.

RCIA: Preparation

E. Implementation of Christian Initiation with Combined Parishes

92. The changing parish structure which is taking place in this as well as other dioceses raises special issues of implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. In addition to individual parishes, the following structures are currently present or emerging in the Diocese of Springfield:

- Parishes with missions
- Two or more parishes sharing one pastor
- Separate parishes, which combine some programs e.g., religious education.

93. The *Rite* presumes certain principles that guide the initiation process in all of these situations. The guiding principle is that initiation is the responsibility of all the baptized (R 9). This implies that each worshiping community should call forth its own members to assist in the initiation process. Similarly, initiation takes place in the midst of the community. The catechumens and candidates breathe new life into the community through their interaction with it. When the catechumenate takes place apart from the community or in another community, the faithful are deprived of the experience of conversion, which is a reminder of the treasure of faith. The potential for bringing new life to the parish is lost.

94. On the practical side it is best to keep initiation parish based so that neophytes will have been formed in their permanent community of worship. It is difficult for the neophyte who has prepared for initiation apart from this community to return to it. Oftentimes, neophytes in this situation, in fact, end up becoming worshiping members of the parish in which their formation took place, which is a loss to what could have been their "home" parish.

95. In light of the above, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- All the rites, including dismissal catechesis for catechumens and candidates, are to be celebrated in the parish that will be their permanent community of worship.
- The elect and candidates must be initiated at the Easter Vigil (or other appropriate time) in their own parish.
- Mid-week catechesis may take place with combined parishes.
- Apostolic works may take place with combined parishes.
- Combined or regional parishes may benefit from one coordinator who oversees the implementation of the *Rite* for more than one community, with on-site coordinators in each of these communities.
- Team formation and support may take place in parish groupings while assuring that there are some team members for each community of worship.

96. **Every effort must be made to keep the initiation process parish based.** While it may be convenient or easier to combine parish processes for initiation, this practice compromises the *Rite* and deprives the parish community of a profound and life-giving experience. Even if there is only one candidate in any given parish community, the effort is to be made to form that person and celebrate the conversion process in that community. This complies with the spirit of the *Rite* and serves the best interests of the catechumens/candidates and the parish.

F. Samples/Appendices

Appendix A: Job Description for the RCIA Coordinator

                    Remuneration for Certified Coordinators

                    Job Descriptions for Various Coordinators of RCIA Ministries

Appendix B: Inquiry Interview

Appendix C: Model Catechetical Sessions for each of the Four Stages

                    Catechesis in the Precatechumenate Period

                    Catechesis in the Catechumenate Period

                    Catechesis in the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

                    Catechesis During Mystagogy

Appendix D: Guide: Who Participates in the Rites
                    Addendum: Eastern Churches

Appendix A

Job Description for the RCIA Coordinator

- Puts forth the vision of the Christian initiation process for the parish community, its leadership and the team;
- Provides or arranges for training of all ministers;
- Coordinates all the ministries within the RCIA;
- Convenes meetings for the team coordinators;
- Communicates with all members of the team and oversees communication with the parish, the coordinators, the catechumens and the candidates;
- Keeps abreast of diocesan and regional events for team members and communicates these to the team and the other initiation ministers as needed;
- Enables, encourages and supports the Christian initiation team in their ministry;
- Oversees the keeping of appropriate records of catechumens, candidates and neophytes.

Remuneration for Certified Coordinators

Christian initiation of adults and children is the responsibility of all the baptized. This assumes that the parish fully understands its mission to initiate so that enough ministers are available to assist the coordinator.

A fully involved coordinator needs extensive training and invests a great amount of time in the implementation of the *Rite* in the parish. Therefore, a just remuneration is appropriate for those who meet the following criteria:

- They are fully trained and/or certified through our Diocesan Lay Ministry Formation program or hold an appropriate degree.
- They spend a substantial amount of time in coordinating the initiation process over and above what can be expected of a volunteer.

The use of the *Ministry Analysis Worksheet* (Diocesan Handbook Section 5) will be helpful in determining this remuneration.

RCIA: Samples/Appendices   Page   4

Job Descriptions for the Various Coordinators of RCIA Ministries

Inquiry:
    Publicizes the RCIA process and invites people to consider it
    Calls meetings for people interested in joining the Church
    Calls forward people to help with greeting and informing inquirers
    Informs RCIA Team when inquirers come forward
    Calls meetings to coordinate inquiry team schedule
    Helps provide welcoming environment for inquirers
    Schedules meetings for discernment process

Liturgy:
    Acts as liaison between team, clergy and music ministry of the parish
    Plans the celebrations of the rites
    Rehearses team and sponsors for celebrations

Hospitality:
    Recruits and schedules hospitality volunteers
    Explains task of hospitality ministry
    Makes resources available to provide welcoming atmosphere and environment for catechetical sessions
    Coordinates receptions, pot-luck, etc. for significant events

Catechist:
    Relays information, questions and concerns between the catechists and the RCIA coordinator
    Recruits and schedules catechists
    Meets periodically with the catechists
    Makes resources available for catechesis and prayer experiences
    Makes resources available for research on topics for discussion
    Works with the RCIA coordinator to arrange initial training and ongoing formation of catechists

Sponsor:
    Calls volunteers forward to be potential sponsors
    Sees to the formation of sponsors
    Coordinates opportunities for catechumens and candidates to meet with potential sponsors
    Relays information, questions and concerns between sponsors and the RCIA coordinator

Children's Catechumenate:
    Understands the RCIA process
    Participates as a member of the parish RCIA team
    Works with parents of the children through the entire process
    Supplies resources for the Children's Catechumenate
    Arranges for training of catechists involved in the Children's Catechumenate
    Coordinates and schedules children's catechetical and dismissal sessions
    Coordinates hospitality with the hospitality coordinator
    Solicits and coordinates peer and family companions for the Children's Catechumenate
    Works with each coordinator to plan any liturgical rites or significant events for the children and their families

Appendix B

Inquiry Interview

(This form serves as a guide for the initial interview. It is intended to be completed by the interviewer, not the inquirer. Confidentiality should be assured to the inquirer.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

When and where do you preferred to be called? _____

Date of Birth: _____Place of Birth: _____

Any other pertinent family background or issues, which would be helpful to the RCIA

team: _____

_____

SACRAMENTAL STATUS

Baptized: ___Yes (Baptismal certificate required) ___No

Denomination: _____ Date (if known): _____

Where: _____

Confirmed: _____Yes _____No   Where: _____

If Catholic, have you received Eucharist?   _____Yes   _____No

---

MARITAL STATUS:

____Married   ____Single   ____Engaged   ____Separated   ____Widowed

____Divorced   ____Annulled by Church

If married, name of spouse: _____

Church/place of marriage: _____

Married by: ____Priest   ____Minister   ____Justice of Peace

If married or engaged, is this your first marriage?   ____Yes   ____No

(If no)---Name of previous Spouse: _____

Church/Place of marriage (of spouse): _____

       Ended by: ____Death?   ____Divorce?   ____Annulled by Church?

Has your partner been married before?   ____Yes   ____No

(If yes)---Church/Place of marriage: _____

Ended by: ____Death?   ____Divorce?   ____Annulled by Church?

If engaged, name of fiancé(e): _____

Projected date of Marriage: _____ Place: _____

Spouse's/Fiancé(e)'s religion: _____

CHILDREN:

Name	Age	Baptized
_____	____	Yes No
_____	____	Yes No
_____	____	Yes No
_____	____	Yes No

OTHER INFORMATION:

Describe any previous religious training, education, or affiliation?

_____
_____
_____

Who or what prompted you to inquire about the Catholic Church?

_____
_____
_____

What members (if any) of this parish do you already know?

_____
_____

Add any other information that might be helpful for the pastoral staff:

_____
_____
_____

Additional Information For Children Seeking Initiation Sacraments

Name of Father: _____

Religion of Father: _____

Name of Mother: _____

Religion of Mother: _____

Marital Status of Parents: _____

Siblings: Age   Baptized?
_____

_____

_____

_____

Any other pertinent family information:
_____

_____

_____

_____

RCIA: Samples/Appendices

Appendix C

Model Catechetical Session for Each of the Four Stages

CATECHESIS IN THE PRE-CATECHUMENATE

The purpose of catechesis in the pre-catechumenate is to bring people to initial faith and conversion, i.e. evangelization (R 36-38). It is also a time for the inquirer to begin to develop a relationship with the local church community. The methodology involves helping people to connect the stories of their lives with the stories of Scripture and Catholic Tradition in an informal atmosphere. It is important that the inquirers be given an opportunity to raise their own questions and thus set the agenda for this stage.

A MODEL OF A PRE-CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Topic: Who Is God?

I. Talk about some common images of God that people may have, such as Father, Creator, Judge, Provider, Sustainer, etc.

II. A. Ask how they understand God at this time in their life. Give the participants time to think adequately about their own image of God.

   B. Hand out paper and markers. Direct them either to draw a picture or write a few words or phrases that reflect their understanding of God.

III. Have them talk about their image in small groups - sharing any stories that lead to this image - to the extent they are comfortable doing this. Catechist shares his/her image.

IV. Read Luke 9:18-20 (Who do you say that I am?)

V. Give a brief presentation about how Catholics understand or know God – making any or all of the following points. We know God through...
   - Jesus - the manifestation, incarnation and revelation of God
   - The Scripture
   - Our Catholic Tradition, i.e. the Catholic Teachings (on the Creed), Practice and Worship - Creation - our experiences of nature, love, etc.
   Or the catechist could also talk about Jesus as the Messiah.

VI. Share with them some other scriptural images of God...(These could be written on a handout for further reflection.)

> e.g. Shepherd - Ps 23; Jn: 10-1-21;
> Creator - Gn 1-2; Ps 19;
> Mother Hen - Mt 23:37-39;
> The Vine and the Vine Grower - Jn 15:1-9.
> Have any team members share their favorite image from Scripture.

VII. A. Have the participants reflect on or journal:
What difference does believing in God make in my life?

B Have them share in small groups their reflections (to the extent that   they are comfortable).

VIII. Close by reciting Psalm 121.

Note: This session may raise more questions about God or Jesus that could be further explored in future sessions.

CATECHESIS IN THE CATECHUMENATE PERIOD

Catechesis in this period aims at forming the catechumens in the Christian life through catechesis accommodated to the liturgical year, participation in the community, the liturgical celebrations and apostolic works (R 75). Each catechetical session flows from the Liturgy of the Word. They have two parts: breaking open the Word (normally following Sunday dismissal) and catechesis on Catholic teachings and practices as they arise from the Sunday readings.

A MODEL FOR CATECHESIS IN THE CATECHUMENATE

Part 1 Participation in Sunday Liturgy of the Word
- Listening to the Word
- Dismissal rite after the homily for catechumens (and candidates)
- Breaking open the Word session, which includes a re-reading of one or more of the Scriptures for the day, shared reflection on that reading and prayer.

Part 2 Catechetical Session
- Follow-up catechesis on Catholic teachings and practices continues after breaking open the Word or may resume at another time during the week. Spouses and sponsors are invited to the catechetical session.
- Catechist gives brief synopsis of breaking open the Word discussion to start this session
- Catechesis on Catholic teaching and practice flows from the breaking open the Word session.

A Sample of Part 1: Breaking Open the Word
                    Based on Cycle C: Sixth Sunday of the Year.
                    Theme: Beatitudes

I. After the reading (Luke 6: 17, 20-26), the catechist may give a brief reflection pointing out the themes of trust, God as the center of our lives and/or pointing out the differences between Luke's and Matthew's versions of the beatitudes.

II. A. Ask: What is your initial reaction to this reading and its message?
                   How did you feel when you heard it?
                   Did it raise any questions for you?

     B. Share responses in small groups. It is important that the catechist
     share his/her response (which may have already been done in the reflections).

III. A. Catechist leads a guided reflection such as:
Imagine yourself in the crowd listening to Jesus... Are you one of the poor? the hungry? the suffering? the persecuted?

or

Are you one of the rich? the full? the happy? those esteemed by others?

Give them silent time to place themselves in the crowd.

B. Either on paper or in their minds, ask them to reflect on the following:
What is Jesus telling you? What is his message to you?
How can you respond to this message in your life?
What attitude may need changing or what action will you take to respond to the message?

C. In a word or a phrase, ask the participants, if they are comfortable doing so, to share their message with the larger group.

D. Catechist may summarize and help participants to make practical application to the Scripture message.

IV. Prayer
Have participants either speak or reflect silently on where they need God's help in living the message.

Play the song: "Blest Are They" from the tape *Come and Journey* by David Haas, Marty Haugen, and Michael Joncas (or another appropriate   song).

or

Pray the Responsorial Psalm for the day.
End with the opening prayer from the day's Mass.

or

Pray minor exorcism D (R 94)

A Sample of Part 2: Catechetical Session
Theme: Beatitudes

I.   Brief Synopsis of breaking open the Word session

II. Reflection and discussion
What would make you fully happy and content?
How do you define success?

III. Presentation on Beatitudes
   A. "Be-Attitudes" Attitudes for living
                    A value system
                    A blueprint for living.

   B. We live by the Ten Commandments <u>and</u> the Beatitudes.

   C. Using a *Catholic Update* on the Beatitudes or some other resource, discuss the meaning of each beatitude.
   (Catechist shares some of his/her own experience trying to live the   beatitudes.)

IV. Discussion:
      Which beatitude do you find most consoling?
      Which do you find most challenging?

V. Reflection/Journaling:
      In what way(s) can you best make the beatitudes a part of your daily life?

VI. Prayer
   A. Have each participant read from either Matthew's or Luke's version one phrase or Beatitude that has meaning for them.

   B. Close with a spontaneous prayer, simply asking God's help in living the Beatitudes.

Note: Other possible topics for development out of the readings for that Sunday (Cycle C: Sixth Sunday of the Year) may be: Ten Commandments, justice, reign of God, resurrection, discipleship.

CATECHESIS DURING THE PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND
ENLIGHTENMENT

Lent is a period of more intense spiritual preparation consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction (R 139). During Lent the Sunday readings continue to be the focus for reflection and dismissal continues. For the elect, the scrutinies provide the primary context for their spiritual preparation. Cycle A readings are used during the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent when there are elect preparing for sacraments.

For the model here we will focus on catechesis on the scrutinies which will fall into two parts: preparation for, and reflection on, the celebration of the scrutiny.

A MODEL FOR PREPARING FOR AND REFLECTING ON THE SCRUTINIES

A Sample of Part 1: Preparation for the Scrutiny
                    Theme: The First Scrutiny, "The Woman at the Well"

                    (This is done on either the previous Sunday or at some
                    time during the week prior to the Third Sunday of Lent.)

 I. Explain that the elect will be celebrating the scrutinies the next three Sundays.
     Include a brief explanation of the purpose of the scrutinies.

 II. A. Have participants reflect on the meaning of water in their lives,
          especially as life-giving - perhaps remembering a time of great thirst.
          Ask them to share these experiences/memories.

      B. Brainstorm or discuss the many ways that water can be life-giving

      C. Have the participants list:
              • Places or situations in the world, our country and our communities that
                thirst for God.
              • Situations in their own lives where they thirst for God.

      D. List their responses on chalkboard or newsprint.
          These could be integrated into the intercessions for the first scrutiny.

III. Read John 4:5-42 or suggest that they read it at home before next Sunday.

IV. Pray a blessing, especially blessing B (R 96) and/or sing a Lenten song.

A Sample of Part 2: Reflecting on the Celebration of the Scrutiny
Theme: The First Scrutiny, "The Woman at the Well"

I. Gathering: Re-read the Gospel story of the "Woman at the Well".
Sing or listen to "The Water I Give", David Haas

II. A. Have the participants reflect on or journal about…
What did you experience, feel or hear during this celebration?

How does the Gospel speak to you of your thirst, especially in light of the preparation session?

In what ways has your thirst been quenched?

B. Share any of these reflections with the larger group.

III. Catechist briefly explains the nature of sin and God's redeeming love.

IV. Pray together the Responsorial Psalm. Then close by praying the opening prayer from today's Mass.

CATECHESIS DURING MYSTAGOGY

The purpose of Catechesis during the period of Mystagogy is twofold: to assist the neophytes in deepening their understanding of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; and to help them discern how they will live out their Christian faith as fully initiated disciples of the Catholic Church. (See NS 23.) It is recommended that the Cycle A readings be used during the Easter season, at least at those masses in which the neophytes participate. These were chosen for this purpose. Sessions may be held after Sunday mass or during the week.

A MODEL OF A MYSTAGOGICAL SESSION

The Third Sunday of Easter.   Gospel - Luke 24: 13-35.
                                    Theme: The Emmaus Story.

I.   Opening Reflection. Pray the alternate opening prayer from the Mass.
      Sing or listen to: "Song of the Body of Christ", David Haas.

II.   Read the Gospel

III. Group Process

    A. Have participants reflect on the following: (Perhaps give them a handout with these questions.)

       How does this reading speak to you about expectations, faith, or   recognizing Jesus in others?

       In the Emmaus Story, the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread. What do you experience in the breaking and sharing of bread at Mass?
       In other words, what do you experience in the Eucharist?
       How do you experience Eucharist in other people?

    B.   Share responses in small groups (if your group is large).

    C. Large group feedback: From your experience or this reading, what insights have surfaced about Eucharist?

IV.   Input Segment
    A. Catechist briefly develops any or all of the following points:
        - Eucharist as the Body of Christ
        - The Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist
        - The presence of Jesus in the Eucharistic community
        - Living out the Eucharist in our daily lives.

    B.   Address any questions the neophytes may have about the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
V. Integration/Action Response

A. Have the neophytes discuss:
    What does it mean for you to be a member in full communion with
    the Catholic Church?

B. Give them quiet time to reflect on or journal about:
    The strangers in the story went to tell the others the good news.   How can
    you bring the good news to others; e.g. in your family, your work place or your
    community?

    Ask for volunteers to share their responses.

VI. Prayer
    Read Peter 1: 17-21 (the Second Reading)
    Catechist leads intercessions asking the group to surface their needs in
    living out their commitment to the faith. The response will be, "Lord,
    show us the path of life".

    Or pray the Responsorial Psalm.

GUIDE: WHO PARTICPATES IN THE RITES

	CATECHUMENS	BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS	ADULT UNCATECHIZED BAPTIZED CATHOLICS	ADULT CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES CATECHIZED	UNBAPTIZED CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE	BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN CHILDREN	BAPTIZED UNCATECHIZED CATHOLIC CHILDREN	ORTHODOX OR EASTERN RITE CATHOLICS
Rite of Acceptance	*				*			
Rite of Welcome		O/R	O/R			O/R		
Anointing with oil of Catechumens	*				O/R			
Minor Exorcisms	*				O/R			
Blessings	*	O, 1	O, 1		O/R	O	O,1	
Rite of Sending	O/R	O/R	O, 1	Do not participate in RCIA process or the rites.	O/R	O		See addendum on Eastern churches.
Rites of election & Calling to continuing conversion	*	O/R	O/R		O/R	O		
Scrutinies	*				*, 4			
Penitential Rite		O/R	O/R			O	O	
Presentations	*	2	O		O/R			
Baptism, Confirmation, & Eucharist at Easter Vigil	*				*			
Confirmation & Eucharist at Easter Vigil		*	*, 3				*	
Confirmation by the Bishop				*			*	

KEY

*	Essential for the integrity of the Rite	**1**	With adaptations
O	Optional	**2**	If uncatechized
O/R	Optional, but highly recommended for the integrity of the process	**3**	Pastor needs to request faculty from the Bishop
		4	See Part II, 1 (R 291-301)

Appendix D
Addendum

Eastern Churches

In all cases involving Orthodox Christians and/or Eastern Rite Catholics, their spouses or children, please consult the Diocesan Vicar for Canonical Affairs before proceeding with the process.

Orthodox Christians and Eastern Rite Catholics must undergo a process in order to transfer to the Latin (Roman) rite. This process is intended to protect the integrity of and to show respect for their Churches. They do not participate in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

Eastern Rite Catholics

Eastern Rite Catholics (e.g., Melkite Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, Maronite Catholic, etc.) are required to obtain the permission of their own Eparch/Bishop before they can change Rites. The actual change in membership is effected, not by a profession of faith, but by communication between the Eastern Eparch/Bishop and the Latin Rite Bishop.

Orthodox Christians

The Orthodox Christians (e.g., Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Albanian Orthodox, etc.) normally should seek membership in the corresponding Eastern Rite. If they desire membership in the Latin Rite, the Eparch/Bishop of the corresponding Eastern Church and the Latin Rite Bishop must each approve.

The Code of Canon Law also makes further provisions for the spouses and children of Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholics.

G. Glossary

Blessings Prayers used to help strengthen the catechumens during the catechumenate.

Candidate An already validly baptized person who is preparing for reception for Full Communion into the Catholic Church or to complete initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. In the *Rite* it also refers to an unbaptized person in the precatechumenate.

Catechist A facilitator for the catechetical session, who shares his/ her faith in a formal setting.

Catechumen One who is unbaptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Catechumenate The second period in the Christian Initiation process which involves formal preparation in Word, Worship, Community Life and Apostolic Works.

RCIA Coordinator/Director Person charged with overseeing the entire Christian initiation process in the parish.

Cycle A, B, C The three year cycle of Liturgical Readings for Sundays: Cycle A, Matthew; Cycle B, Mark; Cycle C, Luke. All three cycles incorporate the Gospel of John.

Discernment The prayerful process for determining readiness of an individual in the initiation process to move from one period to another.

Dismissal Rite The rite after the Liturgy of the Word, in which the catechumens (and candidates) are sent along with a catechist to another place to reflect further on the Scripture which they have heard.

Elect The name given to catechumens who have celebrated the rite of election expressing the awareness of having been called by God to be a member of God's people.

Evangelization The task of the church during the precatechumenate which involves inviting, welcoming, witnessing, sharing of faith, and the proclamation of the Gospel to the inquirers/candidates.

Exorcism Prayer of purification - especially prayed as part of the scrutinies.

Godparent One chosen by the catechumen (and approved by the parish priest) to support him/her in their final preparation for initiation and in living out his/her baptismal commitments. The godparent formally begins the ministry at the rite of election.

Hospitality An atmosphere of welcome and "home", usually provided by particular team members.

Initiation of Children An adaptation of the adult process used for children of catechetical age (7+) who have not been baptized, or were baptized non-Catholic.

Inquirer One who is participating in the precatechumenate, "inquiring" into Catholicism.

Minor Exorcism Prayers of purification during the catechumenate designed to ask God to help catechumens overcome obstacles as they proceed through the catechumenate.

Minor Rites Rites during the catechumenate which include exorcisms, blessings and anointings.

Mystagogy		The final period of the Initiation process, normally during the Easter Season. It means "unpacking the mysteries" or reflecting on the sacraments, prayers, and reality of life as a Catholic Christian.
National Statutes		Particular law for implementation of Christian Initiation in the United States presented by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Neophyte		A newly initiated person.
Neophyte Year		Period from the end of Mystagogy (Pentecost) to the first anniversary of initiation.
Oil of Catechumens		Oil blessed by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass during Holy Week and used as a medium for strengthening of catechumens in their life of faith.
Purification and Enlightenment		The period in Christian Initiation of Adults to prepare with a more spiritual focus for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. It usually coincides with the season of Lent.
Rites	Liturgical Celebrations.	In the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* they include:
	Rite of Acceptance -	Marks the end of the period of inquiry and celebrates the beginning of formal preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation.
	Rite of Welcome -	Marks the end of the period of inquiry and celebrates the beginning of formal preparation for reception into full communion.
	Rite of Sending -	Parish celebration to prepare the catechumens for the cathedral rite of election and candidates for the calling to conversion.
	Rite of Election -	Celebration on the First Sunday of Lent at the cathedral. The Bishop in the name of the diocese acknowledges election by God of catechumens.
	Rite of Calling to Continuing Conversion-	Celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent for candidates in the adapted initiation process, coinciding with the rite of election.
	Scrutinies -	Rites celebrated with the elect on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent to free them from the power of sin and to strengthen them in Christ.
	Penitential Rite-	An adaptation of a scrutiny celebrated with candidates for full communion.
	Preparation Rites -	Celebrated with the elect on Holy Saturday. These may be the ephphatha, recitation of the creed, and the choosing of a new name.
	Sacraments of Initiation -	The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, usually celebrated at the Easter Vigil.
Sponsor		One who accompanies the catechumen or candidate through the catechumenate period. This person helps by offering support, encouragement and witness.
Validly Baptized		Baptized through immersion or by pouring with water which has been blessed, and with the required words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

H. Resources for RCIA

Primary Resource

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See, 1988. Various publishers: USCC; Catholic Book Publishing; Liturgy Training Publications; and Liturgical Press. A Study Edition in paperback is available for parish teams and a Ritual Edition for liturgical use.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, second ed., 2000.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, July 31, 2006

For Forming and Training Teams/Ministers

Books:
* *Christian Initiation of Adults: A Commentary (Study Text 10)* Secretariat, Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1988. Reviews the history of the *Rite*, comments on each of the stages of the *Rite* and offers pastoral directions.

* *Echoing God's Word* James B. Dunning. Liturgy Training Publications, 1993. Formation for catechists and homilists in a catechumenal church.

* *Foundations in Faith* Resources for Christian Living, 1997. Series of handbooks for sponsors, catechists, coordinators, and priests.

* *Guide for Sponsors* Ron Lewinski. Liturgy Training Publications, 1988.

∗ *How to Form A Catechumenate Team* Karen M. Hinman. Liturgy Training Publications, 1986.

* *How to Teach With the Lectionary, With Leader's Guide* Philip McBrien. Twenty-Third Publications, 1992. Available with leaders guide.

* *RCIA Spirituality: Formation For the Catechumenate Team* Barbara Hixon. Resource Publications, 1992.

* *Walking Together in Faith* Thomas H. Morris. Paulist Press, 1992. A workbook for sponsors of Christian Initiation.

* *Welcoming the New Catholic,* third edition Ron Lewinski. Liturgy Training Publications, 1993. A basic introduction to the process and stages of the *Rite*.

RCIA Coordinators/Teams

Books:

∗ *The Catechumenate and the Law: A Pastoral and Canonical Commentary for the Church in The United States* John M. Huels. Liturgy Training Publications, 1994. Canonical issues in the RCIA, particularly sacramental and marriage issues.

* *Celebrating the Rites of Adult Initiation: Pastoral Reflections* Victoria Tufano, ed. Liturgy Training Publications, 1992.

* *Discerning Disciples: Listening for God's Voice in Christian Initiation* Donna Steffen, S.C. Paulist Press, 1997. Offers both the theory and practical ideas for discernment in the RCIA.

* *One at the Table: The Reception of Baptized Christians* Ronald A. Oakham, O. Carm., ed. Liturgy Training Publications, 1995.

* *The RCIA: Transforming the Church,* Revised and Updated Edition Thomas Morris. Paulist Press, 1997 (Revised 1999). A resource book offering general guidelines and practical directions on specific areas of pastoral concern.

Christian Initiation with Children

Books:

* *A Child's Journey, the Christian Initiation of Children.* Rita Burns Senseman. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998.

* *Children and Christian Initiation.* Kathy Coffey. Living the Good News, Inc., 1995. A series of practical guides for all stages of the *Rite* for catechists, sponsors, children, and parents.

* *The Christian Initiation of Children: Hope for the Future.* Robert Duggan, Maureen Kelly. Paulist Press, 1991.

* *The Church Speaks Out About Sacraments With Children.* Mark Searle, ed. Liturgy Training Publications, 1990.

∗ *Issues in The Christian Initiation of Children: Catechesis and Liturgy.* Kathy Brown, Frank Sokol. Liturgy Training Publications, 1989.

Catechetical Resources:

Living the Good News. Living the Good News, Inc. Lectionary based materials. Published seasonally.

Opening the Word: Exploring The Sunday Readings. Sadlier, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993. Two level catechist and student texts available for each cycle of readings.

Pflaum Gospel Weeklies. Pflaum Publishing Co., Lectionary based materials. Published seasonally.

Foundations of Faith. RCL, 1997. Series of handbooks for all involved.

Essential Text

The Holy Bible, New American Bible is used for Sunday Liturgical Readings.

Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative Board of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference:

The New Catholic Answer Bible, New American, Revised Edition. Fireside Catholic Publishing, 2011.

Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative Board of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference:

The Saints Devotional Bible, New American. Our Sunday Visitor, 2012.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The U.S. edition (1988) is available from many publishers, including Liturgy Training Publications, the United States Catholic Conference, the Catholic Book Publishing Company and the Liturgical Press. It is available in both the study and sanctuary editions, the latter for use during the actual celebrations of the rites.

The RCIA Transforming the Church: A Resource for Pastoral Implementation. Thomas Morris, Paulist Press, 1997.

The Catechumenate and the Law: A Pastoral and Canonical Commentary for the Church in the United States. John M. Huels, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994.

Team Training Resources

How to Form a Catechumenate Team. Karen M. Hinman, Liturgy Training Publications, 1986.

A Catechumenate Needs Everybody, Study Guides for Parish Ministers. James A. Wilde, Liturgy Training Publications, 1988.

www.TEAMRCIA.com

SECTION 4

DIOCESAN GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

A. Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. These guidelines are to be read in light of the following documents:
    - A. **The Rite of Penance,** 1973
    - B. **The General Directory for Catechesis,** 1997
    - C. **The Code of Canon Law,** 1983
    - D. **National Catechetical Directory,** 1977
    - E. **General Catechetical Directory, Addendum,** 1971
    - F. **Diocese of Springfield Handbook on Catechesis,** 2020

2. "For those who receive the sacrament of Penance with contrite heart and religious disposition, reconciliation 'is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong spiritual consolation.' Indeed the sacrament of Reconciliation with God brings about a true 'spiritual resurrection,' restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1468)

3. This guideline concerns itself with the preparation of children baptized in the Catholic Church at infancy for first participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Other occasions for first reception of Reconciliation (e.g., those preparing for full communion with the Catholic Church) can be found in the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the Diocese of Springfield.*(Sec. 3)

4. <u>Timing</u>: "After having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year" (*Code of Canon Law,* Can*.* 989). "With the completion of the seventh year one is presumed to have the use of reason" (Can. 97).

    "Catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation. This is to be done so that the specific identity of each sacrament is apparent and so that, before receiving First Communion, the child will be familiar with the revised Rite of Reconciliation and will be at ease with the reception of the sacrament. The Sacrament of Reconciliation normally should be celebrated prior to the reception of First Communion." (*National Catechetical Directory,* 126)

    In order to meet these various timing requirements the Diocese of Springfield recommends that the celebration of First Reconciliation take place before or during the season of Advent, and the celebration of First Eucharist take place during the Easter season. Consider repeating the procedures, purpose and reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation one more time just before the

Sacrament of Holy Communion. This usually corresponds with the child's second grade year of schooling.

Other options for preparation and celebration are possible (e.g., summer programs or family programs) that work outside a school year schedule. Celebration of the sacrament may take place following such preparation, given that the preparation attends fully to the catechesis named below.

As a rule, a child will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation after appropriate catechesis for that sacrament but prior to the reception of First Eucharist. In an exceptional case, if it seems clear to those involved in the sacramental catechesis (priest, DRE/CRE, catechist and parents/guardians) that an individual child is not ready for the sacrament of Reconciliation, then it should be postponed until the child is ready. This does not mean that First Eucharist must be postponed (See *Code of Canon Law, Can.* 843).

5. <u>Catechesis:</u> "Catechesis for children must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of individuals. It seeks, first, to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life; second, to help the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrongdoing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church; third, to encourage the child to see that, in this sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving; fourth, to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly." (National Catechetical Directory, 126)

According to the *Rite of Penance* (6) there are four parts of the Sacrament:
- *Contrition* - a heartfelt sorrow for one's wrong doings.
- *Confession* – admitting one's sins to an ordained minister of the Church.
- *Act of Penance* – an effort to make amends for one's sins
- *Absolution* – receiving God's pardon through the sign offered by the Church's minister.

This catechesis may take many forms, including education about the sacrament as well as liturgical, communal and spiritual formation for its reception. Catechesis for First Reconciliation should take place in the child's home parish, with the exception of those children enrolled in Catholic schools, who will receive preparation in their schools.

There may be situations, given parish size, where local parishes join catechetical staffs, resources and liturgical celebrations in order to improve this preparation.

Children should be made familiar and comfortable with the sacramental ritual before they actually celebrate it. However, practice for reception does not replace catechesis for reception.

Children should learn a prayer of contrition that is appropriate for their level of comprehension. The rite does not demand any specific prayer (*Rite of Penance*, 45).

6. <u>Parent/Family Involvement</u>: According to the *National Catechetical Directory* (126), "parents should be involved in the preparation of children for this sacrament." Times of sacramental preparation for children are an excellent opportunity for welcoming other family members into a closer relationship with God and with the Church. Parents/Guardians should be made aware of expectations for the family and child in the reception of the sacrament and the general themes of catechesis for the sacrament. Family participation in the catechetical process and in the liturgical celebrations relative to reconciliation should be encouraged. Parishes are to provide meetings and/or other opportunities in order to offer adult catechesis on the sacrament, to communicate program expectations and to integrate parents/guardians in the catechesis of their children.

7. <u>Celebration of the Rite</u>: The Diocese of Springfield strongly encourages use of the second form of the rite (Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution) for the celebration of First Reconciliation with children. As well, it is necessary to provide for options: the penitent being clearly visible to the confessor, or behind a screen (*Rite of Penance,* 12) (Refer to Sec 1E, pg. 7).

Although it is the responsibility of the parish to prepare children for the celebration of reconciliation, it is not appropriate to insist that a child receive the sacrament.

8. <u>Sacramental Records</u>: Prior to the reception of First Reconciliation the parish must obtain proof of baptism for all candidates (Cans. 842, 894).

9. <u>Ongoing Catechesis and Celebration of the Sacrament</u>: Catechesis for the immediate reception of the sacrament should be age appropriate and not attempt to address all issues relative to Reconciliation. "Because continuing, lifelong conversion is part of what it means to grow in faith, catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is ongoing. Children have a right to a fuller catechesis each year" (*National Catechetical Directory,* 126). Likewise, children should be taught by word and by example of the worshipping

community that sacramental reconciliation should be practiced and sought regularly.

B. Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Eucharist

1. These guidelines are to be read in light of the following documents:
   A. **The General Directory for Catechesis,** 1997
   B. **The Code of Canon Law,** 1983
   C. **The National Catechetical Directory,** 1977
   D. **Diocese of Springfield Handbook on Catechesis,** 2020

2. "The Eucharist is the center and heart of Christian life for both the universal and local Church and for each Christian. All that belongs to Christian life leads to the Eucharistic celebration or flows from it." (*National Catechetical Directory,* 120)

3. These guidelines address the preparation of children baptized in the Catholic Church at infancy for first participation in the Eucharist. Other occasions for first reception of Eucharist (e.g., those preparing for full communion with the Catholic Church) can be found in the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults in the Diocese of Springfield.*

4. <u>Timing</u>: Children who have reached the age of reason and have been properly catechized may receive their First Eucharist (*Code of Canon Law*, Cans. 913, 914). "With the completion of the seventh year one is presumed to have the use of reason" (Can. 97).

   "Catechesis for First Communion is conducted separately from introductory catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, since each sacrament deserves its own concentrated preparation." (*National Catechetical Directory*, 122)

   In order to meet these various timing requirements the Diocese of Springfield recommends that the celebration of First Reconciliation take place before or during the season of Advent, and the celebration of First Eucharist take place during the Easter season. This usually corresponds with the child's second grade year of schooling.

   Other options for preparation and celebration are possible (e.g., summer programs or family programs) that work outside a school year schedule. Celebration of the sacrament may take place following such preparation, given that the preparation attends fully to the catechesis named below.

Reception of the sacrament may be delayed if it seems clear to those involved (priest, DRE/CRE, catechist and parents/guardians) that an individual child is not ready for the sacrament (Can. 914).

5. Catechesis: "For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion." (Can 913)

According to the *National Catechetical Directory* (122) catechesis for children "adapted to their intellectual capacity" should:
- "Strengthen awareness of the Father's love, of the call to participate in Christ's sacrifice, and of the gift of the Spirit"
- Teach that "the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ"
- Explore concepts of "sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking, and celebrating"
- "Familiarize them with the main events of Jesus' life"
- "Help them participate more meaningfully in the action of the Mass"
- Help the child "to receive Christ's body and blood in communion in an informed and reverent manner"

This catechesis may take many forms, including education about the sacrament as well as the liturgical, communal and spiritual formation for its reception. Catechesis for First Eucharist should take place in the child's home parish, with the exception of those children enrolled in Catholic schools, who will receive preparation in their school.

There may be situations, given parish size, where local parishes join staffs, resources and liturgical celebrations in order to improve this preparation.

Children should be made familiar with the Mass and comfortable with the sacramental ritual before they actually celebrate it. However, practice for reception does not replace catechesis for reception.

6. <u>Parent/Family Involvement</u>: According to the *National Catechetical Directory* (122) "parents have a right and duty to be intimately involved in preparing the children for First Communion. Catechesis aims to help parents/guardians grow in understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist and participate readily in catechizing their children."

Times of sacramental preparation for children are an excellent opportunity for welcoming other family members into a closer relationship with God and with the Church. Parents/guardians should be made aware of expectations for the family and child in the reception of the sacrament and the general themes of catechesis for the sacrament. Family participation in the catechetical process and in the liturgical celebrations relative to Eucharist should be encouraged. Parishes are to provide meetings and/or other opportunities in order to offer

adult catechesis on the sacrament, to communicate program expectations and to integrate parents/guardians in the catechesis of their children.

7. <u>Celebration of the Rite</u>: Celebration of First Eucharist should take place in the child's home parish, with the exception of those children enrolled in Catholic schools who will have the choice of receiving the sacrament in either their home parish or school parish.

   "The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life'" (CCC 1324, LG 11). As First Eucharist is a further step in the initiation of a child into the worshipping community, the ideal time for celebration of First Eucharist would be during the Sunday celebrations.

   To further emphasize their place in the worshipping community the children should be encouraged to participate in the liturgy to the fullest of their abilities.

8. <u>Sacramental Records</u>: Prior to the reception of First Eucharist the parish must attain proof of baptism for all candidates (Cans. 842, 912 & 894). After the reception of First Eucharist the parish is responsible for keeping records on those who have received the sacrament.

9. <u>Ongoing Catechesis and Celebration of the Sacrament</u>: Catechesis for the immediate reception of the sacrament should be age appropriate and not attempt to address all issues relative to Eucharist. "Continued catechesis is given yearly in all catechetical programs for children, inasmuch as the sacraments require lifelong participation and study." (*National Catechetical Directory*, 122) Likewise, children should be taught by word and by example of the worshipping community that participation in the Mass and reception of the Eucharist are to be practiced on the Lord's Day and on Holy Days.

C. Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation

1. These guidelines are to be read in light of the following documents:
   A. **The Rite of Confirmation,** 1971
   B. **The General Directory for Catechesis,** 1997
   C. **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,** 1987
   D. **The Code of Canon Law,** 1983
   E. **National Catechetical Directory,** 1977
   F. **Diocese of Springfield Handbook on Catechesis,** 2020

2. "Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit whom the Lord sent upon the apostles on Pentecost. This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more fully to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his Body in faith and love." (*Rite of Confirmation*, 1,2)

   "Confirmation renews and strengthens the Christians' baptismal call to bear witness to Christ before the world and work eagerly for the building up of His body." (*National Catechetical Directory*, 118)

3. These guidelines address the preparation for the reception of Confirmation of those adolescents and adults previously baptized in the Roman Catholic Church who have received First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Other occasions for full initiation into the Roman Catholic Church are addressed in the *Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults in the Diocese of Springfield*.

4. Timing: "The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time; their parents/guardians and shepherds of souls, especially pastors, are to see to it that the faithful are properly instructed to receive it and approach the sacrament at the appropriate time." (*Code of Canon Law*, Can. 890)

   Canon 891 permits each national episcopal conference to determine the appropriate age of confirmation, and in the United States, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has permitted each diocese to set its own age criteria. Therefore, in the Diocese of Springfield the Sacrament of Confirmation for adolescents is to be celebrated no earlier than the spring of 9th grade or fall of 10th grade.

Permission to confirm children or adolescents before the age named here must be sought from the Bishop of Springfield in writing. In the case where the candidate is in danger of death, no permission need be sought. According to Canon 889 §2, readiness for reception is determined by the candidate's:

- Having the use of reason
- Being suitably instructed
- Being properly disposed
- And being able to renew his or her baptismal promises.

Discernment for readiness is to be done by those responsible for preparing the candidates for Confirmation, appropriate clergy, parents/guardians and the candidates themselves. Therefore, some process should be in place during preparation to aid in this decision.

If reception of the sacrament is delayed for any reason - either by the choice of the adolescent candidate or by that of the pastor, director of religious education, catechist or parent/guardian - the parish is still responsible for ministering to the religious education needs of the adolescent.

If a student has received the sacrament in advance of his or her classmates (either in another diocese, parish or through the RCIA process), the parish is still responsible for ministering to the catechetical needs of the adolescent.

5. Catechesis: "As with Baptism, catechesis for this sacrament takes place within the parish community, which has an obligation to participate in the catechetical preparation of those to be confirmed. The parish is the faith community into whose life of prayer and worship they will be more fully initiated. It also embodies the message to which they are to respond and gives witness, in service, to the faith they profess. The parish should strive to catechize on behalf of 'obedience to Christ' and 'loyal testimony to him' through the power of the Spirit." (*National Catechetical Directory*, 119)

Therefore, **catechesis for Confirmation should take place in the candidate's home parish, even for students of Catholic schools.** There may be situations, given parish size, where local parishes join catechetical staffs, resources and liturgical celebrations in order to improve this preparation. Such collaboration should allow parishes to celebrate the sacrament annually.

The Confirmation program for adolescents should encompass the catechetical elements of community, word, worship and service. **Students of Catholic schools must register in their home parish and must participate in those elements of catechesis which are unique to the immediate preparation for**

reception of the sacrament and are not a part of the Catholic school curriculum (e.g., liturgical celebrations, parent/guardian and sponsor events, etc.).

The Confirmation program for adults may follow a different schedule from that of the adolescents. However, the catechesis should also substantially attend to the elements of community, word, worship and service.

- **Community:** belonging to the Catholic Church, especially emphasized in membership in the local parish. Candidates should be integrated into the life of the parish, and the parish should show interest and support for the candidates.
- **Word:** understanding the call to and requirements of discipleship with special attention to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation catechesis should not be seen as an opportunity to review all elements of the Catholic faith.
- **Worship:** participating in the prayer life of the Church and assisting the candidate in becoming a person of prayer. Participation of the candidates in the Chrism Mass in the Diocese of Springfield is highly recommended during the year of preparation.
- **Service:** witnessing the life of service to the world and the Church. This should be seen as an element of Christian discipleship witnessed by all in the community, and not simply a requirement of confirmation.

A Confirmation retreat during the year of preparation is highly encouraged.

6. <u>Parent/Family Involvement</u>: "As the primary educators of their children, parents, along with sponsors, are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children and godchildren. The parental program is an important element in planning for Confirmation for children and young people." (*National Catechetical Directory*, 119)

Times of sacramental preparation for young people are excellent opportunities for welcoming other family members into a closer relationship with God and with the Church. Parents should be made aware of expectations for the family and the young person in reception of the sacrament and the general themes of catechesis for the sacrament. Family participation in the catechetical process and in the liturgical celebrations relative to Confirmation should be encouraged. Parishes are to provide parent/guardian meetings and/or other opportunities in order to offer adult catechesis on the sacrament, to

communicate program expectations and to integrate parents/guardians in the catechesis of their son or daughter.

7. <u>Sponsor Involvement</u>: "It is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament." (Can. 892) In order for one to be admitted as a sponsor he or she must fulfill the following criteria (as outlined in Can. 874):
   - Be a confirmed Catholic who has received First Eucharist and lives a life befitting the role to be undertaken;
   - Be at least seventeen years old;
   - Not be a parent of the candidate;
   - Not be under canonical penalty;
   - Preferably, be the candidate's baptismal sponsor/godparent.

   As much as possible, the sponsor should be involved in the preparation process so that he or she may better serve as a companion to the candidate on the journey toward mature faith.

8. <u>Celebration of the Rite</u>: Confirmation is to be celebrated by the Bishop (Can. 882). If the Bishop is not able to confer the sacrament himself he may give faculty to another presbyter in his place (Cans. 883-885).

   Celebrations may take place at any time within the year, exclusive of the season of Lent. Requests for dates are to be made in writing to the office of the bishop.

   Confirmation is to be celebrated in the candidate's home parish unless a just cause suggests otherwise. At the request of the Bishop, local parishes may combine the liturgical celebration of the sacrament.

9. <u>Sacramental Records</u>: Prior to the celebration of Confirmation the parish must attain proof of baptism for all candidates (Cans. 842, 889 & 894). After the Confirmation the parish is responsible for keeping records on those confirmed with reference to the minister, parents, sponsor, date and place (Can. 895). Those records also should be shared with each confirmand's baptismal parish for recording there.

D. Diocesan Policy Relative to Catechetical Texts

> *Textbooks are guides for learning, summary statements of course content, and ready instruments of review. They must present the authentic and complete message of Christ and His Church, adapted to the capacity of the learners, with balanced emphasis proportionate to the importance of particular truths. (National Catechetical Directory, 264)*

Recognizing the unique nature of each parish, no one text is appropriate to all parish situations. Each parish must determine those materials that best suit both the capacity of the teachers to use them effectively and the needs of the learners. It is the responsibility of the catechetical leader (ARE/CRE/DRE), in concert with the parish board of religious education and the pastor, to investigate available materials and to select the curriculum most suitable to the parish's individual needs.

The Diocesan Office of Faith Formation keeps abreast of all available catechetical materials, and evaluates them on educational, as well as, theological grounds. More will be said below on how such evaluations are done. Those materials which are recommended for parish use can be found on display at the Diocesan Offices. Those materials that have been found wanting in educational and/or theological dimensions are not recommended. Their use is definitely discouraged by this office.

Changes of series of textbooks within a parish program should be made in consultation with the diocesan staff. Changing texts frequently is contrary to good educational procedure and, therefore, is against diocesan policy.

In 1996 the United States Catholic Conference's Office of the Catechism instituted a Protocol for catechetical texts. Publishers of catechetical texts are encouraged to volunteer their material for the process. The aim of the Protocol is to insure the presentation of sound doctrine within the texts in accordance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Those texts that have been submitted to the Protocol process and have passed will be marked as such by the publisher. The Office of Faith Formation only allows the use of USCCB approved texts for the primary means of catechesis.

The Protocol is not an effort to evaluate good educational processes, catechetical supports, nor age appropriateness of material. In light of these other elements it is still appropriate for the Office of Faith Formation to evaluate texts in order to determine their suitability for parish use.

Evaluation

According to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in the 1997 *National Catechetical Directory* (NCD) *Sharing the Light of Faith*:

"All catechetical textbooks and other materials are to be prepared according to the criteria and guidelines contained in this NCD. It is also fully expected that all such texts and materials will be evaluated by those responsible for catechesis in light of these criteria and guidelines. (266)

This directive is understood by the Diocese of Springfield Office of Faith Formation as its responsibility to review and evaluate those catechetical texts likely to be used in parish settings.

The evaluation tool used*, How to Choose Catechetical Textbooks: Process and Criteria* (1984, revised 1996), was developed for the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). This tool is based on the NCD, the *Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Textbooks* (USCC, 1990), and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican, 1994). It evaluates texts along the following lines:

Format (presentation, readability, and balance)
Content – considered in four areas:
        Message   (doctrine, age appropriateness)
        Community (connection with parish and wider Church)
        Worship   (uses of and opportunities for prayer)
        Christian living and service (living and reflecting on faith)
Assistance for the catechist (methodologies, background, resources)
Resources for parish, family and parent involvement (communication with and material for)
Additional resources (support materials, reference)

Systematic Catechesis and Curriculum

An important thing to remember when considering curriculum is that good catechesis is ongoing throughout a person's life. Therefore, it is not necessary, and it is even ineffectual, to try to teach all aspects of the faith to one person at one time. However, it is essential that over time "the authentic and complete message of Christ and His Church" be attended to in a systematic way (NCD 264).

Keeping this in mind, the series of texts should be chosen and adapted according to grade units (e.g., primary, intermediate, junior and senior high levels). Consideration should be given to the scope and sequence of each series so as to assure continuity in the curriculum as well as appropriate educational methods.

As for the scope and sequence of curriculum for lower grades there is no document that speaks to that age group as such. So looking to the NCD (Chapter 5), Diocesan policy would ask that sufficient attention be given over the years to the principal elements of the Christian message: the mystery of the one God; creation; Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit; the Church; the sacraments; the life of grace; the moral life; Mary and the saints; and death, judgment and eternity. In teaching any and all of these it is essential to present them at the level and ability of the learners.

It is important for each catechist to appreciate the necessity of his or her role in the larger scheme, and remain faithful to the curriculum they have been asked to teach.

Christian prayers should be introduced and learned as they fit with the curriculum and as their concepts, language and degree of difficulty are appropriate for the learners.

It is also advisable that during times of preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation that texts designed for immediate preparation be used alongside or instead of grade level texts.

E. Guidelines for St. Pius X Award

The Bishop of Springfield through the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation gives the St. Pius X Award. Pastors and/or parish catechetical leaders may choose 1 (one) person each year to receive this award. The award is to be presented to a person who has given outstanding service voluntarily to the parish in the area of faith formation for a minimum of 5 years. This may include those who contribute at any level (elementary, adolescent, adult and RCIA) as well as any type of support staff.

The award is to be presented at regional celebrations by the Bishop. In addition, parishes are encouraged to recognize their recipient at a liturgy or celebration within the parish following the award ceremony.

Paperwork to facilitate the reception of these awards will be sent by the diocesan office to parishes of a given region prior to the scheduled date of the ceremony.

Planning for the events will be done through the diocesan office in collaboration with participating parishes. Each celebration will follow a similar format.

See the *Parish Application Form for St. Pius X Award* which includes the criteria for choosing a recipient.

The St. Pius X Award is presented once a year to persons who have given outstanding service to the parish in the area of Faith Formation. In his encyclical "Acerbo Nimis" Pope St. Pius X set forth the importance of the catechetical ministry. He encouraged the teaching of religion to children, youth and adults. Thus, it is appropriate that this award be given the name of Pope St. Pius X. The St. Pius X Award consists of a medal of St. Pius X, one inch in diameter, suspended from a pin-back ribbon.

The candidate must be recommended by the Pastor and/or the Catechetical Leader and approved by the Diocesan Director of Faith Formation. The Office of Faith Formation must receive nominations by **(contact the Office of Faith Formation for the date)** for consideration.

The Office of Faith Formation will present the 2019 St. Pius X Awards at the Catechetical Sunday celebration with the Bishop presiding; September 5, 2019 in St Michael Cathedral. We ask that everyone arrive for 5:30; the celebration of the Mass will begin at 6:00PM. This will be a televised event to air Sunday September 8th on Chalice of Salvation. A second celebration will be held on October 24, 2019 in St. Agnes Catholic Church in Dalton. The St. Pius X recipients will have the choice of which location they would like to receive the award. We would love to see everyone receiving this award at the Chalice of Salvation Mass on September 5th, although understand the difficulties of getting to the Cathedral on a week night.

I.   **General Criteria**
   a. The candidate must have never previously received the St. Pius X Award.
   b. The candidate must be an adult who has given at least three years of service in the parish faith formation program and still be active in it. Catechists on any level, e.g., elementary, adolescent, adult, and RCIA, as well as members of the program's support staff are eligible.
   c. Typically, only one award per parish per year is to be bestowed. Combined programs and team teaching situations require special consideration. Please call the Office of Faith Formation before nominating candidates in these special circumstances.
   d. The Diocesan Director of Faith Formation will review nominations to ensure the nominee meets the award criteria and will then notify the nominator of the nominee acceptance. After that time, please notify the recipient of his/her nomination.
   e. Please notify the office of any changes in attendance and let us know if the pastor will concelebrate the Mass.

II.   **Nomination Forms should be sent to:**
      Office of Faith Formation
      P.O. Box 1730
      Springfield, MA 01102-1730

Please include $30.00 for the nomination to cover the cost of the medal and expenses related to the celebration. Checks may be made payable to: *RC Bishop of Springfield*.

III. **Pastor/Catechetical Leader Recommendation** **(Please print clearly; Nominations must be received by (contact the Office of Faith Formation for the date) for consideration)**

I recommend the following person as worthy of receiving the St. Pius X Award for service to our Parish Faith Formation Program:

Nominee

_____

Address_____

                                     City   State   Zip

Telephone_____Email_____

Parish_____City_____

Years of service within the parish faith formation program _____

Area of catechesis (elementary, adolescent, adult, RCIA, support staff)_____

Date of the Diocesan Celebration at which it will be accepted _____

Number of people from your parish expected to attend the celebration _____

Please share with us a brief description about this person that make the reception of this award appropriate. These comments will be used to introduce the candidate to the Bishop and congregation. The final composition will be edited so that there will be some uniformity of length and scope for each recipient.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Nominator Signature _____ **Date**_____
                                          Pastor or Catechetical Leader

Phone_____**Email**_____

F. Home Study Option

> *"Parents are the first and foremost catechists of their children.... Parents should frequently be reminded of their obligation to see to it that their children participate in catechetical programs sponsored by the Church."*
> *(NCD 212)*

The parish must continue to be the prime mover and the pre-eminent place for catechesis (See CT 67).

The Diocese of Springfield recognizes the important catechetical role and responsibility of both parents/guardians and the parish community. There are times when parents/guardians may find it necessary to choose the home study option for catechesis for their children.

Some pastoral reasoning that may necessitate this are:

1. In those families with two parents/guardians working and with increased pressures on their time, the ability for some to participate in the weekly religious education programs offered by parishes may be difficult. The schedule of families sometimes does not match the schedule of religious education at the parish.

2. In families that have experienced separation or divorce, custody of children is often shared with children spending alternate weeks and/or weekends with different parents. This has resulted in a child's being unable to participate in religious education in a parish nearly half the time.

3. In rural situations or when families live at a distance from the parish where they worship, transportation has sometimes become a severe difficulty and participation in religious education has become more complex and difficult.

4. In situations where virtual teaching is necessary, such as weather related cancellations, illness or disability of a student, pandemic (State and/or Federal shut downs), or when accessibility to our buildings are denied. For specific Diocesan guidelines to teaching virtually, see part G of this section.

While this option may be appropriate and necessary for the time, its use should be limited and done in consultation with the catechetical leader of the parish (ARE/CRE/DRE) and with the approval of the Pastor.

The following guidelines should be upheld:

1. Permission should be given on an individual basis for the period of one year at a time.

2. Parents/guardians and students should meet with parish leadership to determine goals for the year and a means for evaluating those goals. There should be periodic meetings (usually 4) throughout the year to monitor the work being done in the home.

3. Texts used in the home are to be approved by the parish and the USCCB.

4. Families should be encouraged to participate in community activities and supportive programs in order to maintain contact with other children and the parish community.

5. Because of the communal nature of the sacraments, **immediate preparation for First Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation should take place in the parish program.**

> *"It is the whole community, the Body of Christ united with its Head that celebrates. 'Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church which is the "sacrament of unity," namely the holy people united and organized under the authority of the bishops'"* (CCC 1140).

G. Guidelines for Teaching Virtually

Recognizing that the preferred method of teaching Faith Formation is in person in the parish classroom, we realize that situations may arise where virtual teaching is necessary.

When teaching virtually, it is imperative that the following guidelines be followed at all times:

1. **Parent/guardian written consent** is required prior to connecting with minor(s). Consent also must be obtained if the on-line classes are being recorded. Minors should be notified if the classes will be recorded.

2. **Virtual classes** must be taught by a Safe Environment certified adult catechist. The parish Catechetical Leader and parents must always have access to the class. Non-confirmed students may be assistants in the classroom but never left on their own to teach a class.

3. **One on One student classes** should be conducted by a Safe Environment certified Catechist and an additional Safe Environment certified adult or parent/guardian should also be present during the class.

4. **The Catechetical Leader** must use a meeting solution that will provide a preview of all upcoming classes and a history of all past classes. The meeting solution should allow Safe Environment certified administrators to conduct spot checking and review of past meetings.

5. **For all classes** with minors, the Catechetical Leader should require access by use of passwords and send notice of the classes by private invitation. This requirement may be modified, depending upon solution utilized, but there should not be any publicly available links or class numbers. Waiting rooms should be utilized when available (see below).

6. **All parties** should be aware of their audience and surroundings while participating in virtual classes. Students and catechists should be in appropriate spaces of their homes and avoid personal spaces (e.g. lying in bed) or inappropriate dress (e.g. pajamas).

7. **All class date/times** should be pre-scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

Best Practices for Online Education and Ministry

1. When scheduling a class using videoconferencing software (e.g. Zoom, Go To Meeting, etc.), under "Advanced Options", choose to utilize a Waiting Room and disable "Join before host". This will allow you to screen who can enter the class. This is required to ensure that anyone who should not be in your class is unable to get in.
2. Ensure students are unable to chat privately; you can disable the chat feature entirely or allow students to chat with everyone in a central chat area. This will ensure that private chats are not occurring between adults and students.
3. Disable screen sharing for anyone other than the catechist.
4. When possible, enable a Safe Environment Catechist to be a "Co-Host" to help moderate the event and conduct the class in the event you as the "Host" get disconnected.
5. It is permissible to utilize "breakout" rooms with one Safe Environment certified adult leader in each small group discussion. The host can join in on the various discussions.
6. Use Grid-View and do not hide self-view while in class with minors to ensure that everyone is in view.
7. The time of scheduled classes/events should mimic regularly scheduled activities, preferably occurring between 8:00am to 9:00pm at the parish location. Exceptions may be granted by Pastors/Administrators/Catechetical Leaders for special events.
8. Dress and grooming habits of the leader and students should be in accordance with current guidelines in place at the parish. Leaders should be mindful of the space they are teaching from to ensure that the space is appropriate (e.g. not in a bedroom).
9. The leader and students should use their given name (first and last) when signing into the on-line class.
10. Screenshots of any class/activities with minors should not be shared to personal social media accounts. If the picture is to be shared through institutional social media and/or e-mail, manes should be blurred and permission granted by the parent/guardian.

11. It is highly recommended that the leader of any on-line class with minors create standards for effectively managing conversation and share these at the beginning.

H. Guidelines for the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism for Children
(Infants and Children below Catechetical Age)

The responsibility for baptismal preparation rests upon the pastor and/or pastoral administrator. They are urged to form lay teams to assist in this ministry.

1*.* These guidelines are to be read in light of the following documents:
   A.   **The Rite of Baptism for Children,** 1969
   B.   **The Code of Canon Law,** 1983
   C.   **The National Catechetical Directory,** 1977
   D.   **General Directory for Catechesis,** 1997
   E.   **Catechism of the Catholic Church,** 1997
   F.   **NCCB Decree: Baptism Records for Adopted Children,** 2001

2*.* "By accepting Baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, people affirm their faith and are initiated and welcomed into the community of faith. Dedicated to and enlightened by the Spirit, made sons and daughters of God with a permanent relationship in Christ, and cleansed from sin through water and the Holy Spirit, they become a new creation." *(National Catechetical Directory,* 116*)*

3. These guidelines are concerned with how children or infants begin the process of initiation into the Roman Catholic Church through Baptism. "The term 'children' or 'infants' refers to those who have not yet reached the age of discernment and therefore cannot profess personal faith" (RBC 1). These are children who have not reached the age of 7 years. The initiation of older children into the Roman Catholic Church is addressed in the Handbook for Parish Catechesis under Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the Diocese of Springfield (Section 3C, 55).

4. Timing:

In considering the timing of Baptism in the life of a child there are several things to keep in mind. Of primary consideration is the welfare of the child and the desire to give him/her the benefits of the sacrament as soon as possible. Obviously any child in danger of death should be baptized without delay. Ordinarily efforts should be made to baptize an infant within the first weeks after birth.

Several pastoral considerations may delay an infant's Baptism.
- Consideration for the mother's health - Care should be taken that she is able to be present at the Baptism.
- Time afforded for proper preparation of parents/guardians for the celebration of the sacrament and their responsibilities in raising the child within the faith. This includes consent by at least one of the parents/guardians to the Baptism as well as a founded hope that the infant will be raised in the Catholic religion.

- Ability of the extended family to be present for the Baptism

Every effort should be made to baptize the child as soon as possible. It is suggested that baptismal preparations begin before the birth of the child.

Baptism may be delayed, but unless there is no sign of hope that the child will be raised in the faith it may not be denied. In those cases when the Baptism is delayed, concrete reasons are to be given to the parents so as not to alienate them, but rather to encourage them toward a regular practice of the faith.

5. Catechesis:
   A.   Context:
         The Sacrament of Baptism initiates one on a journey of faith as a disciple of Christ. Baptism celebrates and welcomes new members into the community of faith. The domestic church, the family blessed with the birth of new life seeking the graces of the sacrament, brings to the community its gifts and builds up the Body of Christ.

         Since a child obviously is incapable of a faith commitment, the Church looks to the faith of the parents as a basis for baptizing the child. Godparents also have the important task of guiding these children to live a Christian life. It is the extended family and community that support the parents in their task of nurturing this faith. Baptism is a celebration of the entire faith community affecting parents, godparents and extended family.

   B.   Process:

Parents should be made aware of the expectations for the family in the reception of the sacrament. The process of preparation for Baptism affords an excellent opportunity for bringing parents into a closer relationship with God and with the Church. The parish community offers catechesis and/or other opportunities for faith formation.

Noting the critical significance of the beginning stages of faith development in the life of a child, parishes should offer opportunities for the ongoing faith formation of parents.

C.   Content:
Parents and godparents should be made aware of their responsibility for providing a Christian family environment where the faith of their child will be nurtured. Parents are the first evangelizers bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to their children.

Parents and godparents are to be prepared to celebrate the sacrament with understanding through catechesis which considers the rituals and symbols of the sacrament in all their richness and profound meaning.

According to the *National Catechetical Directory* (117), baptismal catechesis centers on:

- The Father's love
- The life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Son
- The cleansing of original and personal sin
- The gift of the Spirit to the Church
- The proclamation of God's word, so that those called may respond in faith

Catechesis in preparation for the celebration of Baptism should provide parents with the support to develop a good Christian home; therefore, encouraging and strengthening their own personal faith development.

6. <u>Persons Involved in the Process:</u>
"It is the duty of the priest to prepare families for the baptism of their children and to help in the task of Christian formation that they have undertaken. It is the duty of the Bishop to coordinate such pastoral efforts in the diocese, with the help also of deacons and lay people " (RBC *Intro. II,7,#1*).

In light of the responsibility of the priest and community to the parents, the Diocese of Springfield strongly recommends that parishes create baptismal teams consisting of members of the parish, a deacon and/or priest, catechetical leader and/or pastoral minister, as determined by the pastor. Catechesis also involves the entire community who share their faith with and give witness and support to the parents and godparents of the newly baptized.

Since a child cannot profess personal faith, parents carry the responsibility of providing Christian formation that will lead the child to the acceptance of the faith that was professed on his/her behalf.

Parents are to choose qualified godparents to assist in this task. Godparents are to model for the child the Catholic way of life. Therefore, godparents are required to:

- Be at least 16 years of age
- Have been fully initiated into the Roman Catholic Church (having received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)
- Live in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken

Parents may not be godparents for their own children. Only one godparent is required. If parents desire two godparents, one must be male, the other female. A Christian of a non-Catholic ecclesial community may serve as an official witness together with the Catholic godparent. (Can. 872-874) There is nothing

in church law requiring a certificate that states that godparents are in good standing. Parents are to be exhorted to choose responsibly according to the above requirements.

The ordinary minister of Baptism is a bishop, priest or deacon. In case of imminent death anyone may and should baptize.

7. <u>Celebration of the Rite:</u>
Baptism is the gateway to life in the Church. The appropriate place of celebration is in the church or oratory where there is a baptismal font. Baptisms are to take place in the parish church of the parents of the child to be baptized. If there is a legitimate reason for the Baptism to take place at another church location, out of courtesy a notification ought to be given to the home parish of the parents.

If a visiting minister is requested to celebrate the sacrament, permission of the pastor/pastoral administrator is to be obtained.

A Christian name, i.e. the name of a saint is encouraged though not required. Only a name that is not offensive to Christian belief or practice is acceptable.

It is recommended that Baptism be celebrated on Sundays or at the Easter Vigil. It is most appropriate that Baptisms take place during a Sunday liturgy when the community is gathered in worship.

While no liturgical law prohibits Baptism during the penitential seasons,. parishes might consider refraining from the celebration of Baptism during Lent. The Easter season is most appropriate, emphasizing its Paschal character and drawing on the model of the RCIA.

The richness of the words and symbols of the ceremony speak of the dignity of a new creation entering a holy covenant with God. Baptism may be conferred either by pouring water over the head of the one to be baptized or by immersion. Immersion signifies more clearly the entering into the Paschal Mystery of Christ. (CCC 1239) The beauty of the sacrament is to be celebrated to its fullest to ensure the reverent participation of all.

8. <u>Sacramental Records:</u>
The pastor has the responsibility to see to it that the names of the baptized are recorded in the parish baptismal record book carefully and without delay. To be noted are the names of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses if any, and the place and date of the conferred baptism, together with the date and place of birth.

In the case of a single mother, the recording of the father's name is not enforced unless the father acknowledges his paternity. The record should be in keeping with what is written on the birth certificate. (Can. 877)

In accordance with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Decree: Baptism Records for Adopted Children, the record for adopted children should mention the Christian name(s) of the child, adoptive parent(s), sponsors, the date and place of birth, with the date and place of baptism. The fact of adoption is to be noted without the names of the natural parents. Baptismal certificates issued by the parish are the same as other baptismal certificates with no mention of the fact of adoption.

The record book for children baptized before their adoption should be completed after the adoption is finalized. Parentheses are to be placed around the names of the natural parents and the adoptive parent(s) added. The child's former surname is to be parenthesized and the new surname added. The legal adoption is to be noted. Baptismal certificates issued by the parish should not give mention of the adoption and the sponsors' names are not to be given. Names of the adoptive parents only and the new surname of the child with date and place of baptism and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament are to be noted on the certificate.

Persons having access to the parish records have an obligation not to disclose information that would reveal the fact of adoption.

9. <u>Ongoing Catechesis</u>:
The sacrament of Baptism takes on its meaning as a child is formed in faith. The beginning stages of life set the direction and foundation for the future. As a child develops in the basic human capacity to relate to others in love, trust and respect, that child also develops the human capacity for relating to God. Parents and extended family are significant influences at this time of life. Faith is nourished continually in a Christian environment. The Church is to support families in providing catechesis at every age level. The gift of Baptism must be continually nourished. (GDC 177)

I. Guidelines for the Employment of Catechetical Leaders

> *"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, USCCB, 2005, p. 24).

> *"Successful catechesis in a parish requires much time, effort, coordination, and expertise. Therefore, each parish needs a designated leader or leaders whose primary responsibility is to coordinate its catechetical endeavors. Each designated leader should be recognize by the Office of Faith Formation in accordance with its current guidelines"* (Handbook, Section 2, p.13).

> *"The Bishop of Springfield would like all parishes (or group of parishes) to have an appropriately qualified and compensated catechetical leader, as outlined in this document, to oversee this very important ecclesial ministry"* (Handbook, Section 2, p. 15).

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with Section 2B of our diocesan *Handbook for Parish Catechesis*.

Role:
The catechetical leader is a faith-filled ecclesial minister with the following roles:
- Guide for sound educational approaches to catechesis
- Theological resource person who is solidly grounded in the Catholic faith
- Skilled administrator of parish resources and services

These tasks require organizational and interpersonal skills, as well as knowledge of educational theory in general and catechetical theory and practice in particular.

Each parish must determine the exact role needed for the parish. Nationally the terms DRE, CRE and ARE used to describe people with various functions and degrees of education. In the diocese of Springfield, we use the term *parish catechetical leader* to refer to the person or persons the pastor considers in charge of the entire parish program or a part of it.

Role Description:
Every parish has its own personality and therefore its own needs. In determining, the needs of their parish, the pastor, Religious Education Commission and Parish Council should consider the <u>Assessment for Parish Catechetical Programs</u> and

<u>Sample Job Description </u>found in Section 5 of the *Handbook for Parish Catechesis*.

Qualifications

Personal:
- Person of faith and prayer
- Practicing Roman Catholic who upholds the teachings of the Church
- Witness to the Gospel
- Willing to share one's faith
- Gifted with the grace for ministry
- Willing participant in ongoing formation.

Professional:

The catechetical leader assumes responsibility for one of the most important ministry in a parish. This ministry, which reaches all members of the parish from children to adults, requires professional training and experience. Ideally, the catechetical leader would have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in Religious Education or a similar field (education, theology, pastoral ministry). Experience and knowledge in both educational theory and theology are important for successfully completing the necessary tasks.

Participation in our diocesan Lay Ministry program should be a requirement for those holding this leadership position without previous theological and educational preparation. The parish should assume the expense of these courses and upon completion of leadership training adjust the salary accordingly.

Compensation and Support

Parish catechetical leaders come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. Their work is varied and time consuming. They often have irregular hours and at various times of the year have to work long hours. The fact that most of their work is with volunteers adds another unusual dimension to their work.

A just salary should be determined by education level and years of experience. A catechetical leader who works more than 20 hours a week should be offered benefits, which should include health insurance (30 hours per week required), membership in the diocesan pension plan, paid vacation, and continuing education opportunities.

All employees regardless of the number of hours they work should receive reimbursement for expenses, including mileage and pre-approved job related continuing education costs. The pastor and catechetical leader should review the budget on an annual basis.

Accountability

The catechetical leader is responsible to the pastor or his designated representative. A written job description of mutual responsibilities and benefits is

essential and important for both the parish and the individual. Regular meetings should be held to insure good communication between the pastor and the catechetical leader. When staff meetings are held, the catechetical leader should be part of those meetings.

The catechetical leader should establish regular office hours when she/he is available to teachers, parents and others who may want to meet with him or her.

Certain times of the year are more demanding than others on the catechetical leader, requiring a greater expenditure of time and energy. It is reasonable and fair that in recognition of this there be flexibility in the work schedule.

Once a year the pastor and catechetical leader should engage in an in-depth evaluation of their mutual expectations and the success of the parish program. This evaluation could include the religious education commission or board.

Hiring Process

All parish catechetical leaders are to be hired in consultation with the Office of Faith Formation. As part of the ongoing educational goals for the catechetical leader, he/she will be required to participate in appropriate training sessions offered through OFF. This approach offers better assurance that those leading our parish programs have the qualifications and academic standards for the position. The pastor of course will make the final determination regarding the person to be employed by the parish. Pastors are reminded that it is their responsibility to see that CORI forms are submitted to the Human Resource Director, Code of Conduct forms are signed, and that the Virtus Safe Environment training has been completed.

The Office of Faith Formation:
- Is available to advertise existing positions and assist throughout the interviewing process.
- Is willing to assist parishes in writing job descriptions, developing parish profiles, formulating a search committee, and conducting interviews.
- Endorses the salary guidelines in the *Ministry Analysis Worksheet* as proposed by the New England Directors of Religious Education, Inc.

Once a parish has hired a catechetical leader, he/she should be guided by the pastor to meet with the staff of the OFF. The diocesan staff will offer information on diocesan policies and services, in addition to adding the individual to diocesan mailing lists.

Diocesan Certification

All parish catechetical leaders should be certified through our diocesan

Office of Faith Formation. Contact the office for information of this process.

J. Safe Environment Forms and Procedures

The Diocese of Springfield is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and vulnerable adults in all of our parishes. This is a four part process:

1. To **CORI** (Criminal Offender Record Information) all paid staff working in the Diocese of Springfield, all Roman Catholic clergy, all school staff, faculty, school volunteers; and all volunteers who have direct and/or unmonitored contact with children, youth, persons with disabilities, adults age 60 or older, or any other vulnerable population.

2. To provide Safe Environment Training for all individuals who go through the CORI process through *Virtus Protecting God's Children for Adults*.

3. To have all above sign the **Diocesan Code of Conduct** (part of the Virtus Protecting God's Children for Adults program).

4. To provide Safe Environment training for all Diocesan Catholic School children and all parish children in the parish and Faith Formation programs. The current Safe Environment program to be implemented is the *Circle of Grace* Program for Pre-school children through grade 12.

The following pages contain:
*   The Diocese of Springfield CORI Policy
*   A Volunteer CORI Form
*   The Massachusetts General Law Chapter 119, Section 51A
*   The Circle of Grace parent Opt-Out Form

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD
Policy Name: Criminal Offender Record Information Policy
Policy #: 2019-01
Effective Date: October 4, 2019
Revision Date(s):
Approved by: _____   Most Rev. Mitchell T. Rozanski   Bishop of Springfield

CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION POLICY

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield, a Corporation Sole ("Diocese of Springfield") is fully committed to ensuring a Safe Environment for the most vulnerable whom we minister to. Pursuant to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Diocese of Springfield is committed to obtaining all available criminal offender record information for the following: all paid staff working in the Diocese of Springfield (e.g., parish, pastoral center or any other ministry); all Roman Catholic clergy; all school staff, faculty and school volunteers; and all volunteers who have direct and/or unmonitored contact with children, youth, persons with disabilities, adults ages 60 and older, or any other vulnerable population.

The Diocese of Springfield, through its Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance, has developed a process by which it will conduct background checks through the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and, as applicable, the Statewide-Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS). Out-of-state background checks will be completed for any person whose permanent residence is outside of Massachusetts or for any person who has resided outside of Massachusetts within the past three (3) years. The process allows the Diocese to receive and review Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Reports from the DCJIS for the above categories of individuals.

The existence of a criminal record does not necessarily automatically disqualify an applicant from employment or volunteer service[1]. The Diocese has established guidelines, adapted from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, to determine whether these individuals are appropriate for employment and/or volunteer service in the Diocese of Springfield. The implementation of these guidelines is set forth in this Criminal Offender Record Information Policy of the Diocese of Springfield.

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[1] Unless provided otherwise by law.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions are used:

- **CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) -** Records and data in any communicable form compiled by a Massachusetts criminal justice agency[2] which concern an identifiable individual and relate to the nature or disposition of a criminal charge, an arrest, a pre-trial proceeding, other judicial proceedings, previous hearings conducted pursuant to M.G.L. c. 276, § 58A where the defendant was detained prior to trial or released with conditions under M.G.L. c. 276, § 58A(2), sentencing, incarceration, rehabilitation, or release.

- **CORI Report –** A name and date of birth (DOB)-based record of a person's Massachusetts criminal court appearances. CORI reports contain only Massachusetts court appearances; out-of-state court information is not included.

- **Clergy –** Bishops and their equivalents, priests, deacons, seminarians and candidates for the permanent diaconate in active or supply ministry (including retired clerics who continue to celebrate occasional sacraments) who are incardinated in the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts.

- **DCJIS (Department of Criminal Justice Information Services) –** The Commonwealth of Massachusetts agency statutorily designated to provide a public safety information system and network to support data collection, information sharing, and interoperability for the Commonwealth's criminal justice and law enforcement communities.

- **Direct and unmonitored contact:** Contact with a child[3], person with a disability, adult age 60 and older, or a person from any other vulnerable population when no other C.O.R.I. cleared person from the Diocese of Springfield is present.

- **Educator –** Any person who works in a school (diocesan, parish or independent elementary or high school(s)) within the Diocese of Springfield, specifically: teachers, teaching assistants, principals, administrative staff, librarians, coaches, student teachers, maintenance staff, cafeteria workers, bus drivers (if applicable), and any other school personnel.

- **Employee –** A paid person who work directly, or under sub-contract, for the Diocese of Springfield and its parishes, pastoral center, or any other ministry or department.

- **Employment Applicant -** An individual who has applied for employment or a volunteer opportunity and who meets the requirements for the position for which the individual is being screened for criminal history by the Diocese of Springfield.

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[2] Out-of-state criminal offender record information will be requested from the state(s) where the person currently resides and/or established permanent residency within the past three (3) years.

[3] Any person under the age of 18 years.

- **Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance –** The office responsible for administering and overseeing all aspects of the Diocese of Springfield's Safe Environment Program, including Background Records Checks for clergy, employment applications, employees, educators and volunteers.

- **Requestor -** A person, other than a law enforcement or criminal justice agency official, submitting a request for CORI or criminal history information.

- **SAFIS (Statewide-Applicant Fingerprint Identification System) –** Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2013, "An Act Relative to Background Checks" requires a fingerprint-based state and national criminal record check for school employees through SAFIS. The persons required to submit to the national fingerprint check are all newly hired school employees, contractor employees, educators, student teachers, maintenance staff, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers (if applicable).

- **Volunteer –** An unpaid person who assists the Diocese of Springfield (including parishes and all diocesan, parish and independent elementary and high schools within the Diocese of Springfield) on either an as needed or ongoing basis to perform a task and/or service.

I.   Policy

The Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Policy of the Diocese of Springfield is applicable to the criminal history screening of prospective and current clergy, employees, educators and volunteers defined in M.G.L. c. 268 § 1 and Section I of the policy (see above). Pursuant to Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2013, all newly hired school employees, contractors, educators, student teachers, maintenance staff, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers (if applicable) are required to submit to national fingerprint checks through the Statewide-Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS).

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and other criminal history checks may be part of a general background check for employment or volunteer work, the following practices and procedures will be followed.

a.   CONDUCTING CORI SCREENING

CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by DCJIS and M.G.L. c. 6 § 172, and only after a CORI Acknowledgment Form[4] has been completed and the person's identity verified by a current and valid Unites States of America issued government ID. The Diocese of Springfield shall conduct CORI checks upon hire or as a requirement to be eligible to serve as a volunteer when (the volunteer) ministry (role, position and/or task) will have direct and/or unmonitored contact with children, youth, persons with disabilities, adults ages 60 and older, or any other vulnerable population. Furthermore, active clergy, employees, educators and volunteers (as

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[4] See Appendix A or go to http://diospringfield.org/wp-content/uploads/June-2019-Employee-CORI-Application.pdf for *Employee CORI Acknowledgement Forms* or Appendix B or go to http://diospringfield.org/wp-content/uploads/June-2019-Volunteer-CORI-Application.pdf for *Volunteer CORI Acknowledgement Forms*

required) shall have a new CORI check completed within ninety (90) days at the start of each three-year cycle:

> July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021
> July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024
> July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027
> July 1, 2027 – June 39, 2030

A CORI Acknowledgement Form shall be completed for each CORI check completed by the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance.

b. ACCESS TO CORI

All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential, and access to the information must be limited to those individuals who have a "need to know." This may include, but is not limited to hiring managers (e.g. pastors, department heads, etc.), staff submitting the CORI request(s), and staff charged with processing job applications. The Diocese of Springfield shall maintain and keep a current list of each individual authorized to have access to, or view, CORI. The list shall be updated every six (6) months and is subject to inspection upon request by the DCJIS at any time.

c. CORI TRAINING

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to view and access CORI at the Diocese of Springfield will review, and will be thoroughly familiar with, the educational and relevant training materials regarding CORI laws and regulations made available by the DCJIS at https://www.mass.gov/service-details/icori-training-documents.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 6 § 171A, the Diocese of Springfield is an agency required to maintain a CORI Policy. All personnel authorized to conduct criminal history background checks and/or to review CORI information will review, and will be thoroughly familiar with, the CORI Policy.

d. USE OF CORI IN BACKGROUND SCREENING

CORI used for employment purposes shall only be accessed for applicants who are otherwise qualified for the position for which they have applied.

Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on background checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulation.

e. VERIFYING A SUBJECT'S IDENTITY

If a criminal record is received from DCJIS, the information is to be closely compared with the information on the CORI Acknowledgement Form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant to ensure the record belongs to the applicant.

If the information in the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, a determination is to be made by an individual authorized (Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or Director of Human Resources) to make such determinations based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant.

f. QUESTIONING A SUBJECT ABOUT HIS/HER CRIMINAL HISTORY

In connection with any decision regarding employment or volunteer opportunities, the subject shall be provided with a copy of the criminal history record, whether obtained from the DCJIS or from any other source, prior to questioning the subject about it. The source(s) of the criminal history record shall also be disclosed to the subject.

g. DETERMINING SUITABILITY

If a determination is made, based on the information provided in Section E (Verifying a Subjects Identify) of this policy, that a criminal record belongs to the subject, and the subject does not dispute the record's accuracy, then the determination of suitability for the position will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but are not limited to, the following:

    (a) Relevance of the record to the position sought;
    (b) The nature of the work to be performed;
    (c) Time since the conviction;
    (d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
    (e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
    (f) The number of offenses;
    (g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
    (h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof; and
    (i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the organization.

The Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources shall determine the applicant's suitability for employment, volunteerism and any other ministry through the Diocese of Springfield. The factors that go into the final decision shall be documented and maintained with the individual's personnel records.

The applicant is to be notified of the decision and the basis for it in a timely manner.

h. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING A CRIMINAL RECORD

As stated above, unless provided otherwise by law, the existence of a criminal record does not necessarily automatically disqualify an applicant from employment or volunteer services with children and youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other vulnerable populations.

The Diocese of Springfield follows the DCJIS[5] criteria for evaluating criminal records. There are two basic types of disqualification – presumptive and discretionary – and three lists of criminal offenses separated into tables – A, B and C. Additionally, any clergy, employees, educators, or volunteers convicted of or who has charges pending for one of the felonies listed on the Lifetime Disqualifying Crimes Table (See Appendix D) shall not be permitted to minister, work or volunteer in/at/through the Diocese of Springfield.

Table A[6]
If a criminal offense on a CORI is listed on Table A, the most egregious and violent offenses, the applicant is *presumptively* disqualified from employment or volunteer service. The Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources shall notify the applicant immediately and share the findings. The applicant then has the opportunity to rebut the presumption that they are ineligible to work in an environment with children, youth, persons with disabilities, elderly and other vulnerable populations.

Table B
If an applicant has a criminal offense that is listed on Table B, the individual is *discretionarily* disqualified from employment or volunteer service. This means that the Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources can exercise a measure of discretion in deciding whether the individual is capable of working safely with children, youth, persons with disabilities, elderly and other vulnerable populations. The Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources shall notify the applicant immediately and share the findings. The applicant shall be provided with the opportunity to rebut the finding of ineligibility by providing additional information (i.e., a letter or reference from a probation officer, the prosecuting district attorney, judge, or a treating mental health professional stating that the individual is unlikely to pose harm to the young and vulnerable). In these discretionary situations, the Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources reviewing the CORI information may also consider and weigh the factors identified in Section G (Determining Suitability) of this policy on case-by-case basis.

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[5] See https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/09/xb/inf-amuse-cori-valuation-criteria-table-a-c.pdf
[6] See Appendix D

Table C
If an applicant has a criminal offense that is listed on Table C, the individual is also discretionarily disqualified from employment or volunteer service. As in both circumstance described above, the Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources shall notify the applicant immediately and share the findings. The applicant shall be provided with the opportunity to rebut the finding of ineligibility by providing additional information.

The difference between the process in terms of the offenses listed in Tables B and C is that Table C offenses (although serious) are considered to be the least egregious category for offenses, and do not necessarily require letters of reference to overturn the initial findings as Table B offenses do.

i. **ADVERSE DECISIONS BASED ON CORI**

If the Director of the Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance or the Director of Human Resources makes an adverse decision based on the results of the criminal history background check, the applicant will be notified in accordance with DCJIS regulations 803 CMR 2.18, 2.1. The subject shall be provided with a copy of the Diocese of Springfield's CORI policy and a copy of the criminal history (unless a copy was previously provided). The source(s) of the criminal history will also be revealed. The subject will then be provided with an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the CORI record. Subjects shall also be provided a copy of DCJIS' *Information Concerning the Process for Correcting a Criminal Record*[7]

j. **SECONDARY DISSEMINATION LOGS**

All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential and can only be disseminated as authorized by law and regulation. A central secondary dissemination log shall be used to record _any_ dissemination of CORI outside the Diocese of Springfield, including dissemination at the request of the subject.

Diocese of Springfield
65 Elliot Street - P.O. Box 1730
Springfield, Massachusetts 01102

DIOMA12-00206

CHAPTER 6, §172H CORI REQUEST FORM
REVISED 10/2019

Diocese of Springfield is requesting all the available criminal offender record information (CORI) on the following individual from the Criminal History Systems Board pursuant to Chapter 6, § 172H which mandates organizations primarily engaged in providing activities or programs to children 18 years of age or less that accepts **VOLUNTEERS,** to obtain all CORI regarding volunteers prior to accepting any person as a volunteer.

Organization _____ CITY OR TOWN_____
(Indicate name of Parish, School or Organization)

Volunteer Activity _____

_____   _____
Volunteer Signature   Date

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)

_____   _____   _____
LAST NAME   **FIRST NAME:**   **MIDDLE NAME**

_____   _____   _____
MAIDEN NAME OR ALIAS   **DATE OF BIRTH**   **PLACE OF BIRTH**

_____   _____
LAST 6 DIGITS OF SOCIAL SECURITY # (REQUIRED)   **MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME**

CURRENT ADDRESS (Cannot be a Post Office Box) _____

_____

EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER

_____

This form must be accompanied by a U.S. Government / State license or photo I.D.
(STATE REQUIREMENT)

To be completed by Organizational Representative Verifying Identification of Volunteer

DOCUMENT TITLE: _____ ISSUING AUTHORITY: _____
(Must be a U.S. Government State -issued photographic form of identification)

Expiration Date: _____ ID #_____Height_____ Weight_____ SEX: M F

CERTIFICATION: I attest, under penalty of perjury, that I have examined the document(s) presented by the above-named employee

_____   _____
Signature and Printed Name of Church/Organizational Representative   **Date**

REQUESTED BY: _____
SIGNATURE OF CORI AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEE
Catherine Farr, Director of Human Resources - Jeffrey Trant, Director of Safe Environment

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 119

Section 51A: Reporting of suspected abuse or neglect; mandated reporters; collection of physical evidence; penalties; content of reports; liability; privileged communication

Section 51A. (a) A mandated reporter who, in his professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from: (i) abuse inflicted upon him which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse; (ii) neglect, including malnutrition; (iii) physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth, shall immediately communicate with the department orally and, within 48 hours, shall file a written report with the department detailing the suspected abuse or neglect; or (iv) being a sexually exploited child; or (v) being a human trafficking victim as defined by section 20M of chapter 233.

If a mandated reporter is a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school or facility, the mandated reporter may instead notify the person or designated agent in charge of such institution, school or facility who shall become responsible for notifying the department in the manner required by this section.

A mandated reporter may, in addition to filing a report under this section, contact local law enforcement authorities or the child advocate about the suspected abuse or neglect.

(b) For the purpose of reporting under this section, hospital personnel may have photographs taken of the areas of trauma visible on the child without the consent of the child's parents or guardians. These photographs or copies thereof shall be sent to the department with the report.

If hospital personnel collect physical evidence of abuse or neglect of the child, the local district attorney, local law enforcement authorities, and the department shall be immediately notified. The physical evidence shall be processed immediately so that the department may make an informed determination within the time limits in section 51B. If there is a delay in processing, the department shall seek a waiver under subsection (d) of section 51B.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (g), whoever violates this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than $1,000. Whoever knowingly and willfully files a frivolous report of child abuse or neglect under this section shall be punished by: (i) a fine of not more than $2,000 for the first offense; (ii) imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 6 months and a fine of not more than $2,000 for the second offense; and (iii) imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 21/2 years and a fine of not more than $2,000 for the third and subsequent offenses.

Any mandated reporter who has knowledge of child abuse or neglect that resulted in serious bodily injury to or death of a child and willfully fails to report such abuse or neglect shall be punished by a fine of up to $5,000 or imprisonment in the house of correction for not more than 21/2 years or by both such fine and imprisonment; and, upon a guilty finding or a continuance without a finding, the court shall notify any appropriate professional licensing authority of the mandated reporter's violation of this paragraph.

(d) A report filed under this section shall contain: (i) the names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or other person responsible for the child's care, if known; (ii) the child's age; (iii) the child's sex; (iv) the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect; (v) the circumstances under which the person required to report first became aware of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect; (vi) whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, shelter or otherwise assist the child; (vii) the name of the person or persons making the report; (viii) any other information that the person reporting

believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries; (ix) the identity of the person or persons responsible for the neglect or injuries; and (x) other information required by the department.

(e) A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has died as a result of any of the conditions listed in subsection (a) shall report the death to the district attorney for the county in which the death occurred and the office of the chief medical examiner as required by clause (16) of section 3 of chapter 38. Any person who fails to file a report under this subsection shall be punished by a fine of not more than $1,000.

(f) Any person may file a report under this section if that person has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse or neglect.

(g) No mandated reporter shall be liable in any civil or criminal action for filing a report under this section or for contacting local law enforcement authorities or the child advocate, if the report or contact was made in good faith, was not frivolous, and the reporter did not cause the abuse or neglect. No other person filing a report under this section shall be liable in any civil or criminal action by reason of the report if it was made in good faith and if that person did not perpetrate or inflict the reported abuse or cause the reported neglect. Any person filing a report under this section may be liable in a civil or criminal action if the department or a district attorney determines that the person filing the report may have perpetrated or inflicted the abuse or caused the neglect.

(h) No employer shall discharge, discriminate or retaliate against a mandated reporter who, in good faith, files a report under this section, testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect. Any employer who discharges, discriminates or retaliates against that mandated reporter shall be liable to the mandated reporter for treble damages, costs and attorney's fees.

(i) Within 30 days of receiving a report from a mandated reporter, the department shall notify the mandated reporter, in writing, of its determination of the nature, extent and cause or causes of the injuries to the child and the services that the department intends to provide to the child or the child's family.

(j) Any privilege relating to confidential communications, established by sections 135 to 135B, inclusive, of chapter 112 or by sections 20A and 20B of chapter 233, shall not prohibit the filing of a report under this section or a care and protection petition under section 24, except that a priest, rabbi, clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, leader of a church or religious body or accredited Christian Science practitioner need not report information solely gained in a confession or similarly confidential communication in other religious faiths. Nothing in the general laws shall modify or limit the duty of a priest, rabbi, clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, leader of a church or religious body or accredited Christian Science practitioner to report suspected child abuse or neglect under this section when the priest, rabbi, clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, leader of a church or religious body or accredited Christian Science practitioner is acting in some other capacity that would otherwise make him a mandated reporter.

(k) A mandated reporter who is professionally licensed by the commonwealth shall complete training to recognize and report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Safe Environment Training for Children Opt-Out form

The USCCB Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth* and the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Springfield require that all children and youth in our schools and religious education programs be offered Safe Environment training that is age-appropriate and in accord with Catholic moral principles. The Diocese of Springfield and each parish and Catholic school provides such training.

Information about what will be presented is shared with parents and guardians through the parish Religious Education ministry or the school Safe Environment coordinator. You are welcome to review the materials or participate in these lessons. Further resources for parents about preventing and responding to child abuse and bullying are available through the Diocese of Springfield's Child and Youth Protection website. We encourage contact your child's school administrator or parish Catechetical Leader if you have questions or concerns.

If you choose not to have your child participate in this training, please sign this form and return it to the Safe Environment coordinator.

I do not wish my child to participate in the Safe Environment training offered through the Diocese of Springfield. I am aware that I can obtain Safe Environment resources from the school, our parish, the Office of Counseling, Prevention and Victim Services, and the diocesan website at www.diospringfield.org/ Child and Youth Protection.

_____
Parent/Guardian's Signature

_____
Date

Child's Name: _____

Child's Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

SECTION 5

FORMS AND APPENDICES

Youth Event Registration Form

Event Name, Date & Location: _____

Event Sponsor: _____

I. Youth Information

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____/_____/_____ Grade: _____ Gender: M / F T- Shirt Size (if applicable): S M L XL 2X 3X

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Parish/School *(group you are registered with)*: _____

Mother/Guardian: _____ Father/Guardian: _____

Mother/Guardian Phone: _____ Father/Guardian Phone: _____

Note: All areas utilized are not ADA accessible. Contact your Event Leader for special arrangements.	**Circle ALL that apply:** Mobility Impaired Hearing Impaired/Interpretation Needed Wheelchair Access Visually Impaired (more than wearing glasses)

II. Youth Agreement0

I understand that my participation in this Event requires compliance with specific regulations for this Event. I agree to abide by all rules and regulations set forth. Any infraction of the rules or regulations, including, but not limited to, the possession of alcohol, drugs, or weapons may cause my dismissal from the Event. If I should be dismissed, I understand that my parents will be contacted to arrange for my immediate transportation home.

Youth Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

III. Parental/Guardian Release, Hold Harmless/Indemnify Agreement

I, the parent/guardian of _____, who is less than 19 years of age, grant permission for my child/ward to participate in the above named Event. By allowing my child/ward to participate in this Event, and in consideration for his/her being allowed to participate by the above named Parish/School, I hereby assume on behalf of my child/ward all risk of accident or harm to my child/ward arising out of, directly or indirectly, any incident of any kind occurring during the course of, including travel to and from, this Event, and do hereby release and discharge the Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield, A Corporation Sole, the above named Parish/School, and their officers, directors, agents, employees, administrators, representatives, grantees and assigns (collectively referred to as "Releasees"), of and from all debts, demands, actions, causes of action, suits, accounts, covenants, contracts, agreements, costs, fees, expenses, losses, damages and any and all claims and liabilities whatsoever of every name and nature, both in law and in equity, whether known or unknown, that I, on behalf of my child/ward, have ever had or now have against the Releasees relating to or arising out of this Event. I further agree on behalf of my child/ward to protect, defend, hold harmless, and fully indemnify the Releasees for any claim or cause of action whatsoever arising out of this Event that may be brought against the Releasees, or any one of them, by any person, including without limitation, my child/ward or his/her family members, relating to or arising out of the participation of my child/ward in this Event.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

I am aware of the particulars of the said Event including the times, costs, and adults chaperoning and/or transporting my child/ward for the Event and have clarified any concerns I may have with the coordinating adult in charge. I agree that my child/ward shall abide by the rules and all regulations of the Event including in regards to alcoholic beverages, drugs, and weapons. I agree that if my child/ward fails to abide by the regulations set forth, he/she may be dismissed from the Event and I will need to arrange for his/her immediate transportation home at my expense.

I understand that photographs or video taken at this Event may be used in Parish or Diocesan publications.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

IV. **Medical Information** (*Please read the options below, then check & sign those that are in accordance with your wishes.*)

☐In the event of an emergency, I hereby grant permission to transport my child/ward and obtain emergency medical or surgical treatment(s) from a licensed physician, hospital, or medical clinic. I hereby authorize medical personnel to release necessary information about his/her care to the parish or school group leaders(s) named here: _____. I wish to be advised prior to further treatment by the medical provider.

In the event that I cannot be reached, please contact _____at_____.
                                       (Emergency Contact Name)   *(Emergency Contact Phone Number)*
Relationship to Youth: _____.

Family Physician: _____ Physician Phone Number: _____

☐ My child/ward is covered by hospitalization and medical insurance under policy # _____ issued by _____.

☐ My child/ward does not have medical coverage and I assume responsibility for the cost of hospitalization and medical care for my child/ward.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

☐My child/ward is taking medications at present. He/she will bring all necessary medications and such medications will be well labeled. The names of, and concise directions for taking such medications, including dosage and frequency of dosage are as follows: Medication: _____ Dosage: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

☐ I hereby grant permission for nonprescription medication (such as acetaminophen, decongestant, cough syrup) to be given to my child/ward, if requested by my child/ward and deemed advisable by an adult chaperone.
Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

☐ No medication of any type whether prescription or nonprescription may be administered to my child/ward unless the situation is life threatening and emergency treatment is required.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

☐ I wish to inform you of the following additional medical information and the recommended course of action
(allergies, dietary restrictions, special conditions, learning modifications, etc.) _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

☐ I would like to have a member of the Event staff speak with me further regarding a medical concern or situation. Please contact me at _____.

YOUTH UNDER 18 SERVING IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE CODE OF CONDUCT

Parishes and/or other youth-serving organizations within the Diocese of Springfield often provide opportunities for youth to grow in their relationship with Jesus by inviting them to serve in a leadership capacity. In order to provide safety and security during these programs, proper rules and regulations are set in place. By signing this document, you are agreeing to the following:

As a youth member of _____ parish, I acknowledge that I am representing my parish while participating in _____ parish event or organizational activity and will follow these rules to the best of my ability:

All Youth will:
- I will treat everyone with dignity, respect, integrity, and courtesy.
- I will have a positive attitude toward others.
- I will project an image of Christian consideration, sensitivity, and respect to everyone.
- I will have appropriate behavior. I will treat my peers and adults with respect. I will use appropriate, positive and life-affirming language when talking to others.
- I will have an appropriate appearance and will be dressed accordingly.
- I will have appropriate postings on social media (such as Instagram, Twitter, etc.) that reflect positive, life-affirming values.
- I will have appropriate relationships with peers.
- I will refrain from actions that could result in injury.
- I will refrain from inappropriate touching and verbal harassment.
- I will report any problems or unacceptable behavior of any kind to a trusted adult.

Youth Serving in Leadership Roles will also:
- I will have a willingness to serve and perform tasks that are asked of me in my role.
- I will ensure the physical and emotional safety of any children or youth entrusted in my care.

All Youth will not:
- I will not engage in any form of sexual activity or peer sexual harassment.
- I will not be alone in a private area with a child, youth or adult.
- I will not purchase, consume, or distribute any form of alcohol or drugs.
- I will not possess any type of weapon.

Youth participants will be aware of what are and are not appropriate behaviors in terms of relationships between adults and youth, and with their peers:
The following behaviors are generally considered appropriate:
- Side hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder or "temple" hugs
- Handshakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise for a job well-done (not regarding physical attributes)
- Touching hands, faces (usually in context of a blessing), shoulders, and arms of minors

- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with younger minors
- Sitting beside younger minors
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with younger minors
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate

The following behaviors are generally considered inappropriate:
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children on the lap who are capable of sitting on their own
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas
- Showing affection in isolated areas of a facility such as bedrooms, restrooms, bathrooms, closets, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
- Being in or on a bed with an adult
- Touching knees or legs of minors
- Wrestling with minors
- Tickling minors
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by minor to adult or to another minor
- Any type of massage given by adult to minor
- Any form of unwanted affection or peer sexual harassment
- Compliments or put downs of any kind, especially those that relate to physique or body development
- Going to an isolated area away from the group, or being taken to an isolated area by an adult or peer

Youth and parents understand that failure to agree to and abide by these rules will result in the youth's immediate removal from the activity at their own expense and/or the informing of local authorities.

Youth Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

THE DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
serving berkshire, franklin, hampden & hampshire counties

YOUTH EVENT ROSTER AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT VERIFICATION FORM

PURPOSE

- This form is required for any parish/school that intends to bring youth off parish/school property.
- This form is used to certify that the adult chaperones are in compliance with our Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People. This form is also used to certify that the youth have had the opportunity to receive Safe Environment Training that will help them learn skills to identify, respond to, and report situations that might be harmful to them.

DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

- The diocese requires at a minimum of one adult chaperone for every eight youth attending an event.
- Chaperones are compliant with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policies when they have: 1) Completed the online Virtus Training, 2) Signed the Code of Conduct, and 3) Successfully completed a CORI.
- CORI's can take 4-6 weeks to be processed.
- When submitting an event-related CORI, please include a note that includes the event name and date.

GROUP LEADER DIRECTIONS

- Please complete the GROUP INFORMATION and ROSTER Sections.
- Give this form to your Parish Child Advocate to complete the CERTIFICATION Section.
- For Diocesan Events, you must bring the certified form with you to the event.
- For events outside of the diocese, you must submit the certified form with your request for the diocese to complete any Safe Environment Compliance Forms.
- If a youth or adult attending with your parish group is from another parish in the diocese, please contact their parish's Child Advocate to have them complete a form with that person's information on it.

PARISH CHILD ADVOCATE DIRECTIONS

- Please complete the PARISH CHILD ADVOCATE CERTIFICATION Section.
- Maintain a copy of the completed form with your parish's Safe Environment Records.
- Notify the Group Leader immediately if any adult chaperones listed are not in compliance and tell them what they need to complete in order to be in compliance.
- Return the completed form to the Group Leader when all adult chaperones listed are in compliance.

GROUP INFORMATION

Group Leader Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____Email _____

Parish/Group/School _____ City _____

Position at Parish/Group/School _____

Event Name _____

Event Location _____ Date _____

PARISH CHILD ADVOCATE CERTIFICATION

I certify that based on our records, the adults listed have successfully satisfied the requirements of the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy and that the youth listed have had the opportunity to receive the appropriate Safe Environment Training. Please complete the applicable sections below based on the grade(s) of the youth listed.

- Last Date and grade that the parish/school offered the "Circle of Grace" Training for grades K-12:   Last Date _____ Grade _____

Child Advocate Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ROSTER: Total # Adult Chaperones _____   Total # Youth Participants _____

*If this is a Parish Group, then list the participant's parish only if they are not from your parish.

*If this is a School Group, there is no need to list the participant's parish.

ADULT FIRST & LAST NAME	DATE OF CORI	DATE OF VIRTUS	*PARISH

YOUTH FIRST & LAST NAME	CURRENT GRADE	*PARISH

(Attach additional names as necessary)

ASSESSMENT FOR A PARISH CATECHETICAL PROGRAM

Please check all that applies to your program.

Adult Education

_____ Adult education is offered on a systematic basis.

_____ A variety of adult catechetical programs are offered each year.

_____ Programs for adults are implemented in light of adult education principles.

_____ The parish has resources of adult materials to borrow.

_____ Catechesis of Children and Youth

_____ Texts used are those in keeping with the *Diocesan Policy Relative to Catechetical Texts.*

_____ Children and youth have their own texts in which they can write, take home and keep.

_____ Supplementary resources connected to the text are available to catechists.

_____ Audio visual resources are used appropriately and effectively.

_____ Other supplies are available to catechists.

_____ Scheduling takes place according to "A Planning Checklist" in the Scheduling section of this handbook (Sec. 1B).

_____ Communication with parents/guardians takes place on a regular basis.

_____ Catechetical activities take place in a welcoming and comfortable environment.

_____ Regular learning groups should have no more than 12 participants.

_____ The program is adaptable to people with special needs.

Supportive Programs Offered

_____ Retreat/Prayer opportunities

_____ Liturgies

_____ Intergenerational programs

_____ Service projects

_____ Vacation Bible School or other summer activities

_____ Programs such as youth ministry and family gatherings integrated with religious education.

Sacramental Preparation Programs

_____ Sacramental preparation uses texts designed specifically for that purpose.

_____ Immediate sacramental preparation takes place in the parish for all children, including Catholic school children.

_____ Parent/Guardian meetings are held for sacramental preparation - Eucharist, Penance, Confirmation.

Other Elements of the Program

_____ The catechetical program has a specific and adequate budget.

_____ The program is coordinated by a trained, certified catechetical leader.

_____ Catechists are adequately trained.

_____ All should have taken *Catechist Training* or its equivalent.

_____ All should have some formal theological education.

_____ Regular catechist meetings are held.

_____ At all age levels, the program integrates

    _____ Word (message)

    _____ Worship

    _____ Service

    _____ Community.

_____ The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is implemented according to diocesan guidelines and recommendations.

SAMPLE CATECHIST APPLICATION FORM

Name_____

Address_____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Other activities in which you are currently involved (work/volunteer)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Previous catechetical experience (grade/age level and parish)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Catechetical training or workshops attended

_____
_____
_____
_____

Special interests/skills

_____
_____
_____
_____

Grade level of Interest _____

Availability of Days:	Morning	Afternoon	Evening

CORI ☐   **VERTUS** ☐   **Catechist Training** ☐   **Grade Level Assigned** _____

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Director of Faith Formation

1. Initiate, organize and implement programs designed to meet the religious education needs of the total parish, e.g.:
   a. develop educational programs for adults and children
   b. develop sacramental programs
   c. coordinate (or work with the Parish RCIA Team toward) the implementation of RCIA
   d. recruit and train or provide for the training of volunteers to implement all catechetical programs
   e. provide programs for support and spiritual growth for those involved in parish faith formation.
   f. prepare schedules and communicate these schedules to appropriate individuals and groups
   g. maintain appropriate records of programs and their participants
   h. select appropriate educational resources

2. Maintain familiarity with educational resources such as:
   a. programs and/or texts
   b. audio visual materials
   c. supplementary materials needed for effective implementation of catechesis

3. Maintain familiarity with official catechetical documents of the Church.

4. Prepare the budget for faith formation.

5. Communicate and cooperate with the pastor and parish organizations which may include:
   a. meeting on a regular basis with the pastor and parish staff
   b. attending all meetings of the Faith Formation Commission and/or Board
   c. attending all meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council
   d. convening the Faith Formation Executive Board and
   e. communicating with the parish community

6. Organize and maintain an efficient office which is accessible and responsive to the needs of parishioners.

7. Evaluate existing programs and make recommendations for revision or expansion of programs.

8. Prepare an annual report for the Parish Faith Formation Board and/or Parish Pastoral Council or Education Commission.

9. Participate in ongoing professional development through reading and participation in workshops, seminars, and catechetical institutes.

10. Understand diocesan policies in order to develop parish polices which are consistent with diocesan policies.

Coordinators of Faith Formation

1. Organize and implement part or all of the catechetical programs of the parish (as determined by agreement with the coordinator and the pastor or staff), e.g.:
   a. recruit and provide for the training of volunteers who assist in the program
   b. provide regular meetings for catechists for support and formation
   c. recommend to the parish director of faith formation (or pastor) texts, programs, audio-visual materials and appropriate supplies to be used in the program
   d. prepare schedules and communicate them to appropriate individuals and groups
   e. maintain records of programs and participants
   f. prepare (or collaborate in the preparation of) the catechetical budget

2. Communicate and cooperate with the pastor, the parish director of faith formation and parish organizations to include:
   a. meeting with the pastor (and director) and staff on a regular basis
   b. participating in all meetings of Parish Faith Formation Commission
   c. convening the faith formation board
   d. participating in all Parish Pastoral Council meetings
   e. communicating with the parish community

3. Maintain an efficient office that is accessible and responsive to the needs of parishioners.

4. Evaluate all programs relevant to the specific area of responsibility assumed and make recommendations for revision and/or expansion of programs.

5. Prepare and present an annual report to the Parish Board of Faith Formation and/or Parish Pastoral Council or Education Commission.

6. Maintain familiarity with diocesan policies relevant to the specific area of responsibility assumed.

7. Participate in ongoing formation through reading and attendance at catechetical workshops, seminars and institutes.

Administrator of Faith Formation

1. Organize a particular segment of the faith formation program in cooperation with the pastor (and/or the coordinator or director of faith formation) to include:
   a. scheduling catechetical sessions and communicating that schedule to appropriate individuals and groups
   b. recruiting volunteers and seeing to their training and formation
   c. maintaining a supply of resources for catechists
   d. seeing that appropriate records are maintained
2. Cooperate and communicate with the pastor and appropriate groups to include:
   a. meeting regularly with the pastor
   b. participating in Parish Faith Formation Board and/or Commission meetings

3. Participate in training and formation for catechetical ministry.

APPENDIX

NCCB DECREE: BAPTISM RECORDS FOR ADOPTED CHILDREN 2001

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescription of Canon 877.3, hereby decree that:

1. For children **baptized after their adoption is finalized**, the following shall be entered in the register:
   - the Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
   - the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
   - the date and place of birth;
   - the names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
   - the place and date of the baptism;
   - the fact of adoption but **not the names of the natural parents.**

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

2. For children **baptized before their adoption is finalized,** the following notations shall be added to the baptismal register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction:
   - parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
   - the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
   - the child's former surname shall also be parenthesized and the surname added;
   - a notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the baptismal certificate.

For future ease in reference, and to afford what may often be the only possibility of reference after the adoption has been finalized, a baptismal entry for the adopted child can be made in the baptismal register of the adoptive parents' parish, citing the date and location of the original baptismal record, listing only the name of the adoptive parent(s) and the date and place of birth.

Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted.

Publishers Most Commonly Used in the Springfield Diocese

2019 Publisher Contacts

Ascension Press
PO Box 1990
West Chester, PA 19380
484-875-4550

Loyola Press
3441 North Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60657
800-621-1008

Our Sunday Visitor
200 Noll Plaza
Huntington, IN 46750
800-348-2440 Ext. 2173

Pflaum
800-543-4383
3055 Kettering Blvd.
Suite 100
Dayton, OH 45439

RCL Benziger
877-275-4725
8805 Governors Hill Drive
Suite 400
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Sadlier
800-221-5175
9 Pine Street
New York, NY 10005

St. Mary's Press
702 Terrace Heights
Winona, MN 55987-1320
800-533-8095

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     Sarah Harmony. Liturgical Press, MN, 1991.

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    Shaughnessy, SCN. National Catholic Educational Association Publications, 1997.

Making Parish Policy: A Workbook on Sacramental Policies   Ron Lewinski. Liturgy
    Training Publications, Chicago, IL, 1996.

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Throughout the Year with the DRE   Gail Thomas McKenna. Paulist Press, 1987.

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A Child's Journey, the Christian Initiation of Children   Rita Burns Senseman.
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