Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth
Director of Religious Education Handbook

"Guard what has been entrusted to you."

2 Tim 3:16

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Important Catechetical Documents

Here are the major documents of the Church appropriate for the ministry of Catechesis and Religious Education in the Catholic Church.

BT *Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education*
National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1973.

CCC *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
Libreria Vaticana Editrice, 1994. (1ˢᵗ Ed.)

CE *Declaration of Christian Education*
Vatican II, 1965.

CS *The Catholic School*
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997.

CT Catechesi Tradendae
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, 1979.

DV Dei Verbum (On Sacred Scripture)
Vatican II, 1965

EN *On Evangelization In the Modern World*
Pope Paul VI, 1975.

EV *The Gospel of Life*
Pope John Paul II, 1995.

GCD *The General Catechetical Directory*
Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1971.

GDC *The General Directory for Catechesis*
Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1997

GDCM *Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials*
USCC, Publication 419-8, November 21, 1990.

GMD Go and Make Disciples: National Catechetical Directory
National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1979.

RCIA Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults
USCC, Publication 1214-4, 1988

ST   The Splendor of Truth
            (Veritatis Splendor) Pope John Paul II, August 5, 1993

TJD   To Teach As Jesus Did
            National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1972.

            The joy of the gospel
EG   (Evangelii Gaudium) Pope Francis, November 24, 2013

Important Catholic Terms

Catechist – one who teaches in the name of Jesus Christ.

Catechism – A source book or compendium of all Doctrinal teachings in faith and morals of the Catholic Church.

Catechetical – An object, lesson plan or other method of instruction that reveals the teaching of Jesus Christ through the use of various methods.

Catechesis – An instruction on the Catholic Faith to everyone centered on Christian Doctrine in an organic and systematic way in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Catechetics – the discipline of teaching the faith to others the art of Catholic instruction.

Catechized – those who have been formed in the faith.

CCD – Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

Catholic Education - Catholic education addresses the development of the whole person through spiritual and academic formation based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Catholic School – an institution of learning founded on the basic mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all children and forming the child in the chief truths of the faith and application of sound academic disciplines with teachings of Jesus Christ as the core of overall Catholic instruction.

Christocentric – all that we do, say, and teach is centered on Jesus Christ.

Curriculum – a systematic presentation of information to be taught to others.

Doctrine – teachings of the Catholic Church founded through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture centered on Jesus Christ.

Magisterium – the living teaching office of the Church whose task is to give as authentic interpretation of the Word of God through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture

Methodology – the utilization of different catechetical/academic disciplines to instruct others in a particular topic.

Evangelization – the proclamation of Christ and his Gospel by word and testimony of life, in fulfillment of God's command.

Pedagogy – the art of science of teaching age appropriate instruction

Mission Statement

One of the greatest gifts God has given us is the ability to communicate. Whether the mode of communication is through words, gestures, music, art or a non-verbal form of communication the basic premise is to convey a message or better yet a story. When we speak of the Church as the Bride of Christ, it was instituted and entrusted by Christ to convey God's Story. And His story reflects God the Father's love for His children and His desire to be in communion with us.

God's intention became more visible with His only-begotten son Jesus Christ the "Word made flesh" so that we might know God's love and partake in His Divine nature. In the Gospel of St. John, Christ reminds the Jewish community while teaching in the Temple that his teaching is not his, but it is the one who sent him (7:16-17). What Christ conveyed in the Temple was that His authority comes from God and that anyone who aspires to teach must teach by the authority of God and not one's own. Glory is reserved and directed toward God and not ourselves.

As Catechists our mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of God to everyone and initiate a relationship with Christ. Central to this mission is the role of discipleship and its purpose within our catechetical ministry. The proclamation of the Kingdom i.e. the Kerygma is part of the three-fold approach of proclaiming the Gospel, teaching the faith that leads the person toward active discipleship in Christ. The aim of this three-fold approach is to actively cultivate a gradual interior conversion of faith through an authentic witness of the Gospel followed by a cogent explanation of the faith that in turn forms faithful disciples.

Our Mission as Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education is to echo the approach just mentioned for the simple reason that it is the method of the Church (Acts 2:37-42; GDC 63-68). St. John Paul II reaffirms this method by reminding us that;

> catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission that have a catechetical aspect, that prepare for catechesis, or that spring from it. These elements are: the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma to arouse faith, apologetics or examination of reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial community, and apostolic and missionary witness (CT, 18).

The aim and mission of this handbook is to reinforce our role as authentic witnesses of the Gospel (DRE's and CRE's) and spread the good news of Jesus Christ in every encounter with our students and their families. Our catechetical efforts are built on our evangelistic outreach to serve others in Christ and establish a journey of faith so that we can walk, nurture and love those we teach in the love of Christ and His Church. The intent of the handbook is to serve as a bridge and reminder of our role and mission as Catechists and Administrators to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every family we encounter for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Phil 2:1-2

Understanding and Application of this Handbook

The purpose and utilization of this handbook takes on many pillars. First and foremost, this catechetical tool serves as a general guide into the active application and practice of the areas of Evangelization and Catechesis within the role of a parish Director of Religious Education.

Elements within this handbook serve a specific aim; to reveal the fully human person (Jn 10:10). Our anthropology centered on the Divine love of the Father rests on our ability to value the dignity of the human person. Students who enter into a Parish Religious Education setting are to be exposed to the saving reality of God through His Son Jesus Christ as the reason for why we believe. The centrality of our Catechetical Philosophy depends on this understanding. A question that all Catechists should ask is this; what is the fundamental need of all human persons? The answer, an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ! Application of the Gospel serves as the foundation to understanding Christ because it provides the foundation of living out the Gospel (Jn 3:16; 3:30; Mt 5:3-12)

Catechists are co-operators with Christ the Teacher. Their responsibility lies in creating a true Catholic environment for all children. This Catholic ethos rests on the use of Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Both serve to establish a symphony of the faith rooted in the Blessed Trinity. The Trinity is central to all Christian understanding. It is the pillar of catechesis. Thus, instruction in Catholic Doctrine is primary when instructing a child. The Catechism presents five major themes in this symphony of faith; the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Paschal Mystery, the Church, and the nature and dignity of the human person.

Where does all this lead to? A community formed to profess a love for Christ. We cannot be afraid to express this love and foster it. The temptation to be influenced by secular culture only leads to a widening of our ability to exercise moral courage as Catholic educators.

'As a community we must honestly acknowledge that at times Christians themselves conceal rather than reveal the 'authentic face of God and religion' by not living according to the Gospel, by failing to hold the true teachings of the Church, and by serious deficiencies in religious, moral or social life (Gaudium et Spes 19)'.

Preparing to engage our students in a Catholic World View we must identify what our primary mission is as Catechists.

A General Origin and History of Catechesis

The Great Catholic Educator and Father of Catechetics St. Augustine of Hippo once said that the ways and means i.e. content and method God communicates to us lies in several spheres of instruction. These means of instruction are rooted traditionally in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. These two sources serve as instruments in the handing on of the Deposit of Faith to all students who are zealous and eager to acquire knowledge through the pillars of faith and reason. Other means of instruction flow through the source of God's word i.e. Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. He may speak through some natural phenomenon of this world, as He is speaking to the Magi (Mt 2:22); He speaks through the casting of lots – i.e. the ordination of Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:26); He speaks by means of the human soul when he speaks through the Prophets; He speaks through His Angels; He speaks by means of created vocal sound. (Mt. Tabor)[1]

In order to understand the genesis of Catechesis, we must first look at the call of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his intent to re-echo what God the Father has so intimately taught his children. Jesus serves as our Rabbi-teacher. The ways and means of Christ's teaching reflected His ability to transform the mind of man into living within the actual mysteries God the Father has brought through the manifestation of His Son. In other words, God's revealed Word took on human form in the Incarnation. The Incarnation offers us the very foundation of Catholic Education because it reveals four distinct deposits of faith. The Word became flesh for us, in order to saves us by reconciling us with God; the Word became flesh so that we might know God's love; the Word became flesh to be our model of holiness; the Word became flesh so that we can become partakers of His divine nature.[2]

Behold now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
2 Cor 6:2

Catechesis is an education in the faith for children, young people, and adults which includes especially, the teaching of Christian Doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to imitating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.
CCC 5, CT 18

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[1] Source Taken from Msgr. Eugene Kevane: Jesus the Divine Teacher
[2] CCC 456-459

A Word to the Parish and the Catechist

Those to be catechized, and those who will catechize are what make-up the initial body of catechesis among all who will learn the faith. Jesus Christ is the Word that became flesh through the Divine Will of the Father sent forth through the power of the Holy Spirit so that we might have life and live it abundantly. It was through His Incarnate Word that Christ, through His Father established for us those redemptive qualities that we receive in our Profession of Faith, the Mass and Sacraments, the Commandments, and in prayer that allow us to fully share into the history of Salvation with our Lord. We, as the people of God, are a faith sharing community in the created image of God to profess and proclaim the Gospel message. This mission of catechesis has been practiced from the moment Christ was born. As part of the Church community we hold a responsibility not only to learn our Catholic faith, but teach it to all who will listen. The ministry of catechesis serves the Church in a decisive mission. This teaching first and foremost is passed on through the apostles and their successors, the Bishops of the Catholic Church.

The moment of catechesis is that which corresponds to the period in which conversion to Jesus Christ is formalized, and provides a basis for first adhering to him. (GDC 63)

Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ. (CCC 4, CT 1;2)

It is in this totality that we must present a complete authentic instruction of the faith, faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church so that the fruits of the Church may not go unnoticed or unpracticed. Catechetical instruction provides us with a framework to accomplish just such a mission. This task of catechesis, then, must be carried out under the guidance of the Church, whose duty it is to safeguard the truth of the divine message, and to watch that this ministry of the Word uses appropriate forms of speaking, while prudently considering the help which theological research and human science can give (GCD 38 and NCD 47). The Bishop holds the primary position of authority over programs of catechesis (NCD 47).

Universal Religious Education Policies

Catechetical Models

Pope John Paul II reminds us that "the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and preeminent place for catechesis" (CT 67). With this said, Pope John Paul II lays the foundation with respect to the church being the pre-eminent place for catechesis. It must rediscover its vocation, which is to be a fraternal and welcoming family home, where those who have been baptized and confirmed become aware of forming the People of God. In that home, the bread of good doctrine and the Eucharistic Bread are broken for them in abundance, in the setting of the one act of worship; from that home they are sent out day by day to their apostolic mission in all the centers of activity of the life of the world. (CT 67)

Religious Education (History of CCD)

The letters CCD stand for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. This fraternity was established, under the old Code of Canon Law (1917) in every parish community as a way of formally organizing schools of Christian Doctrine. This was done initially because there was a lack of Catholic Schools and other forms (institutions) of religious instruction. Thus, many canonical societies were established in parishes and Diocese. Currently, no parish is an officially chartered Confraternity in this diocese.

Catholic Schools

The Catholic School, under the direction of the Pastor (where applicable) Principal and DRE (where applicable), affords a particularly favorable setting for catechesis with daily opportunity for proclaiming and living the Gospel Message, for learning and appreciating the teachings of our Church, for building community, for prayer and worship and for Christian Service. In addition to the increased time (daily) available for the teachings of religion, children and young people "can experience learning and living fully integrated lives in the light of faith, (TJD) because Catholic Schools thrive to relate all human culture eventually to the news of salvation, so that the life of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life and of humankind" (NCD 232, CE 8). Thus:

> It is necessary, therefore, that religious instruction in school appear as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigor as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge. It should not be an accessory alongside of these disciplines, but rather it should engage in a necessary interdisciplinary dialogue. (GDC 73).

The Liturgical and Sacramental Life of a Parish Religious Education Program

Sacramental Preparation Program

It is imperative that all involved in the Sacramental Preparation of a child within a Parish Religious Education program have the responsibility for sacramental preparation. This understanding must be especially evident within the specific sacramental preparation grade "2." Sacramental Catechesis exhibits a faith that becomes living, explicit and productive through formation in doctrine and the experience of Christian living (Can 843 2:773; 777). All the sacraments follow the order set forth by the Rites of the Church and its application by the local Bishop through approved Diocesan Liturgical Directives for the proper instruction of the Sacraments of initiation in conformity with the general laws established by the Church.

A Parish Religious Education program aims at providing the light of faith to all of its students. Understanding the nature of developing a sound liturgical environment through the expression of prayer especially the participation in the Mass, Confession and the Liturgical Year, serve as instruments of grace that will bring clarity and a natural understanding of the Church's call to prayer.

The Sacramental Life of the Church leads to an attractiveness of the faith students need to observe. A continual presence of the Liturgical life within the Parish Religious Education programs serves as the basis for an understanding of the nature and purpose of the sacramental life.

The Seven Sacraments are Instituted by Christ

- "Sacraments are 'powers that come forth' from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are 'the masterworks of God' in the new and everlasting covenant.[3]
- The Sacraments are of the Church and for the Church.[4]
- The Sacraments direct our faith towards Christ. The mission to evangelize is found through the sacrament of Baptism as our initiation into the life of Christ.[5]
- "The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God."[6]

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[3] CCC 1116
[4] CCC 1118
[5] CCC 1122
[6] CCC 1123

The Sacraments are:

- ". . . efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church by which divine life is dispensed to us.[7]
- ". . . necessary for salvation."[8]

Proper Catechetical Application of the Liturgical/Sacramental Life of the Church in a parish religious education program

- The Identity of a Parish Religious Education Program rests on a sound exposition of the Liturgical/sacramental life that is lived and practiced by the, staff, catechists, students and their parents. This practice can be found through various recommended forms:

  1. The Sign of the Cross as the means of initiating prayer every morning and at the start of every class. (The Sacraments are Trinitarian in nature)
  2. Crucifixes should be place prominently in every classroom. Remember the lasting image of our Lord Jesus Christ left for us is his death on the Cross (Corpus). His death serves as a reminder of our entrance in to the Church.
  3. Recitation of the Liturgical Readings of the Day. (Liturgy of the Hours, Liturgy of the Word)
  4. The availability of Holy water fonts in every classroom and the practice of utilizing these sacramentals. This serves as a renewal of our baptismal call and baptismal promises.
  5. The prominent display of a sacred space in each classroom commemorating the sanctity of Christ and His Church through worship.
  6. The prominent display of the Church's Liturgical colors signifying the Liturgical Season.

Proper Catechetical Instruction of the Sacraments

- Catechesis on the Sacraments will follow the Diocesan Grade School Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-K through 8th grade.

  1. All seven sacraments are to be taught throughout the course of the academic/catechetical year.
  2. Emphasis is to be placed on the nature of the sacraments instituted by Christ. (Christocentric)
  3. Sacramental Images of instruction on the Sacraments should directly resemble the sacraments themselves or be taken from scriptural images of the sacraments as outlined in the Old and New Testament.
  4. The Sacraments must be taught in light of their foundation in sacred scripture.
  5. Opportunity for regular reception of the sacraments must be a priority.
  6. Emphasis on the family of God in the sacraments and the role of the human family participating in the sacramental life is to be stressed at all times.

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[7] CCC 1131
[8] CCC 1129

- "Christ instituted the Sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The seven Sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of the spiritual life."[9]

- The Sacraments of Christian Initiation –Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist – lay the foundation of every Christian life. 'The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian Initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.' [10]

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[9] CCC 1210
[10] CCC 1212

Catholic Identity and Religious Education

Summary Points to Reflect on the Nature of Catholic Identity in a Parish Religious Education Program

Religious Education refers to the study of our Catholic faith where catechists intentionally pass on the traditions, beliefs, values, and practices of their religion. Catholic Religious Education is conducted by committed, prepared, adult Catholics in order to provide a clear explanation of our teachings, our values, and our mission to those seeking sound information. It assumes that the learner is interested, able to hear and comprehend the message, but not necessarily a fully committed, believing follower of the Lord. (C.F. NCD 33, 34, 181)

The family, especially the parents must be the primary figures of religious instruction for their children on top of what is provided by a catechist outside of the family. It is the Baptismal commitment of the parent/guardian to pass on the Deposit of Faith to the child to learn, mature and grow in his or her own faith. Guided by the power of the Holy Spirit, and rooted firmly in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the child absorbs the sacred tradition of the Catholic Church while at the same time, applying those values, teachings and prayers to his or her everyday life.

Christian Religious Education must be complete, organic, and systematic to provide a fullness of the truth and assure that the Deposit of Faith is being passed on. From this complete approach, religious education is centralized in a Trinitarian and Christocentric approach emphasizing the mystery of God and the plan of salvation, which leads to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. (NCD 47)

". . .sure and authentic source book (Apostolic Constitution, John Paul II, 1992) for evaluating the religious education curriculum, for the Christian message in its entirety, is the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This catechesis is a faithful presentation of the doctrinal truths of our faith. This compendium of all the Catholic Church's teachings is a vital resource to all who are involved in the ministry of Catechesis. It truly passes on the Deposit of Faith while at the same time empowering the catechists to teach in accordance with the church."

The Bishop, assisted, consistently at all levels by priests, deacons, parents, catechists, parish directors of religious education, parish and school coordinators of religious education, principals, and other qualified catechetical leadership, ensures "that catechetical goals and priorities are established, developed, implemented and evaluated" . . . (NCD 218).

The educational mission of the Church is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: the message revealed by God (didache) which the church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit (koinonia); service to the Christian Community and to the entire human community (diakonia). While these three essential elements can be separated for the sake of analysis, they are joined in the one educational ministry (TJD 14).

St. John Paul II has stressed that religious education; "must concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith, but also with arousing it increasingly with the help of grace,

with opening the heart, with converting and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith" (CT 19).

As religious educators with a mission to the People of God, we enlighten young and old to know better this (living) Jesus . . . to know his mystery; the kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promise contained in the Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for any who wishes to follow him (CT 20).

Evangelization and Catechesis

From the beginning, the mission of Jesus was to establish a church on earth that would proclaim what He had taught to the Apostles so that in turn the Apostles themselves would go forth and proclaim the good news to all the nations. This mission is so eloquently revealed in Matthew's Gospel where Christ instructs His Apostles to:

> **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .**
>
> **Mt 28: 19-20**

Establishing the integrity of the Gospel message is the purity of what the mission of Catechesis is all about. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel integrally . . . because I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father (Jn 15:15, GDC 111). This making known statement reveals to us a knowledge that is firmly rooted in the Gospel, professed through the Trinity and is passed on through the Deposit of Faith where we as catechists come into play as part of that Deposit of Faith entrusted to proclaim, profess and evangelize through a complete, systematic, organic, thorough presentation and teaching of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church. The Church was instituted by Christ through His Apostles, His disciples. We look at Peter as being the rock, (Kephas) where the foundation is laid by his possession of the keys to the gates of heaven and of earth thus receiving the power to bind and loose on earth. We see this very clearly in chapter 16 verse 18 of Matthew's Gospel where Christ proclaims to Peter:

> **On this rock, I will build my church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.**

Catechesis works as the instructional wing of the Church to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all corners of the globe. It does not end in the classroom as soon as the child leaves. It continues to be fostered, maintained, and cared for so that the maturity of the faith becomes the end result. We wouldn't necessarily plant a bed of roses and then calmly say, all right they're fine, they'll grow on their own. This probably won't happen. We know full well that the rose needs constant irrigation, pruning and maintenance to keep the vitality of the rose from withering away. This same principle applies towards catechesis. Catechesis does not only impart itself in the classroom, but outside as well. In spreading the Gospel message;

> **The church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks,**
> **(Catechist, Pope John Paul II pg. 37);**

It is because of catechesis that the Holy Father urgently and faithfully established for us a New Catechism of the Catholic Church now in its second edition as the first of its kind in over 400 years. Along with the catechism came the revision of the Code of Canon Law (1983), General

Directory for Catechesis (1997), Catechesis In Our Time (1979) etc. Pope John Paul II envisioned the need to systematically promote the Catholic faith to all the faithful.

Primary Aim of Catechesis and the Responsibility of the Catechist

Christ is the Divine Teacher. He is the ultimate catechist who constitutes all that we proclaim to be true. In keeping with Christ as our ultimate Divine Teacher, we find evidence in the Gospel where Jesus is seen "day after day sitting in the temple teaching" (Mt 6:25; 24:1-14; Lk. 14:15; 20:1-8). Christ's teaching was part of His missionary work on earth. The proclamation of the Gospel by Christ involved catechetical instruction to the un-catechized. Christ had to teach the people who He is as Messiah, the Son of the living God. He instructed the faithful in the key role He held for all mankind in bringing about the Redemption of humanity. He firmly presented and taught the mystery of the Blessed Trinity for all to see how He, Jesus, is the principle figure towards the Redemption and Salvation with our Father in Heaven.

Christ is passing on the Deposit of Faith:

> **My teaching is not from myself; it comes from the one who sent me. (Jn 7:16).**

The Apostles thus become the witness for Christ throughout the ends of the earth. So, then, how does all this apply to our ministry as catechists? Catechesis in Greek means to resound to avail a certain element or particle for all to see and witness. Thus, catechesis is passing on the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the use of written and spoken words plus visual and audio aids. Catechesis is based primarily on Scripture and Tradition as well as the Liturgy and wisdom of the saints. It promotes a lifelong conversion to the faith of all Christians. With, catechesis, the primary object is the mystery of Christ. A revelation occurs in the Person of Christ through God's eternal design for all mankind. Through this revelation, catechesis is established not as a mean's of promoting one's own teaching or someone's personal mastery of a subject, it is the establishment of the teachings of Jesus Christ because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life-Jn 14:6.

The Parish Religious Education Environment and Catechesis

Catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian Doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life . . . catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission that have a catechetical aspect that prepare for catechesis, or that spring from it. These elements are:

- The initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma (proclamation) to arouse faith. This translates into opening each catechetical session in prayer through the recitation of the daily readings and applying these readings on a daily basis. Our aim is to begin the session with the Word of God.

- Apologetics or examination of the reasons for beliefs. All catechists must be able to articulate the chief truths of the faith to all children who desire the truth.
- Experience of Christian living. All catechists are to exhibit an authentic Christian witness by leading there students in prayer and exposing them to the truth, beauty and goodness of the Church.
- Celebration of the sacraments. Participation in the Mass and Confession as much as possible within the parish liturgical life.
- Integration onto the ecclesial community.
- Apostolic and missionary witness" (Catechesis In Our Time 18).

The Role of the Catechist in Instructing the Faith

My brethren show not partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory . . . for whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it . . . what does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has no works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or a sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead . . . you see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Jas 2:1, 10, 14-17, 24

- The first and primary role of the Catechist is to be a primary witness to the Catholic faith to the students.
- That faith must also be put into practice resulting in the catechist being an active model of Christian charity for all to see, especially the student being catechized.
- In the act of faith and works, a catechist exemplifies the model of catechesis as a systematic, organic presentation of the faith rooted firmly in the teachings of the Catholic Church and visibly expressed through participation in the sacraments, the commandments, beatitudes, and prayer.
- The missionary mandate of Jesus, the supreme evangelist, was to proclaim the kingdom of God. In proclaiming the Kingdom of His Father, Jesus preached of the joy of the kingdom and the fruits that would be shared in the kingdom. **(GDC 34)**
- It was in the profession of the Kingdom of God where Christ fully revealed himself as true God and true man. Jesus Christ completed and perfected Revelation; he did this by way of his presence and self-manifestation-by words and works, signs and miracles, but above all by his death and glorious resurrection from the dead, and finally by sending the Spirit of Truth **(DV 4).**
- As Catechists, the constant revelation of faith must be apparent to all whom we catechize. It must not cease at the end of class time. Revelation must be on-going. It must not be stagnant or disruptive. This revelation of faith must take on the image of God who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **(1 Tim 2:4)**
- This revelation of faith as a catechist must be communicated through the Word of God. It is in the Word where the message is transformed and communicated. "The ministry of the word, within the context of evangelization, transmits Revelation through the Church, by using human words. These, however, always refer to works: to those which God has done and continues to do, especially in the liturgy. **(GDC 50)**
- The missionary activity of the catechists is essential ecclesial. The Church becomes the starting point in the catechetical activity of those who are catechized. Transmission of the faith occurs in the Church. It is in the celebration of the Christian mystery where catechesis is aimed. As, catechists, our definitive aim must always be "to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ." (GDC 80, CT 5)

Qualities of the Catechist

In discerning whom to invite to be a catechist, the DRE or CRE needs to consider the following qualities of a catechist:

Response to a Call
The individual must respond to the call to minister. The response to the call includes the willingness to give time and talent, not only to catechizing others, but to one's own continued growth in faith and understanding.

Witness to the Gospel
For catechesis to be effective, the individual must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. Faith must be shared with conviction, joy, love, enthusiasm and hope. He/she must be a person of prayer, one who reflects on the scriptures and whose Christ-like living testifies to deep faith.

Commitment to the Church
The individual strives to be an instrument of the Lord's power and a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence. The catechist realizes that it is Christ's message which he or she is called to proclaim. To insure fidelity to that message, catechists test and validate their understanding and insights in the light of the gospel message as presented by the teaching authority of the church.

Sharer in the Community
Awareness of membership in a Christian community leads to awareness of the many other communities in the world which stand in need of service. The catechist seeks to cooperate with other leaders in making the parish a focal point of community in the Church.

Servant of the Community
The catechist is committed to serving the Christian community, particularly in the parish and the community at large. Such service means taking the initiative to seek out the needs of others and to encourage students to do the same.

Competencies of the Catechist

Although even the best preparation for catechetical ministry will have little effect without the action of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of catechists and those being catechized, catechists should seek to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate the gospel message effectively.

A Solid Grasp of Catholic Doctrine and Worship
The individual should have a mature understanding of the basic teachings of the Catholic faith as contained in **The Catechism of the Catholic Church** and understand the sacramental nature of the Christian life.

Familiarity with Scripture
The individual should be familiar with the sacred scriptures and be able to use scripture for teaching, prayer, and reflection.

Communication Skills
The individual should be able to effectively utilize a variety of communication skills, creative activity skills and group skills. Thus he/she will be able to select suitable activities for desired learning environments.

Ability to Use Various Methodologies
The individual recognizes the unique needs of the participants and is able to adapt and plan a class to meet these needs.

Understanding of the Stages of Development
The individual understands and is able to apply the basic elements of the psychology of learning. He/she will know the stages of moral development and be able to integrate these into teaching. The catechist will understand the stages of faith and be able to orient religious content to the level of the participant's readiness.

The Role of the Laity in Ministry

The lay faithful participate in the common priesthood of Christ by virtue of their baptismal calling. As one chosen People of God there is one common calling to the grace of divine sonship, to the perfection of holiness, and to the fullness of faith, hope and charity (*Lumen Gentium* 32). An essential difference exists, however, between the faithful's priesthood in common and the priesthood of ministry (*LG* 11). "The specific vocation of the laity is to make the Church actively present in those places and situations where the very salt of the earth can only be spread by their efforts" (*LG* 33). The vocation of most laypersons is *ad extra* or in the midst of the world (*Gaudium et Spes* 43). Lay persons can also "receive a call to a more direct co-operation with the apostolate of the Hierarchy after the fashion of men and women who worked for the gospel at the side of the Apostle Paul, working hard for the Lord (cf. Phil 4:3; Rom 16:3ff.) (*LG* 33).

Some years ago the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released a document entitled *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,* which describes the role of laypersons involved in ministry roles with in local parishes and church institutions.   A "lay ecclesial minister" is a generic term "meant to encompass and describe several possible roles." In parishes the pastoral associate, parish catechetical leader, youth ministry leader, school principal and director of religious instruction are examples. "Lay ecclesial minister" is not a position title, but rather describes, the role of baptized lay person which is not necessarily a lifelong commitment and should not be confused with ordained ministry. (*Co-Workers, p. 10-11*). The particular type of persons and ministries this document has in mind are those whose ecclesial service is characterized by;

- *Authorization* of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church

- *Leadership* in a particular area of ministry

- *Close mutual collaboration* with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons

- *Preparation and formation* appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them (Co-workers, p. 10)

 Persons involved in this type of lay ecclesial ministry:

- Are responding to the empowerment and gifts of the Holy Spirit received in baptism and confirmation by engaging in ministry as a paid staff person (full or part-time) or a volunteer

- Have the responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry.

Some important aspects of these dimensions include:

- Call to ministry

- Prayerful discernment

- Formation

- Education and training for competent functioning

- Community recognition and support

- A formal and public role in ministry conferred by a competent ecclesiastical authority

- Installation in ministry through the authority of the bishop or his representative

- Close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of the bishop, priests and deacons

Role and Description of the Director of Religious Education

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The jobs listed below are responsible for providing Evangelistic Outreach, Catechetical Formation and forming Christian Disciples to members of the parish faith community.

DESCRIPTION OF LEVELS

Director of Religious Education II: Fully responsible for a comprehensive parish religious education program including Adult Christian formation (RCIA). This includes supervising other Religious Education personnel; managing the office; recruitment and training of volunteers; planning programs for adults, teens and children; evaluating program curricula and acting as parish resource person in methods and some areas of theology. The classification requires a Master's Degree in Religious Studies or related field and three to five years of experience in the field.

Director of Religious Education I: Directs several dimensions of a comprehensive parish religious education program or has full responsibility for a less comprehensive parish religious education program. This typically includes supervising support staff personnel; recruitment and training of volunteers; planning programs for adults, teens and children; evaluating program curricula and acting as parish resource person in methods and some areas of theology. The classification requires a Master's Degree in Religious Studies or related field with no experience or graduate level background in theology/catechetics with experience in the field.

Religious Education Coordinator: Responsible for the parish religious education program, utilizing a variety of resources to complement the Coordinator's background and skills. This typically includes managing the religious education office; supervising staff; recruitment and training of volunteers; planning programs for adults, teens or children and evaluating program curricula. The classification requires a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies or certification from the St. Francis De Sales Catechist Formation Program.

Religious Education Teacher /Catechist: Teach students in accordance with textbook content and course outlines prepared and/or approved by Religious Education Director or Coordinator; maintain a high level of enthusiasm and commitment to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The C/DRE is a person called by the people of a given parish to share faith with them. The C/DRE is a person who has discerned the call within and has answered YES.

Pertinent Definitions

DRE – (Director of Religious Education/Faith Formation)
A person with a Master's Degree in Theology, Religious Education, or an approved equivalent, and at least three years of administrative or teaching experience, who has demonstrated skills in organization, and who is a professional salaried member of the Parish Staff.

CRE – (Coordinator of Religious Education/Faith Formation)
A person who administers a specific segment(s) of the faith formation program of a parish, (e.g. elementary program, RCIA, Confirmation program). This person may or may not have a professional degree in Religious Education/Faith Formation and is hired (or volunteers) for a part-time ministry.

Role Definition of the DRE

Title: Parish Director of Faith Formation/ Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Professional Status: Full time, paid Staff Member

Professional Preparation: To be a DRE requires a M.A. Degree in Religious Education, Religious
Studies/Theology or a Masters of Theological Studies Degree

Basic Function: To direct the faith formation/catechesis of the parish community for all age groups and all cultures by involving, training, working with and coordinating the efforts of catechetical leaders.

Accountability: The DRE is accountable in day to day matters to the pastor and in policy matters and reporting to the parish council.

Accountable to This Position: Elementary Level Coordinator, Youth Catechesis, Adult Education Coordinator, Sacramental Program Coordinator, RCIA Coordinator, Faith Formation Secretary and/or Administrative Assistant.

Specific Responsibilities of this Position:

1.   Plans, supervises, and evaluates all faith formation/catechetical efforts of parish in accord with parish and Diocesan policies.

2.   Recruits and trains adequate personnel to provide leadership for catechetical programs and coordinates their efforts.

3.   Develops for approval and monitors annual faith formation budget.

4.   Attends parish staff meetings.

5.   Articulates the vision of faith formation within the parish community and recommends policy changes to faith formation committee/pastoral council.

6.   Keeps current of trends and issues in catechesis by attending workshops and personal study. It is important the Director attends Diocesan-sponsored meetings, workshops.

7.   Communicates and cooperates with all parish staff and other ministers.

8. Supervises Faith Formation Office: ordering materials, paying bills, record-keeping, communications, etc.

9. Promotes the sense of Christian community among Catholics.

10. Ensures all catechists are Keeping Children Safe trained, have had background checks (every five (5) years per diocesan policy) and signed the Diocesan Code of Conduct. Reads and disseminates training bulletins from Keeping Children's Safe

Role Definition of the CRE

Title: Coordinator of Faith Formation/Religious Education (CRE)

Profession Preparation: Preferably, the CRE position requires a B.A. in Religious Education/Theology or a Religious Studies Certificate. The minimal requirement is Diocesan Certification as a catechist with at least three years of experience as a catechist.

Professional Status: Full-time or part-time paid staff member (in a small parish, a volunteer may be necessary)

Basic Function: To coordinate the faith formation/catechetical efforts for the specified age group by involving, training and working with various volunteer personnel of the parish.

Accountability: The coordinator is accountable to the parish director of faith formation and to the Pastor.

Specific Responsibilities of This Position:

1. In coordination with the director and Pastor, plans, supervises, and evaluates a specific age level of faith formation efforts of the parish in accord with parish and Diocesan guidelines.

2.   Encourages and conducts the training of adequate personnel to properly carry out the program objectives for this age level, including but not limited to facilitating catechist formation.

3.   Meets with other parish faith formation coordinators and reports on accomplishments and needs.

4.   Accepts assignments of special nature that can be mutually agreed upon with the director and pastor.

5.   Has the desire to further own education through various modes of self-study, reading, formal classes and attending Diocesan Workshops, In-Service Days, and Conferences.

6.   Ensures all catechists are Safe Environment trained, have had background checks and signed the Diocesan Code of Conduct.

How to Hire a DRE

Hiring a new DRE involves much work, but using the right tools to find the right person can make the process go smoothly and result in a thriving parish catechetical life! It is important to have the right person and the right catechetical plan in place for your parish to have a thriving catechetical ministry.

How to Hire a Director of Religious Education: A Seven-Step Process for Parishes[1] is an easily followed reference with advice on the steps needed to search for and hire a DRE. A brief outline of the seven steps found in this book follows:

Step 1: Form a Search Committee
While not required, a committee helps remove the stress of the search process from the shoulders of just one individual. Committees are highly recommended for the burden-sharing and the experience they bring to the hiring process.

Step 2: Develop a Job Description
A job description is necessary to have a comprehensive description of the duties the DRE is expected to perform. Before creating a job description, it is recommended to review the catechetical goals, needs, and resources of the parish. A sample job description can be found in this document.

Step 3: Advertise the Position
Many things must be considered when advertising for an opening for a DRE. Often, the competition is high among parishes and it is necessary to carefully plan and execute advertising to find candidates. It is important to identify parish strong points, consider a salary that is competitive, consider location and work environment. It is recommended that help be received in writing the advertising copy from parishioners or others who have experience writing advertising copy. Parishes may decide to advertise on a national level, a regional level, or a local level (own diocese). Once you prepare an application packet and have your advertising plan ready, you can begin to advertise for applicants.

Step 4: Screen Applicants
The number of applicants determines how much work is involved in the screening process. First, eliminate unqualified applicants. With remaining applicants, rank them by what the search committee deems the most important qualifications. References should be obtained, as well as checking any background history (employment, academic, criminal).

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[1] National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. How to Hire a Director of Religious Education: A Seven-Step Process for Parishes. Washington, DC: National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, 2002.

The finalists are then ready to move to the interview process. It is not recommended to contact applicants who are not considered at this time, as you may want to contact them later if the top choice does not work out

Step 5: Conduct Interviews

The search committee is responsible for overseeing the interview process, not performing the actual interviews. The interview team should consist of a facilitator who directs the process, and four or five other persons representing a cross section of parish membership. You may also want to invite a neighboring DRE or a member of diocesan staff to assist in the interviewing process. Scheduling of interviews, and arranging any necessary transportation and hospitality should be anticipated. The interview team should be provided with a copy of the job description and the complete application file of the interviewee. The main purpose of the interview is to determine how well each candidate fits the job qualifications. As soon as possible after the interviews are complete, the interview team should meet to make a decision, and notify the pastor of their choice.

Step 6: Negotiate Employment Agreement

This process is similar to hiring any parish employee. A parish representative (appointed to make adjustments to the employment agreement, within understood boundaries) meets with the new hire. The Employment Agreement should have been determined prior to the search process to include salary, benefits package, sick leave and vacation policies. During meeting, clarifications can be made as needed and any specific concerns addressed. Once both parties are satisfied, the agreement is signed and the new employee welcomed.

Step 7: Welcome and Support the New DRE

Introductions meet and greets, and orientations are all part of welcoming the new DRE to the parish and the position. A supportive work environment helps the new DRE adjust to the new position and the people he/she ministers with.

DRE Compensation

In implementing the policy of just compensation for parish directors and coordinators, the hiring committee will look to the job description of the person being considered. The committee might also look to the local Catholic school salary schedule in order to determine some general salary parameters. In addition, the committee might contact the Human Resources Office for assistance in determining a just salary scale as well as just compensation. Just compensation for C/DREs will take into consideration the administrative role and responsibility.

C/DREs are to be paid just compensation in accordance with professional preparation, background, experience, job description and other qualifications. Additional benefits such as professional allowances, workshops and other types of in-service assistance are to be provided to aid this ministry.

Relationship with the Parish Catechist

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states:

The apostolic work of the catechist springs from the Sacrament of Baptism through which all believers come to share in the prophetic ministry of Christ and the evangelizing mission of the Church.… Catechists are to identify and create "suitable conditions which are necessary for the Christian message to be sought, accepted, and more profoundly investigated" for each of the various groups they serve. [NDC 54 (p. 288-9)]

It is the responsibility of the DRE/CRE to recruit catechists. A general outline of a potential recruitment process is below.

Process for recruitment and interview:

The DRE calls the prospective catechist for an appointment at their mutual convenience. At the appointed time, the DRE covers the following with the prospective catechist:

1. Discusses the "Mission Statement" and/or the goals and objectives of the Faith Formation Program.
1. Discusses the importance of the laity helping to fulfill the "Mission Statement" and/or the goals and objectives.
2. Gives the prospective catechist a copy of the job description.
3. Walks through the job description, task by task.
4. Tells why the catechist was selected.
5. Asks the prospective catechist to reflect prayerfully for a few days.
6. DRE calls for the prospective catechist's response.

Support for the parish catechist:

1. The DRE conducts an orientation to outline the specifics of the particular grade level and how it fits into the whole program.
2. The DRE provides the catechist with a copy of a Teacher's Manual for the level taught andexplains how to use it.
3. THE DRE supplies the catechist with copies of lesson planning forms and gives assistance in filling out the forms.
4. The DRE gives the catechist a listing of resources from the parish and Diocesan Office that can be used to supplement textbook material.
5. The DRE informs the catechist of various times for community building activities.
6. The DRE gives the catechist a schedule of classes, in-services, and special events for the upcoming year.
7. The DRE encourages the catechist to share experiences, both positive and negative.

In-Service for Catechists

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states:

Programs of formation should be designed to help them [catechists] acquire the knowledge and skills they need to hand on the faith to those entrusted to their care and assist them in living as disciples in Christ. [NDC 55 (p. 235)]

Men and women from all walks of life volunteer for parish catechetical programs. Parish and diocesan programs for the preparation and in-service training of volunteers should include the following elements:

1. Basic orientation and preparation, including instruction in Catechetics, catechetical methodologies, evangelization and discipleship, theology, Sacred Scripture, Doctrine, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, General Director for Catechesis, National Director of Catechesis, Catechesis In Our Time, Liturgical Catechesis, RCIA etc. . They should be shown how to identify goals and achieve them in their particular circumstances.
2. Opportunities for liturgical celebrations, prayer, retreats, and other experiences of Christian community with others engaged in this ministry.
3. Continuing in-service educational activities.
4. Regular assistance, from more experienced persons, in planning and evaluating their performance.
5. Opportunities to evaluate not only their performance but the programs in which they are involved.
6. More specialized training for those who will work with persons with disabilities.
7. Cultivation of a sense of community among the catechists during the entire formation process.
8. Some form of commissioning ceremony which expresses the faith community's call and the catechists' dedicated response.

In-service for catechists is necessary for achieving the above. It will also help strengthen faith formation programs. Therefore, in-service should be scheduled periodically during the year. In addition, the Director of Faith Formation/Religious Education needs to inform catechists of the educational opportunities sponsored by the diocese.

Job Description for Parish Catechist

QUALITIES

1. Practices the Catholic faith and is actively involved in parish life.
2. Knows and supports the teaching of the Catholic Church.
3. Shows a concern for ongoing personal spiritual growth.
4. Maintains a positive attitude in relating to others.
5. Holds diocesan certification/working toward it.
6. Relates well to the assigned age

level. **GENERAL**

RESPONSIBILITIES

The catechist, under the leadership of the DRE, will provide quality instruction to the students at the grade level assigned. Being aware of the call to proclaim the Good News, the catechist will enrich and guide the spiritual formation of the students by witnessing as a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

A. Class Planning

1. Cooperates with the DRE in implementing the goals and objectives of the parish program of faith formation.
2. Follows the Diocesan Curriculum Guide, Grade Pre K-12, in planning the content to be taught.
3. Observes parish guidelines for using resource materials.
4. Makes arrangements with parish director for using Diocesan Resources.
5. Requests needed supplies from the DRE.
6. Prepares weekly lesson plans using a form provided by the DRE.

B. Classroom Management

1. Is punctual for each class.
2. Notifies the DRE when there is a need to be absent.
3. Arranges teaching area to be attractive, orderly, and conducive to learning.
4. Greets students as they enter the classroom.
5. Establishes routine procedures for carrying out instructional process.
6. Sets few, simple and clear rules of discipline.
7. Follows through and is consistent in rules of discipline.
8. Is firm, but kind, with students.

9. Leaves teaching area in order.

C. Classroom Instruction

1. Begins and ends lesson on time.
2. Keeps the attention of all students.
3. Presents material clearly, with enthusiasm, and in an interesting manner.
4. Reviews previous lesson.
5. Relates new material to previous learning.
6. Uses a variety of methods to present material.
7. Uses audiovisuals to reinforce, enrich or review material.
8. Summarizes lesson at the end of class presentation
9. Makes appropriate assignments being aware of students' family structure.
10. Evaluates each class session.

RELATIONSHIPS

1. Cooperates with the parish DRE.
2. Attends in-service opportunities for catechists at the parish level.
3. Attends Diocesan in-service opportunities for catechists.
4. Informs parents of children's progress.
5. Keeps parents informed of discipline, special learning difficulties, or special needs observed about their children.
6. Is sensitive to the various family structures.
7. Works with other parish organizations sharing in the same space.
8. Follows the directives of the pastor and/or DRE in planning liturgies and sacramental programs.

Diocesan Catechetical Certification

I. According to canon law parents bear primary responsibility for the Catholic education of their children. But by virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation, every Catholic bears some responsibility for teaching the Catholic faith. Even volunteer catechists should be "practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the Church and who have been prepared for the apostolate by appropriate catechetical training. Their commissioning by the Church is a participation in the divine calling to teach as Jesus did" (*National Directory for Catechesis*, pp. 228-229). Their spiritual life should be characterized by among other things a love of God and his holy people, personal prayer, missionary zeal and a devotion to Mary, the first disciple and model of catechists (NDC, p. 229)

II. Catechists need preparation and ongoing formation. The parish in co-operation with the diocese should plan to prepare catechists for their calling. ***The St. Francis De Sales Catechist Formation Program has a two year formation process that will provide catechetical certification through a balanced curriculum based upon Scripture, the Catechism and many other resources.*** The United State Conference of catholic Bishops' (USCCB) document, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States* (OHWB), points to six dimensions of faith that should be taught:

- Knowledge of the faith
- Moral formation
- Prayer
- Liturgical life
- Community life
- Missionary spirit

Catechists who come from another diocese may consult the Department of Catechesis as to certification requirements and credit for courses taken in other dioceses

St. Francis De Sales Catechist Formation Program

The objective of the Catechist Formation Program is to prepare the catechist to be an effective witness and teacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The aim of all Catechetical instruction is to place the student in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. (CT, 5, 20)

One of the main tenets of this program is to assist the catechist in forming and developing sound catechetical lesson plans that will draw the student toward a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout this program emphasis is placed on using sound resources such *as Sacred Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Magisterial Catechetical documents e.g. General Director for Catechesis, Catechesis In Our Time, Evangelization in the Modern World* and so on.

In the end, the catechist will hopefully come away with a sound catechetical foundation enabling him/her to transmit the Gospel with rigor and vigor.

The aim of the St. Francis De Sales Basic Catechist Formation Program is to form catechists. A catechist is a person who desires to teach the Catholic faith and become an effective witness of the Gospel. The primary emphasis of this program is to form faithful catechists. Throughout this journey, catechists will become familiar with basic catechetical concepts; understand the role of the liturgy, the RCIA process, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, proper methodology, lesson planning, and so forth in the areas of catechesis and catechetical instruction.

God did not create you because He had any need of you, for you are wholly useless to Him, but only that He might exercise towards you His goodness, bestowing on you His grace and glory. To accomplish this, he has given you an understanding to know Him, a memory to remember Him, a will to love Him, an imagination to recall His mercies, eyes to see the wonders of His works, a tongue to praise Him, and so with all your other faculties. Therefore being created and placed in the world for this purpose, you should avoid and reject all actions which are contrary to it; and despise as idle and superfluous all which do not promote it.

St. Francis De Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life

Overview

The St. Francis De Sales Basic catechist formation program consists of nine sessions divided into four distinct parts.

Part One

Introduction: This section serves to provide the catechists with an overview of the lesson and what key areas will be covered an emphasized.

Part Two

What does the Catechist Need to Know: this section covers particulars key areas of catechetical instruction, Church documents on catechesis, important tools necessary for sound catechesis etc.

Part Three

What Does the Church Say: this section reflects the Church's understanding and mission in the area of catechesis and catechist formation. It is meant to give the catechist a sound overview of the Church's mission to teach the faith.

Part Four

The Catechism Reminds: Key articles from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are provided to aid the catechists understanding and value of the Catechism in catechetical instruction.

Additional Sections

1. **Glossary**: each session is comprised of a list of glossary terms related to catechesis aimed to assist catechists in catechetical terminology.

2. **Reflection Questions:** each session is comprised of reflection question to assists catechists articulate what they have just learned throughout the session.

The Curriculum

Lesson One: What is Catechetics?

This lesson will go over basic understanding on the ministry of catechesis, what is catechetical instruction and the art of teaching of the Catholic faith in a clear and organized way.

Lesson Two: The Content of Catechesis

This lesson will concentrate on teaching the Content of Catechesis centered on Jesus Christ. Particular emphasis is placed on Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Lesson Three: Teaching the story through Sacred Scripture.

This lesson will guide the catechist how to proclaim and effectively teach the Story of Salvation i.e. Salvation History as part of the yearly catechetical curriculum. Emphasis is placed on how we are part of God's plan as children of God.

Lesson Four: Using the RCIA as a model of instruction

This session will cover how to use the RCIA model to instruct your children in the Catholic faith. Emphasis will be placed on the general structure of the RCIA process.

Lesson Five: Teaching from the Catechism

The lesson will guide the catechist on how to effectively use the catechism of the Catholic Church in their catechetical instruction.

Lesson Six: Teaching the Liturgy and the sacraments

This lesson will cover basic points on how to effectively teach from and with the Liturgy and effectively articulate the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Lesson Seven: Teaching According to Age

This lesson will guide catechist on how to effectively teach at various grade levels. Emphasis will be placed on sound pedagogical principles to enhance the lesson.

Lesson Eight: Teaching Methods in Catechesis

This lesson will cover multiple teaching methods to assist the catechists in developing sound catechetical principles while teaching.

Lesson Nine: Developing Your Curriculum

The aim of this last lesson is to assist the catechist in putting everything together towards developing a sound lesson plan and curriculum for their religious education class.

Standards of Conduct

Introduction

This document is intended as an instrument to help adult leaders to identify their personal and ministerial standards of conduct while participating in events with children. It is recommended that the pastor or pastoral administrator, parish director of religious education or the pastor's or pastoral administrator's delegate review these standards with all adults working with children and youth.

General Principles

A) Fidelity and Integrity

Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children must be persons of fidelity and integrity and conduct themselves in an honest and open manner, free from deception or corruption.

B) Competence

Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children must maintain high levels of professional competence in their particular ministry. Training, education, and experience all contribute to making them competent and credible in their areas of expertise and service.

C) Respect for the Dignity of the Human Person

Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children must respect the rights, dignity, and worth of each member of the church community without regard to their economic status or degree of participation in parish life. Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children should be cognizant to dignity of the human person and know and understand that we are all created in the image and likeness of God.

Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children are committed to providing a safe environment for children and adults, free from any and all harassment and intimidation. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical and verbal behavior which can include, but is not limited to: physical or mental abuse, racial insults, derogatory ethnic slurs, sexual advances or unwelcome touching, sexual comments or sexual jokes, requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or affecting personnel decisions or participation, or display of obscene materials.

D) Conversations, Meetings, and Travel with Children

Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children must not disclose information revealed in conversations. Confidentiality is an important value. Exceptions, cases wherein confidentiality cannot be maintained, would include, but are not limited to: threat of

suicide, child abuse, teenage pregnancy, drug or alcohol use, or other situations wherein human life and safety are at risk. In recognition of the preceding examples, directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children may promise confidentiality only within, and in light of, the above limitations.

Obviously, those who minister to young people have an obligation to act with personal integrity in all their dealings, but it is also important to avoid even the impression of impropriety. For their own protection and to help maintain a comfortable environment for the children with whom, they serve, ministers should always be aware of the impressions they create. Certain professional habits can help protect the integrity of one's ministry.

1) Do not spend an unusual amount of time with any individual young person. Too much time spent with one person may give unhealthy impressions either to that young person or to others who become aware of the imbalance of attention.

2) Avoid placing yourself in situations in which your actions are not witnessed. More than one adult should be present during, and especially after, activities. For example, if you need to drive a young person home at night, have another adult go with you, or perhaps several other young people. If this is not possible, ask the young person's parents to come after him or her.

3) Certainly there may be times when privacy is necessary, such as when a young person seeks your opinion on a sensitive matter. Volunteers do not provide counseling; however, any conversation is still a function of our parish ministry and should be done in a professional manner. It is our policy to have clear parameters in any such situation:

   a) Use a space which provides privacy but is always visible to other team members. Meetings should not be done in private living quarters or at places or times that would cause ambiguity in the mind of the young person.
   b) Arrange the meeting space so that you and the young person are a comfortable distance apart.
   c) Let another person (ideally, the Coordinator) know when you are about to begin and when you have ended a private conversation. This person should see the young person leave.
   d) Establish a beginning and ending time for the meeting. If it is necessary to go beyond the set time, inform another person of the change in schedule.
   e) Immediately following a meeting, make notes which include the time and date of the meeting and appropriate comments.
   f) Adult leaders are discouraged from meeting with young people apart from parish events and are not to meet young people in non-public situations. If you feel the young person has developed an unhealthy attraction to you, or vice versa, it would be best to refer him or her to another adult.
   g) Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children must not step beyond their competence in dealing with personal issues in the lives of young people. If you think the issues being raised go beyond the scope of your knowledge, level of comfort, or the time restraints provided, you should speak to the parish priest or director

of religious education. If counseling or disclosure of abuse is indicated, the parish priest or DRE should be the contact person for such a referral.

h) Physical contact with young people beyond a handshake can often be misconstrued by both children and adults and should only occur under appropriate public circumstances (e.g.: sign of peace at liturgy).

4) Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children should not go on vacations or overnights alone with minors other than their own children. They should never share beds with minors nor should adults share sleeping quarters with minors unless the children are their own. On the rare occasion when dormitory accommodations are present, the dorm should be exclusively youth and if adults must be present, no less than two adults accompany the youth in the dorm.

5) Young people are at a stage of continuous emotional development and upheaval and can easily become infatuated with caring adults. These attractions are a normal part of growing up and are not usually a cause for concern, but they become problematic if they go too far. A sensitive minister will always be aware of the possibility of infatuation and, when it occurs, act so as not to encourage it while, at the same time, giving the young person support in a time of great vulnerability.

6) Alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances are not to be brought or allowed at youth/parish activities.

Self-Awareness
Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children should be sensitive to warning signs in their behavior and moods which indicate conditions that can be detrimental to their mental, physical, and spiritual health. Inappropriate use of alcohol, misuse of prescription drugs, unresolved past sexual abuse or unmanaged anger are examples. Adult leaders should immediately seek help when they identify such warning signs in their personal lives.

Directors of religious education and volunteers in ministry with children may find the unquestioning adulation of an infatuated young person can be very alluring, and adult leaders are not immune from sexual attraction for those whom they serve. To complicate matters, American popular culture encourages young people to "grow up" quickly. Material affluence, provocative clothing styles and the trend toward using make-up at an early age can create the illusion of maturity in a young person. But while popular culture often equates physical and emotional maturity, those in ministry must know the difference. Ministers and volunteers have the same needs as other human beings, but it is crucial that we not look to young people to fulfill those needs. If we are to be free to minister to young people, we must not develop an unhealthy dependence on them. Following are some ways in which the adult leaders can care for themselves so that they can more effectively serve young people.

1) Schedule regular time off and stick to it. If you are to properly serve young people, you need to get away from them once in a while. Gently but firmly teach others to respect your private time. Of course, there will be unplanned times when you need to be present to a person in need, but afterwards make sure you take time away from your ministry.

2) Develop interests outside of ministry. Church work can absorb one's whole life, if one lets it. Seek out social and recreational opportunities in the community.

3) Develop relationships outside of ministry. Seek out healthy adult friendships which nurture and support you both personally and as a minister.

4) It is recommended that those serving in ministry maintain a relationship with a spiritual director. Seek a director with whom you are comfortable, one who is empathetic, experienced, insightful and who has a healthy appreciation of his or her own spiritual journey. A good spiritual director is an invaluable asset.

5) If a situation arises in which you question your objectivity or the appropriateness of your actions, you should seek the counsel of a qualified mental health professional. If you feel compelled to act in a way which you know to be unhealthy, inappropriate, or illegal, remove yourself immediately from the ministerial situation and seek professional counseling. Take a break from your ministry until the issues are resolved and in check.

Christian Witness
Always keep in mind that Christianity is counter-cultural, and part of your ministry is bearing witness to this. Young people today are under tremendous pressure to conform to societal values which are directly contrary to the values of the Gospel, and adult volunteers engaged in ministry are called to name this truth both in word and in lifestyle.

The way an adult volunteer engaged in ministry acts, how he or she dresses, the language he or she uses, the jokes he or she tells, the objects he or she chooses to possess, the way in which he or she uses alcohol and tobacco – all of these things speak volumes to those around us, who observe more than we often realize and are very perceptive when it comes to spotting inconsistencies in word and deed.

I have read and agree to the standards of conduct as they are outlined above.

_____   _____
Signature of Adult Volunteer   Print Name

_____
Date

_____
Signature of Pastor/Pastoral Administrator or Delegate

_____   _____
Date   Parish

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Safe Environment Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Fort Worth provides services designed to prevent abuse of children and young people through the diocesan Human Resources Department. The Safe Environment Program provides education, screening, and training to ensure safety for children, youth, families, and communities of the diocese.

MISSION

The mission of the Safe Environment Program is to maintain the safety of children, youth, families, and communities in all parishes, schools, missions, and apostolates of the Diocese of Fort Worth. This mission is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, revealing the love of God for all creation.

The mission of the Safe Environment Program reflects the commitment to Catholic teaching, namely that all human life, at every age, is to be respected, nurtured, and protected. The teachings of the Church call for action on the part of Catholics to safeguard the life, health, and faith of all people.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All Clergy, Religious Men and Women, Employees and Volunteers of the Diocese of Fort Worth are required to fulfill all mandatory steps PRIOR TO THE START OF SERVICE. Note: Employment or Volunteer Service in the Diocese of Fort Worth will not begin until ALL of the following steps are completed:

I. Application for Employment or Volunteer Application for Ministry – Individuals seeking employment in the diocese are required to complete an Application for Employment, including the names and contact information of references, who will be contacted.

Individuals seeking to volunteer in the diocese are required to complete and submit a Volunteer Application for Ministry, including the names and contact information of three references, who will be contacted.

II. Criminal Background Check – All individuals seeking employment or seeking to volunteer in the diocese will sign an "Authorization for Release of Information" and must receive an acceptable Criminal Background Check result before a Letter of Hire or clearance for volunteer service can begin.

III. Safe Environment Training – All individuals seeking employment or to volunteer in the diocese will attend the live, initial Safe Environment Training session, "Keeping Children Safe" before employment or volunteer service can begin.

IV. Code of Conduct Agreement Form – All individuals seeking employment or to volunteer in the diocese will participate in a review of the Diocesan Code of Conduct and sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

The Mandate of the U.S. Bishops' Document,
Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

The mandate of the Safe Environment Program originates in the document of the United States Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,* first published in 2002, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 2005, made particular law in the United States in 2006, and recently revised in 2011.

The *Charter* is a directive for all arch/bishops in the U.S. and a guide for establishing safe environment programs; screening all clergy, employees, parents, volunteers, children and youth; and responding to allegations of abuse. In addition, the *Charter* provides for the screening and education of seminarians, orientation of new and foreign clergy to the diocese, and evaluation of each diocese regarding effective implementation of the *Charter.*

To fulfill the requirements of the Safe Environment Program, contact the Safe Environment Coordinator at your parish or Catholic School. For additional information, contact Pam Potts, the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment at 817-945-9340.

Safe Environment Policy 09/22/2015

Safe Environment

Guidelines Information

All Parish Religious Education Program should train their students annually

Visiting priests are required to submit a Letter of Good Standing (LGS) from their superior directly to the office of the Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia. This letter must include the following:

- Confirmation that they have completed Safe Environment through their Order/Diocese
- Once the letter is received and approved then a copy of the letter is email to the pastor of the parish they are visiting.
- Visiting priests are not allowed to exercise any priestly ministry within the diocese without this letter of approval.

Mail Letter of Good Standing to:

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth
Office of the Vicar General
800 West Loop 820, South
Fort Worth, TX 76108-2919

Criteria for Approved Trainers

- o Must be 21 years of age
- o Written recommendation from pastor
- o Submit two references – we must be able to talk to them
- o Work well with others

Abuse Prevention and Healing Guidelines

Safe Environment Program

Creating a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults is a Diocesan priority. Article 12 of the US Bishops document, *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* requires that dioceses will establish "safe environment" programs and gives the necessary elements of such a program. This program includes:

- Mandatory training of all who are involved with children as to the issue of abuse of children and youth (required every 3 years).
- Evaluation of the background of all employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children (required every 3 years).
- Review and signing of the *Code of Conduct and Standards of Behavior* required annually.

Who must attend?

The sessions are designed for volunteers who are:

- In religious education programs of all kinds including sacramental preparation, Vacation Bible School and Liturgy of the Word programs.
- In programs that provide training of altar servers.
- Who direct choirs and lead music for children and youth.
- In programs that provide child care.
- In youth ministry and activities.
- In school settings and in school activities.
- Everyone serving in every parish ministry.

Please note: Each catechist and volunteer must attend these sessions. Contact the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment at 817-945-9340 or http://www.fwdioc.org/safe-environment-program-about   for session times and other details.

Step by Step Process Recruiting New Ministry Volunteers

Step 1: Interview candidates
Use the *Ministry Volunteer Interview Form* to:

- get to know the new volunteer
- discern gifts he/she may bring to the particular area of ministry
- determine interests of the candidates

File interview forms in the parish. Candidates may also want complete the *Ministry Volunteer Time, Talent and Interest Survey* to assist you in placement of the volunteer.

Step 2: Candidates complete an Application Form
If you determine the interviewee is someone you want to invite into ministry, give the candidate the ministry *Volunteer Application Form* to complete. This application includes naming three references who have known candidates for at least three years.

Step 3: Complete Reference Checks

- Use the *Volunteer Applicant References* form included in the application and request three references from the applicant.
- Send a letter to each reference name and include in the envelope:
  > *Volunteer Applicant Reference Check Form*
  > cover letter on parish stationery
  > response date
  > self-addressed stamped envelope
- Send a second request (or contact by phone) if necessary.
- If no response by the new return date, ask the applicant for a different reference.

Three references are needed. File the applicants *Reference Checks* in the parish.

Step 4: Conduct a Criminal Background Evaluation
Background evaluations are required in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

- Candidates must complete the *Authorization for Release of Information Form*
- The staff member responsible for personnel will send this completed form to the diocesan office of Human Resources.
- Once the applicant is cleared, continue with step #5.
- Discuss restricted or non-clearance issues with the pastor and the Diocesan Human Resource office.

Step 5: Safe and Sacred Online Training, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Safe Program
Contact the Safe Environment Coordinator in your parish for adult online training, or use the diocesan-wide *Calendar of Sessions* on www.fwdioc.org to locate a training sessions or call the

Safe Environment Office at 817-945-9340

Step 6: Volunteers must review/agree to abide by the Diocesan Code of Conduct and Behavior Standards.
This document is designed to assist all ministry leaders understand their moral responsibilities to the people they minister to.

- Ministry leaders must review the entire *Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards* with each volunteer, individually, or in a group to determine that the "Code" is understood and the volunteers agree to abide by it.
- Each volunteer must then complete the "Code" Acknowledgement Form (not available online) and return it to be filed in the parish.
- Each volunteer must be provided a copy of the "Code" to be able to refer to it during the year. Each volunteer will sign off on the "Code" annually.

Recruiting Youth Volunteers (Under 18)
Leaders recruiting youth volunteers should follow the same step by step process for adults (above), but use the following forms, tailored specifically for youth:

- Youth Volunteer Interview Questions
- Ministry Volunteer Application for Youth
- Youth Applicant Reference Check
- Volunteer Time, Talent and Interest Survey for youth

Create a Filing/Tracking System for Volunteers
It is important to set aside a space and determine how the parish will track volunteers and the paperwork necessary for each volunteer.

- Interview forms
- Application/references
- Reference checks
- Criminal background checks
- Acknowledgment Form for The Code of Conduct and Behavior Standards (must be read and signed annually)

Other items that could be stored about your volunteers include:

- Diocesan Driver Form
- Trainings/ Continuing Formation participation
- Any incidences or awards as volunteers

Files/box/folder/binder must be kept in a secure location and should only be available to parish staff - not to the general public.

Volunteer Sample Interview Questions

We recommend that volunteers, especially those working with children and youth, be interviewed. Some sample questions follow:

PERSONAL

    1. Tell me about your family... about your growing up years... about your family now.

    2. Who are your idols or mentors?

    3. Tell me about your faith life.

    4. Why is the Church important to you?

    5. What do you do for fun?

    6. What have you done for personal improvement this year? Books, workshops, courses, etc.?

    7. Why did you choose to volunteer in this ministry?

PAST EXPERIENCE:

    1. In religious education? Evangelization? Catechesis?

    2. In liturgy?

    3. In creating or building community?

    4. In guidance and healing?

    5. In justice and service?

    6. In training youth or adults (enabling someone)?

    7. In speaking for a group of people (advocating for someone)?

    8. Which element(s) above strongly speak to you?

    9. What past experience outside of ministry do you think is transferable?

VISION:

    1. Tell me how you would like to be a part of the ministry now?

    2. What are some of the concerns you have as you become involved in this ministry?

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Volunteer Ministry Application

Your completed application will be reviewed carefully, but its receipt does not imply that you will be accepted as a volunteer minister. The Diocese, in its sole discretion, decides who may officially minister in the Catholic Church. Incomplete answers on this application may result in no offer of ministry.

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name

Ministry Applying For	Name of Parish, School, or Other Entity

☐ Check if you or a family member is registered in this entity	Name of this individual	Relationship

Briefly explain why you are interested in this ministry and why you believe you are qualified:

☐ **Check if first time volunteer. COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION, SIGN AND DATE OTHER SIDE**
☐ **Check if currently volunteering and wish to add or change assignments**
   COMPLETE ONLY CHANGING INFORMATION, SIGN AND DATE OTHER SIDE

Personal Information

▶ Please circle one: Rev.   Bro.   Sr.   Dcn.   Mr.   Mrs.   Ms.

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____
                City   State   Zip

Length at Current Address: _____ years _____ months

Home Phone: _____ _____   Work Phone: _____ _____
            Area Code   Number   Area Code   Number

Cell Phone: _____ _____   E-mail Address: _____ _____
            Area Code   Number   Area Code   Number

Occupation: _____

Please specify your current parish membership, if not a member, please leave blank:

_____

How long have you been associated with the parish or school? _____

Previous Experience

Have you served as a volunteer or employee in another parish/school?   _____ Yes   _____ No

If so, when? (year) _____ and in what capacity? _____

_____

Parish/School_____ City _____ State _____

Phone # _____ Supervisor/Contact Person _____

Language Proficieny

Indicate any languages besides English that will assist in the ministry sought._____

Personal References

Please fill in the requested information below. Be sure to include ALL of the information requested. Please list three (3) references that we can contact.

Reference 1

Name _____ Phone_____

Address _____ City _____State _____ Zip _____

How long have they known you? _____ In what capacity (relationship)? _____

Reference 2

Name _____ Phone_____

Address _____ City _____State _____ Zip _____

How long have they known you? _____ In what capacity (relationship)? _____

Reference 3

Name _____ Phone_____

Address _____ City _____State _____ Zip _____

How long have they known you? _____ In what capacity (relationship)? _____

Disciplinary History

Have you ever had a disciplinary proceeding, been terminated from a position

or asked to resign from a position due to your behavior with a minor?   _____ Yes _____ No

Have you ever had your parental rights restricted, suspended or terminated? _____ Yes _____No

Has a civil or criminal complaint ever been filed against you alleging physical

or sexual abuse?   _____ Yes _____No

If you answered "YE S" to any of the above questions please explain on a separate sheet of paper.

 Applicant's Statement –THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED BELOW

- I certify that answers given herein are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- I understand that this is not an application for employment.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the application process at any time
- I authorize investigation by the Diocese of Fort Worth of all statements contained in this application for volunteer ministry as may be necessary in arriving at an acceptable decision.
- I understand that if I am accepted into a volunteer ministry position, then I may resign at any time and the Diocese may discharge me at time and for any or no reason.
- In the event of acceptance into volunteer ministry, I understand that false or misleading information given in my application or interview(s) may result in discharge.
- I understand, also, that I am required to abide by all rules and regulations of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

_____   _____

 Signature of Applicant   **Date**

As part of the volunteer ministry application, you must also consent to Criminal Background Check evaluation. If you have not already done so, complete an **Authorization for Release for Information** form and submit it along with this application. After this application and background check are evaluated, an interview will be scheduled with the leader of your selected ministry. All volunteers participating in an official ministry in a parish/school are required to attend a **Keeping Children and Youth Safe Session** and agree in writing to abide by the **Diocesan Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers**.

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Ministry Volunteer Reference Check

To: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

The volunteer applicant named below has applied for a position of trust working with children and youth in ministry, and has given your name as a reference and waived his/her rights provided by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1.974 to inspect this letter of reference. Your assessment of the person will help us in guiding his/her involvement into a particular area of ministry on a volunteer level. This information will remain confidential. Thank you.

Applicant: _____

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?

2. Please describe this person's ability to work with children and/or youth?

3. Please describe this person's ability to work with adults?

4. What age grouping(s) do you think the applicant is best able to serve?

5. What particular gifts does the applicant bring to ministry?

6. Please rate the applicant on the following characteristics (1= weak; 5=strong; NK no knowledge)

	1	2	3	4	5	NK
Relates well with children and/or youth						
Relates well with adults						
Sense of confidence in self						
Honest and open in relationships						
Witness to the Christian faith through his/her lifestyle						
Openness to new learning						
Reliability						
Ability to express oneself						
Ability to take criticism						
Ability to work with superiors						
Ability to work as part of a team						
Ability to take initiative and complete a project						

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7. Do you feel this applicant has any problems or limitations which would impede his/her volunteering in ministry?

8. What age grouping(s) do you think the applicant is best able to serve?

9. To the Best of your knowledge:

   Have there been complaints about the applicant behaving inappropriately with minors? Yes   No

   Have there been complaints about the applicant behaving inappropriately with adults? Yes   No

   Have there been allegations of abuse against the applicant? Yes   No

   Has the applicant been disciplined or terminated from a position working with minors due to inappropriate behavior or abuse?   Yes   No

   Would you trust the care of your children or your senior parent to this person?   Yes   No

Please feel free to add any additional comments about the applicant.

The information I have given is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:_____Date:_____

Please return to   _____ _____

                     _____ _____

                     _____ _____

                     _____ _____

Diocese of Fort Worth

Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards
For All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers

"For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with the simplicity and sincerity of God, (and) not by human wisdom but by the grace of God."
(St. Paul, 2 Cor. 1:12)

Article 6 of the ***Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People***, published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, mandates: "There are to be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people." This document is the Diocese of Fort Worth's response to this mandate and is one of the cornerstones of our Safe Environment Program. All clergy, religious, and lay ministers (employees and volunteers) indicate their agreement with and adherence to the Code of Conduct by signing and dating it.

Professional Ethical Obligations

1. Ministerial Role

a) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers work collaboratively with all those engaged in ministry.
b) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers faithfully represent the teachings of the Catholic Church, with integrity in word and action.
c) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are competent and receive ongoing education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231 and 279, Code of Canon Law).

2. Inclusion

a) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from actions or words that are disrespectful of anyone.
b) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers serve all people in accordance with the Church's teaching on Faith and Morals.
c) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers ensure that all persons have reasonable access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.

3. Accountability

a) Priests are accountable to His Excellency, Bishop Michael F. Olson, or the person or persons he designates; all other ministers are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative under the authority of the Bishop.
b) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are called to serve the Faithful, carrying out their ministerial functions "…conscientiously, zealously, and diligently" (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
c) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.
d) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are responsible for supporting each other toward being effective leaders. This support must include discussing concerns about inappropriate behavior with one's supervisor.

4. Confidentiality

a) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers respect confidentiality.
b) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect or abuse or whenever physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
c) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers support the rights and roles of parents, guardians and caretakers, as prescribed by the Church in the Code of Canon Law, while ministering to the needs and concerns of those receiving ministry.

5. Conduct

a) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers will sustain respectful relationships with all those they serve, avoiding manipulation, sexual harassment and other abuses of the power that come with a ministerial position.
b) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers maintain appropriate professional boundaries with colleagues.

Romantic or sexual relationships between a minister and those whom he/she ministers to are inappropriate and unethical, regardless of who initiates the conduct.

c) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are to model healthy and positive behaviors with all those receiving ministry.

d) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol for persons under 21 years of age and procuring, providing, or using controlled substances for anyone is illegal, inappropriate and unethical.

6. Referrals and Intervention

a) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are to be aware of the signs of sexual abuse and physical neglect.

b) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.

c) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policies and procedures for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.

7. Parish/School/Organizational/Diocesan Policies and Guidelines

a) Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers are to be aware of and comply with all applicable parish/school, organizational and/or diocesan policies and guidelines with special attention to ministerial competency, sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

Behavior Standards

1. Any interpersonal conduct that is prohibited by civil law is likewise forbidden under diocesan policy. As a prime example, any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior between a minister and a child or young person is inappropriate and forbidden. Further, illicit use of electronic media, whether through the internet, email, chat rooms, social networks, phone conversations, text messaging, photos, videos or any other access, is expressly included in this prohibition.

2. All suspicion of sexual abuse must be reported as required by state law and diocesan policy. Any knowledge or reasonable suspicion of any minister having an inappropriate relationship with a child or young person must be reported promptly to that person's supervisor, who must then discuss this concern with the minister.

3. Two adults or one adult and two teens must be present at all children's and/or youth religious education programs, classes and activities, and must remain until all children/youth have left the premises. This requirement includes all *jovenes* (Spanish youth) ministries that include adolescents. All planning meetings/ interactions with a teen assistant/helper must take place in public or in the presence of another adult or teen. All Catholic school events and activities outside of a regular classroom setting require the presence of two adults or one adult and at least two teens. Going out/Dating between a minister and a child or young person is not allowed.

4. When initiating physical contact, discretion must be used. Any display of affection should be made in a public setting in front of other group members and should respect the wishes of the other person.

5. One-to-one counseling between a minister and those he/she ministers to should always occur in a public place where they can be observed by others—never alone in a car or a private place.

6. Driving alone with a child and/or youth is to be avoided at all times unless extraordinary circumstances require immediate and prudent action. In such situations, special care should be taken, including all of the following:
   ✓ Contact parents and document the outcome of the call.
   ✓ Do not sit close to one another in the car.
   ✓ Do not come into physical contact with each other.
   ✓ Do not stop the car to talk.
   ✓ If you must stop, turn on the inside light of the car.
   ✓ Avoid physical contact (hugs and kisses) when saying goodbye.
   ✓ Be aware of the time you depart and arrive and make a record of those times.

7. If a minister experiences a recurring romantic or sexual attraction for someone they are ministering to, the minister is required to discuss the situation with their supervisor or spiritual director for guidance.

8. Any sexual gestures or overtures made to a minister, from those he/she ministers to, should be reported to his/her supervisor who will then meet with those involved to discuss the incident.

9. All observed Code of Conduct violations must be reported to the supervisor and documented.

10. Any Clergy, Religious or Lay Minister who cannot maintain these Behavior Standards cannot serve in the Diocese.

Unacceptable Behaviors

- ✓ Speaking graphically about sexual activities (including your own) and/or allowing others to do so (this includes telling sexually suggestive jokes)
- ✓ Hosting parish or school events for children or youth in your home without at least one other adult present
- ✓ Showing pornographic materials (photos, films, cartoons, stories, and drawings) to others
- ✓ Allowing anyone to become sexual with you or with another
- ✓ Spanking, shaking, slapping, wrestling, tickling or physically punishing children or youth
- ✓ Giving, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol
- ✓ Giving, possessing or being under the influence of illegal drugs
- ✓ Giving persons tobacco products
- ✓ Shaming, degrading, ridiculing, threatening, belittling, or humiliating another person
- ✓ Using foul or abusive language
- ✓ Showing favoritism
- ✓ Going out/Dating a child or young person
- ✓ Having physical contact with another that can be misinterpreted
- ✓ Wearing provocative or revealing attire
- ✓ Being nude in front of others
- ✓ Being in bed with children or youth
- ✓ Keeping "secrets" about relationships
- ✓ Showing affection when no one else is around or in bedrooms, closets, restricted areas and other private rooms
- ✓ Staring while others are dressing
- ✓ Commenting on others' bodies
- ✓ Taking pictures or video/digital recording while others are dressing or showering
- ✓ Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection

Warning Signs

- ✓ Wearing special clothes when you know you're going to see a certain person
- ✓ Spending extra time grooming yourself when you know you are going to see a certain person
- ✓ Finding ways or reasons to be alone with a certain person
- ✓ Keeping aspects of your relationship with a person secret from others (such as how often you talk on the phone or see each other alone)
- ✓ Giving and receiving special gifts from a certain person
- ✓ Neglecting ministry to others in order to spend more time with a certain person
- ✓ Sharing personal information about others with a certain person
- ✓ Sharing personal information or seeking help with personal problems from a certain person
- ✓ Discussing adult issues with children and/or youth
- ✓ Excessively looking forward to seeing a certain person
- ✓ Fantasizing or daydreaming about a certain person

Displays of Affection

Appropriate	Inappropriate
✓ Asking permission before touching	✓ Any form of unwanted affection
✓ Side hugs (with adults)	✓ Full frontal hugs or "bear hugs"
✓ Brief shoulder to shoulder hugs	✓ Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
✓ Pats on the shoulder or back	✓ Massages
✓ Handshakes	✓ Patting others on the thigh, knee or leg
✓ "High-fives" and hand slapping	✓ Tickling or wrestling
✓ Verbal praise	✓ Touching or hugging from behind
✓ Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms	✓ Games involving inappropriate touching
✓ Arms around shoulders	✓ Kisses on the mouth
✓ Holding hands during prayer or when a person is upset	✓ Special gift giving to/from a certain person
✓ Holding hands while walking with small children	
✓ Sitting close to small children	
✓ Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child	

Violations of the *Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers* are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers of the Diocese of Fort Worth are to sign the *Code of Conduct Agreement Form*. Failure to agree in writing with this Code of Conduct is also grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Please keep this copy for your personal records. The companion document, *Code of Conduct Agreement Form*, is an integral piece of diocesan compliance for the *Charter of the Protection of Children and Young People.* When you first attend the Keeping Children and Youth Safe session, you will be required to sign and submit this agreement form to the location of your primary ministry. The primary location for clergy is the Chancery Office. The primary location for employees of the Diocese is their primary place of employment. For volunteers, the primary location is where they designate as their primary location.

Policy on Sexual Misconduct on the Part of Employees of the Diocese of Fort Worth

Introduction

The opening pages of Sacred Scripture tell us of God's wondrous creation of a universe that was good. The culmination of the whole of creation occurred when God breathed the divine spirit into the clay of the earth and brought forth humankind created in God's own image and likeness, male and female.

Our sexual identity is an intimate part of God's plan for creation and therefore for each of us. The mystery of what it means to be a human being -- incarnate and sexual, male and female -- is bound up in the very mystery of God, the author of life and the font of love. Human sexuality is God's creation, and we approach any discussion of it with a deep sense of appreciation, wonder and respect. It must, however, be integrated with the other gifts we have received. Sexuality fully integrated in the human personality fosters human communication and encourages and enriches all human relationships. The moral and spiritual health of the Church and human society depends on morally and spiritually healthy men and women who have learned to integrate the gift of sexuality with all the other gifts God gives them for the building up of the kingdom.

Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church is deeply concerned for the well-being of all people, and has a special concern for those who are most vulnerable. Sexual misconduct is a serious breach of the trust that should exist among all the members of the Church, and especially those who serve others as church ministers and employees. Sexual misconduct is always a tragedy and calls for the Church to respond with compassion toward all those persons involved.

The Catholic Church expects its employees to live chaste and moral lives, respecting in every way the gift of sexuality. Inappropriate sexual activity abuses the power and authority of the pastoral role. Sexual misconduct by church personnel is contrary to Christian morals and civil law and will not under any circumstances be tolerated in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Therefore, all personnel of the diocese, its parishes, schools and other agencies must comply with all applicable church, federal, state and local laws regarding incidents of actual, alleged or suspected sexual misconduct, and with the procedures outlined by this document.

Implementing the Policy

I. Definitions

A. Sexual Misconduct

For the purpose of this policy, sexual misconduct is defined as any of the following:

- Sexual Abuse -- Sexual contact between church personnel and a minor or vulnerable adult, as defined by the laws of the State of Texas.
- Sexual Exploitation -- Sexual interaction between church personnel and a person receiving pastoral assistance, whether initiated by one or the other.
- Sexual Harassment -- Unwanted sexual advances, conduct or language between persons in the work environment of a parish, school or diocesan agency.

All three forms of misconduct are addressed simultaneously since they cause injustice by the abuse of authority and are contrary to the doctrines, moral teaching, and canon law of the Catholic Church.

B. Church Personnel

The term *church personnel* is defined as any of the following:

1. Priests incardinated in the Diocese of Fort Worth.
2. Priests who are members of religious institutes, assigned to pastoral work in the Diocese of Fort Worth.
3. Priests of other jurisdictions who are assigned to pastoral work in this diocese; priests who seek incardination in this diocese; other priests, including those who are retired, who request canonical faculties to do part-time or supply ministry.
4. Permanent and transitional deacons incardinated in the diocese; permanent deacons incardinated in other dioceses but with canonical faculties to function in this diocese; those enrolled in the Permanent Deacon Formation Program.
5. Women religious and religious brothers working for the diocese, its parishes, schools or agencies.
6. Seminarians studying for the priesthood under the sponsorship of the diocese.
7. All paid personnel and volunteers while engaged in areas of ministry or other kinds of services for the diocese, its parishes, schools or other agencies.

C. Contractors

Contractors are defined as those non-employee providers of any service to the diocese, its parishes, school or other agencies. Although not considered church personnel as such, contractors and contract staff will be held to the code of behavior outlined in this policy.

II. The Church's Pastoral Concern for All

A. Care of the One Who Alleges Sexual Misconduct

The Diocese of Fort Worth will respond immediately to any accusation of sexual misconduct. This response is not a judgment of the person being accused, and innocence is presumed unless facts prove otherwise. It is expected that an allegation be brought by the one directly involved or by that person's parent or legal guardian, that it be based on fact, and that it be an honest representation of the truth. It is important for members of the Church to be sensitive to those who allege sexual misconduct.

The Diocese will cooperate with civil authorities and will follow the reporting requirements of Texas law.

The victim of sexual misconduct has the right to receive pastoral assistance from the Church. Assistance and support will vary with circumstances and will be provided in consultation with mental health professionals.

B. Care of the Priest Accused of Sexual Misconduct

1. Sexual misconduct by a priest is a serious failure of the responsibilities inherent in the pastoral office and is a violation of a sacred trust. Should an allegation of sexual misconduct be made, the Diocese of Fort Worth will show compassion toward both the accused and the accuser. The diocesan response to an allegation is in no way a judgment of the accused, and innocence is presumed unless facts prove otherwise.

2. Although several persons may be involved in an investigation, the bishop will make the final decision regarding the disposition of the accused priest.

C. Care of Other Church Personnel (see I-B, 4, 5, 6, 7) Accused of Sexual Misconduct

The Diocese of Fort Worth also has a concern regarding sexual misconduct by other church personnel. This policy will be followed should any allegation of misconduct be made against any other church personnel.

1. The diocese will protect the legal rights of the accused and will observe all canonical and civil laws. The response of the diocese is in no way a judgment of the accused, and innocence is presumed unless facts prove otherwise.

2. Sexual misconduct is an abuse of the pastoral role. Proven allegations of misconduct, according to this policy, will result in termination.

D. Care of the Christian Community Affected by Sexual Misconduct

The diocese has special concern for parishes, schools, agencies and other church communities served by personnel accused of sexual misconduct. While respecting the privacy of those directly involved in an allegation, when an incident becomes public, every effort will be made to inform and assist the local community.

III. Procedure When Sexual Misconduct is alleged

A. Investigative Phase

When an allegation of sexual misconduct is made, the following diocesan procedures will be initiated:

1. The person reporting the allegation is referred to the chancellor or vicar general.
2. The chancellor or vicar general reports the allegations to civil authorities, if required by law, if that has not already been done.
3. The chancellor or vicar general reports the allegation to the legal counsel of the diocese.
4. The chancellor or vicar general reports the allegation to the diocesan insurance carrier.
5. The chancellor or vicar general collaborates with the diocesan communications director to prepare timely statements for the media should the need arise. The communications director will be the sole person to deal with the public media.
6. The chancellor or vicar general maintains contact with the victim and/or family to inform them of the diocesan actions.
7. The chancellor or vicar general calls for an internal diocesan investigation which is conducted in cooperation and consultation with civil authorities.
8. The chancellor or vicar general appoints a person to chair the committee investigating the allegation. The chair, in consultation with the chancellor, selects at least two others to serve on the committee. The committee will be formed from a pool of people with varied personal and professional backgrounds, both laity and clergy.
9. The committee organizes the investigation and schedules the interviews. Strictest confidentiality is always maintained.
10. Interviews will be conducted. Persons other than the accuser and the accused may be consulted.

B. Action Phase
1. If the committee determines the allegation is unfounded, the bishop is notified and concludes the investigation. The bishop notifies the accused and the person reporting the allegation that the investigation is concluded.
2. If the committee determines the allegation is founded, the investigation continues, with a final report submitted by the chair to the bishop within 20 working days. The bishop is responsible for the final disposition of the allegation.

<div align="right">

July 1, 1993
Revised May 1, 1996

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Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

The Law (Texas Family Code, Chapter 261)

Who must report:	Any person
Basis for report:	Having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect.
When to report:	IMMEDIATELY - A report must be made orally within 48 hours after there is cause to believe/suspect that the child has been or may be abused or neglected.
Penalty:	Failure to report is a Class B misdemeanor. Knowingly or intentionally making a false report is a Class A misdemeanor.
To report child abuse:	**Call 1-800-252-5400 (toll free).**

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Any person who believes a child has been or will be abused or neglected, as those terms are defined in Chapter 261, Texas Family Code (see back page for definitions), shall make the required *non-accusatory* report to child protection services and immediately notify the Pastor and the Fort Worth Diocese Director of Human Resources. The person making the non-accusatory report shall keep the alleged abuse or neglect confidential and shall not discuss the matter with others except as required by law. The individual making the report and the pastor shall cooperate with the child protective service personnel in investigating the case. Immunity from prosecution is granted to those individuals who file a non-accusatory report in good faith concerning suspected child abuse or neglect. This immunity may not extend to statements that are not part of the reporting or investigation process. Therefore, the individual should be very careful about making such statements except for the purpose of reporting or investigating the matter.

In reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Allegations by parents, guardians, or children themselves of sexual abuse, or any abuse, must be treated most seriously and may never be dismissed.

2. The person having cause to suspect child abuse or neglect must:

   - notify his or her supervisor, without discussing details, that he or she needs to make a report of child abuse to the Pastor;
   - make a detailed report to the Pastor; if the Pastor is not available, the report should be made to the Director of Human Resources, Diocese of Fort Worth.

3. A report must be made **IMMEDIATELY – WITHIN 48 Hours** to the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) or Child Protection Services: **Call 1-800-252-5400.**

4. The person making the report needs to identify, if known:

1. name and address of the child;
2. name and person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child;
3. any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

5.   Document the information needed in paragraph 4a/b above, as well as to whom the report was made and on what date.

Definitions, from Chapter 261.001 of the Texas Family Code

√   **Abuse**, includes the following acts or omissions by a person.

1. Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
2. Causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
3. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent or guardian that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
4. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical welfare;
5. Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare;
6. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child
7. Compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct;
8. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene;
9. The current use by a person of a controlled substance in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child; or
10. Causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance.

√   **Neglect**, includes:

1. The leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent or guardian of the child;

2. The following acts or omissions by a person:

   a. Placing the child in or failing to remove a child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;

b. Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child;

c. The failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life of health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused; or

d. Placing a child in, or failing to remove the child from, a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the child.

3. The failure by the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child's home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having run away.

To Report Sexual Misconduct . . .

Call...
Victims Assistance Coordinator
 (817) 560-2452, ext. 201

Or
The Sexual Abuse Hotline: (817) 560-2452, ext. 900

Or
The Catholic Center: (817) 560-3300
Ask to speak to the Chancellor.

Or Write...
Diocese of Fort Worth
Victims Assistance Ministry
The Catholic Center
800 West Loop 820 South
Fort Worth, Texas 76108

(If the sexual abuse occurred outside this diocese, the Victims Assistance Coordinator will assist in bringing the concern to the appropriate authorities.)

For further information, please contact:

The Catholic Center
800 West Loop 820 South
Fort Worth, Texas 76108
(817) 560-2452, ext. 201

If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by anyone who serves the church, and you need a place to talk with someone about your feelings of betrayal or hurt by the church due to abuse, exploitation, or harassment . . . we are here to help you.

A sacred relationship exists between the Catholic Church and all its members, children and adults. It is a matter of very great concern when sexual abuse occurs in the context of that relationship.

Because of the harm that has been done to members of the Catholic Church by sexual abuse, the Diocese of Fort Worth has a process for dealing with reports of sexual misconduct by clergy, other church personnel, or volunteers. When someone has experienced the harm of sexual abuse from a person in a position of trust, justice and compassion demand a response.

We are here to help you access resources including:

- Nonjudgmental listening
- Spiritual support
- Pastoral care
- Professional counseling

The Victims Assistance Ministry of the Diocese of Fort Worth is available:

- to individuals who have experienced sexual abuse by clergy, lay employees, or volunteers serving in the Diocese of Fort Worth
- to family members of these victims/survivors.

It may be helpful for the persons reporting misconduct to have the support of a friend or companion who can accompany them at any stage of the process.

Diocese of Fort Worth

Procedures When Sexual Misconduct is Reported

The Catholic Church expects all those who work and minister in the name of the Church to live chaste and moral lives, respecting in every way the gift of sexuality. Inappropriate sexual activity abuses not only the gift of sexuality but also the power and authority of the pastoral role. Sexual misconduct by anyone who serves in the Church is a serious violation of sacred trust.

In order to preserve a safe environment, the Diocese of Fort Worth requires all ministers, employees and volunteers of the Diocese, its parishes, schools and other agencies to be in compliance with the requirements of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (the "Charter")* by abiding by the Fort Worth Diocesan *Code of Conduct*. Any proven allegation of sexual abuse of a minor will permanently disqualify any individual from ministry in the name of the Church. Other forms of sexual misconduct may also result in termination of service in the church.

Refer to the Diocese of Fort Worth website, *www.fwdioc.org*. for policies and procedures about the diocesan Safe Environment Program. The Office of Child and Youth Protection routinely updates this website with information and helpful resources.

How to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect

The law requires *any person* who has cause to believe that a child has been or will be abused or neglected to file a *non-accusatory* report to *Child Protection Services (CPS)*. The person making the non-accusatory report shall keep the alleged abuse or neglect confidential and shall not discuss the matter with others except as required by law. Immunity from prosecution is granted to those individuals who file a non-accusatory report in good faith concerning suspected child abuse or neglect. This immunity may not extend to statements that are not part of the reporting or investigation process. Therefore, the individual should be very careful about making such statements except for the purpose of reporting or investigating the matter.

A report must be made **IMMEDIATELY – WITHIN 48 Hours –** to the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) or CPS: **Call 1-800-252-5400.** The person making the report needs to identify, if known:

The name and address of the child;

The name and person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child; and

Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

Keep a written record of the information above, as well as to whom the report was made and on what date. Ask Child Protective services to provide you with a *CASE NUMBER* and include it in your documentation. You may use the Diocesan Form *Confidential Notice of Concern* to help you file this report.

Allegations by parents, guardians, or children themselves of sexual abuse, or any abuse, will be treated most seriously and will never be dismissed. If the person alleged to be responsible for suspected abuse is a minister, employee or volunteer in the Diocese of Fort Worth, then you must also notify the Pastor of your parish, the Principal of your Catholic School, the Director of Human Resources, the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia, or the Bishop. Call the Catholic Center at 817-560-3300 for more information or to report the allegation to the Diocese. Catholic Charities Victim Assistance must also notify at 817-945-9345. Be advised that calling the Catholic Center does not satisfy your obligation to report the matter to CPS.

How to Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Misconduct

Your first obligation is to report child abuse to CPS. If you suspect a church minister, employee or volunteer is involved in sexual misconduct (including but not limited to sexual abuse), then Diocesan policy requires that you report the person to your supervisor (if applicable and not the suspect), the Pastor of your parish, the Principal of your Catholic School, the Catholic Charities Victim Assistance, the Director of Human Resources,

or the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia. The Diocesan report may be made by telephone, electronic messaging, or in writing. If you have reported the matter to CPS, then immediately send a copy of your written report to the Catholic Charities Victim Assistance and the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese.

When an allegation of sexual misconduct is reported to the diocese, the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia will take appropriate action, including but not limited to:

Reporting immediately to civil authorities if the sexual misconduct involves a minor and it has not been reported by the person notifying the diocese;

Removing an individual from office even when a single act of sexual abuse with a minor is substantiated;

If safety and/or circumstances warrant, removing from ministry any individual accused of sexual misconduct pending positive determination of guilt;

Authorizing the Director of Human Resources to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct by any employee or volunteer;

Not knowingly transfer an individual who has committed an act of sexual abuse with a minor to another diocese/eparchy or to a religious province;

If the allegation is made about a priest, deacon or religious no longer working in the Diocese of Fort Worth, making the accusation known to the bishop of the other diocese/eparchy or to the Major Religious Superior of the accused; and

Convening the Conduct Review Board, if appropriate.

Care for the Victim of Sexual Abuse

The Diocesan *Catholic Charities Victim Assistance* provides pastoral care and support to all victims of sexual abuse, including assistance to access counseling, support groups, and spiritual direction resources. Whenever appropriate, the Catholic Charities Victim Assistance also provides similar assistance to victims' family members. Assistance and support will vary with circumstances and may be provided in consultation with mental health professionals. The Sexual Abuse Hotline phone number is **817-560-2452 x900**.

Care of the One Who Reports Sexual Misconduct

Although mainly focusing on care for victims of sexual abuse, the Catholic Charities Victim Assistance also offers assistance to the person reporting the misconduct. When the accused is an employee or volunteer, the Catholic Charities Victim Assistance directs the accuser to *Human Resources*, the diocesan department responsible for protecting and supporting the person who accuses another of sexual misconduct.

Care for the One Who is Accused of Sexual Misconduct

The Diocese of Fort Worth is compassionate toward both the accused and the accuser. Furthermore, the diocese will make every attempt to protect the legal rights of the accused and observe all canonical and civil laws. The diocesan response to an allegation is in no way a judgment of the accused, and innocence is presumed unless facts prove otherwise.

The Human Resources Department will promptly and thoroughly investigate the allegation. In some situations, private investigators may be retained by the Diocese. Upon completing the investigation, the Director of Human Resources will file a written report to the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia.

The Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia may convene the *Conduct Review Board* in some instances. The board reviews all the steps taken in the investigation of the allegation. Once the review is completed, the board reports its recommendations to the Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia.

The Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia files a written report to the Bishop, who makes the final decision regarding the disposition of the accused.

In the case of sexual misconduct with a minor by a cleric, the steps required by Canon Law and by instructions from the Holy See will be followed, not excluding laicization.

Care of the Christian Community Affected by Sexual Misconduct

The diocese has special concern for parishes, schools, agencies and other church communities served by personnel accused of sexual misconduct. While respecting the privacy of those directly involved in an allegation, when an incident becomes public, every effort will be made to communicate with, inform and assist the local community.

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i. Texas Family Code, Chapter 261

ii. Following the instructions of the *Charter*, the *Conduct Review Board* of the Diocese of Fort Worth generally includes at least one experienced pastor and four conscientious lay people not in the employ of the diocese. One member has expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors.

Appendix I

SAMPLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION JOB DESCRIPTION

SAMPLE
Religious Education Coordinator: Job Description for Preschool – Eighth Grade DRE

The Religious Education Coordinator will oversee the religious program of _____.

Duties and Responsibilities are as follows:
1. Serve as the director/resource person for parish religious education programs, including sacramental preparation for children and youth
   a. Continue development of the curriculum for children and youth
   b. Act as a resource person to the youth and confirmation program
2. Attend the regular Religious Education Advisory Committee meetings and continue to work with the committee developing policies for religious education for the children and youth of the parish.
3. Attend Quarterly Diocesan Deanery DRE meetings.
4. Try to determine the educational needs of the parish through observation, conversation and written surveys.
5. Research, select and purchase within budget, books and other visual aids for the Religious Education program.
6. Set up program for preschool through eighth grade children including registration.
7. Oversee Vacation Bible School (VBS) program.
8. Recruit Catechists for all classes.
   a. Work with each teacher individually before classes begin and throughout the year to set basic objectives for each class.
   b. Give orientation session.
9. Provide in-service and training for catechists.
10. Write Catechists job descriptions.
11. Provide ongoing support and supervision of catechists
    a. Catechist training by diocesan personnel for catechist's certification
    b. In-service days
    c. Individual help as requested
12. Review lesson plans from the catechist to be informed about what is going on in each classroom. Help catechists as needed to build lesson plans and para-liturgies for classroom with focus on Liturgy of the Word for Children.
13. Work on evaluation for events.
14. Be present on Sunday for support of the catechists.
15. Keep Pastor informed all catechetical activities within the parish.
16. Keep the parish informed through the parish website, Facebook, twitter, e-bulletin.
17. Provide meetings pertaining to adult information for parents involved in the Religious Education programs.
18. Work with parents who want to teach their child at home.
19. Organize parent support to help with various events.
20. Be open to hear concerns of all parents and act upon them when necessary.
21. File our annual Religious Education report for diocese and answer various surveys.
22. Aid the supervision of junior high catechist.

Appendix II

EVALUATIONS INSTRUMENTS FOR DRE'S AND CRE'S

Self-Evaluation Instrument for a Parish Director/ Coordinator of Religious Education Formation

Circle the number that best expresses your true feeling. [One (1) indicates a need for change, three (3) is average or okay, and five (5) is well pleased or outstanding.]

Specific Responsibilities

Program Development	Weak		Strong
1. I am aware of catechetical needs of my parish.	1 2	3	4 5
2. I study catechetical needs with a family perspective.	1 2	3	4 5
3. I design programs according to Diocesan guidelines.	1 2	3	4 5
4. I follow parish policy in developing goals and objectives for each catechetical program.	1 2	3	4 5
5. I schedule liturgical events involving catechists, students, and parents.	1 2	3	4 5
6. I design sacraments preparation programs involving students and parents.	1 2	3	4 5
Administration			
A. Management			
1. I keep an organized Office of Faith Formation.	1 2	3	4 5
2. I implement Diocesan policies and guidelines.	1 2	3	4 5
3. I implement parish policies and guidelines.	1 2	3	4 5
4. I prepare a budget for catechetical programs.	1 2	3	4 5
5. I administer the budget conscientiously.	1 2	3	4 5
6. I keep updated files on administrative details.	1 2	3	4 5
7. I keep updated files on each catechist.	1 2	3	4 5
8. I keep updated files on each student.	1 2	3	4 5
9. I safeguard confidential files and use them discretely.	1 2	3	4 5
10. I organize and maintain the resource center.	1 2	3	4 5
11. I cooperate with other parish organizations in total parish ministry.	1 2	3	4 5
12. I am prompt in returning reports and surveys to the Office of Faith Formation.	1 2	3	4 5
B. Leadership			
1. I recruit qualified catechists.	1 2	3	4 5
2. I support the members of the catechetical staff in their ministry.	1 2	3	4 5
3. I provide training opportunities for new staff.	1 2	3	4 5
4. I provide in-service at parish level for catechetical staff.	1 2	3	4 5
5. I coordinate the certification process for catechists according to Diocesan directives.	1 2	3	4 5
6. I participate in Diocesan catechetical events.	1 2	3	4 5
7. I involve parents in catechetical programs.	1 2	3	4 5
8. I schedule liturgical events involving catechists, students and parents.	1 2	3	4 5
9. I assist catechists in preparing liturgies.	1 2	3	4 5

10. I take time for professional reading and growth.	1	2	3	4	5
C. Supervision					
1. I oversee and guide all secretarial work for Faith Formation.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I assist catechists in their assigned responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I oversee the instructional process including classroom supervision.	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation					
1. I prepare my self-evaluation instrument for the formal evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I evaluate catechists annually using the Diocesan instrument.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I conduct annual evaluations of catechetical programs to determine if goals and objectives are being met.	1	2	3	4	5
Communication					
1. I communicate with the pastor and staff information about catechetical programs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I hold regularly scheduled staff meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I use various means to inform parents of children's progress (e.g. bulletin notices, letters, telephone calls and/or conferences).	1	2	3	4	5
4. I make use of the resources available from the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation.	1	2	3	4	5

_____   _____

Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation   Date

Instrument for Evaluation a Parish Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation

Qualities	Weak		Strong
1. Practices the Catholic Faith.	1 2	3 4 5	
2. Knows and supports the teachings of the Church.	1 2	3 4 5	
3. Shows concern for ongoing personal growth.	1 2	3 4 5	
4. Maintains positive relationships.	1 2	3 4 5	
5. Affirms others through leadership.	1 2	3 4 5	
6. Empowers others to use their talents.	1 2	3 4 5	
7. Holds Diocesan certification as Director of Religious Education/Faith Formation.	1 2	3 4 5	
8. Earns hours toward Diocesan certification yearly.	1 2	3 4 5	
Specific Responsibilities			
Program Development			
1. Is aware of catechetical needs of the parish.	1 2	3 4 5	
2. Views parish catechetical needs with a family perspective.	1 2	3 4 5	
3. Uses Diocesan guidelines in designing programs.	1 2	3 4 5	
4. Follows parish policies in developing goals and objectives.	1 2	3 4 5	
5. Designs sacramental preparation programs involving students and parents.	1 2	3 4 5	
Administration			
A. Management			
1. Organizes and maintains the Parish Office of Faith Formation.	1 2	3 4 5	
2. Implements Diocesan policies.	1 2	3 4 5	
3. Implements approved parish policies.	1 2	3 4 5	
4. Prepares a budget for catechetical programs.	1 2	3 4 5	
5. Administers the approved budget.	1 2	3 4 5	
6. Keeps files updated.	1 2	3 4 5	
7. Maintains the resource center.	1 2	3 4 5	
8. Cooperates with other parish organizations.	1 2	3 4 5	
9. Sends annual reports to Diocesan Office of Faith Formation as requested.	1 2	3 4 5	
B. Leadership			
1. Recruits catechists and other staff persons.	1 2	3 4 5	
2. Supports catechists.	1 2	3 4 5	
3. Provides in-service for catechetical staff.	1 2	3 4 5	
4. Coordinates the certification process at parish level according to Diocesan directives.	1 2	3 4 5	
5. Participates in Diocesan Catechetical events.	1 2	3 4 5	
6. Involves parents in catechetical programs.	1 2	3 4 5	
7. Schedules liturgical events involving catechists, students, and parents.	1 2	3 4 5	

C. Supervision	
1. Facilitates the instructional process including the supervision of the catechists in their teaching.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Assists catechists in carrying out assigned responsibilities.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Oversees the instructional process including classroom supervision.	1 2 3 4 5
Communication	
1. Communicates with the pastor and staff information about catechetical programs.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Holds regular staff meetings.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Keeps parents informed about children's progress.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Uses Diocesan resources.	1 2 3 4 5
Evaluations	
1. Prepares self-evaluation instrument for the formal evaluation.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Evaluates the catechists annually using diocesan instrument.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Conducts with catechists an evaluation of programs to determine if catechetical goals and objectives are being met.	1 2 3 4 5

_____   _____

   Pastor   *Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation

Date _____

*Signature of the DRE/CRE does not mean that he/she agrees with the evaluation, only that he/she has seen the results of the evaluation

Self-Evaluation Instrument for a Catechist

Name: _____ Parish: _____ Grade Level: _____

Specific Responsibilities					
1.Class Planning	Weak				Strong
a. I cooperate with the DRE in implementing the goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I follow the Diocesan Curriculum Guide.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I observe procedures for use of resources.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I preplan with the DRE for the use of Diocesan Resources.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I make written requests to the DRE for classroom supplies.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I prepare weekly lesson plans.	1	2	3	4	5
2.Classroom Management					
a. I am punctual for class.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I notify the DRE when I will be absent or tardy.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I keep an attractive, orderly teaching area.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I greet students as they enter the classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I establish routine procedures for the instructional process.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I set simple, clear, minimum rules of discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I follow through and I am consistent on rules of discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I am firm and kind with students.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I leave teaching area in order.	1	2	3	4	5
3.Instructional Procedures					
a. I begin and end each lesson on time.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I have the attention of all students.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I present new material clearly and interestingly.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I review previous lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I relate new material to previous learning.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I use a variety of methods.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I use audiovisual to reinforce, enrich, or review material.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I summarize each lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I make appropriate assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
j. I evaluate each class session.	1	2	3	4	5
k. I show enthusiasm and interest in teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
Relationships					
a. I cooperate with the parish DRE.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I attend catechists' in-service at the parish level.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I attend catechists' in-service at the Diocesan level.	1	2	3	4	5

d. I inform parents of their child's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I contact parents when special needs arise/	1	2	3	4	5
f. I work with other organizations for total parish effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I am sensitive to the various family structures.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I follow directives of the pastor and/or DRE especially in planning liturgies and other sacramental programs.	1	2	3	4	5

_____

Signature   Date

Instrument for Evaluating a Catechist

Name: _____ Parish: _____ Grade Level: _____

QUALITIES	Weak				Strong
1. Practices the Catholic Faith.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ministers to the Parish.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Supports the teachings of the Catholic Church.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Shows concern for personal growth.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Maintains positive relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Holds Diocesan certification/working toward it.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Relates well to young people, in assigned age level.	1	2	3	4	5
SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES					
1.Class Planning					
a. Cooperates with DRE in implementing goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Follows Diocesan Curriculum Guide.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Observes parish guidelines for use of resources.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Preplans with DRE for the use of Diocesan resources.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Makes written requests to DRE for classroom supplies.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Prepares weekly lesson plans.	1	2	3	4	5
2.Classroom Management					
a. Is punctual for class.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Notifies DRE when she/he will be absent /tardy.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Keeps an attractive, orderly teaching area.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Greets students as they enter the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Establishes routine procedures for instructional process.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Sets simple, clear, minimum rules of discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Follows through and is consistent in rules of discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Is firm and kind with students.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Leaves teaching area in order.	1	2	3	4	5
3.Instructional Procedures					
a. Begins and ends lesson on time.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Has the attention of all students.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Presents new material clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Reviews previous lesson.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Relates new material to previous learning.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Uses a variety of methods.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Uses audio visuals.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Summarizes lesson.	1	2	3	4	5

i. Makes appropriate assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Evaluates class session.	1	2	3	4	5
k. Shows enthusiasm and interest in teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Relationships					
a. Cooperates with parish DRE.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Attends catechists' in-service at parish level.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Attends catechists' in-service at Diocesan level.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Informs parents of their child's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Contacts parents when special needs arise.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Works with other organizations for total parish effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Shows an awareness of different family structures.	1	2	3	4	5

_____

Director of Faith Formation

_____

Catechist*

_____

Date

* Signature of catechist does not mean he/she agrees with the evaluation but indicates he/she has seen the evaluation results.

Appendix III

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

Developmental Characteristics: The Three Year Old

Characteristics for Three- through Five-Year-Olds from: Union City School District in Kansas

With People

Self
- Still plays alone most of the time
- Is egocentric (mostly involved with own self)
- Is age of "doing"

Family
- Has "we" feeling with mother; is independent other occasionally
- Likes to relive babyhood
- Does small chores about the house

Others

- Begins to accept suggestions
- Tends to establish social contacts with adults; imitates adult behavior
- Begins friendships with peers, with discrimination against others in group
- Friendships are of short duration

Development Physical Coordination

- Not well-developed; small-muscle activities such as cutting, tying, coloring in pre-drawn lines are difficult. "Draws" crudely
- Tapers off in growth with accompanying decrease in food intake; feeds self (slowly) and dawdles with food
- Runs, jumps, hops on one foot, climbs stairs with alternative feet
- Dresses and undresses self somewhat, but still wants or asks for help
- Walks on balance beam, rides a tricycle
- Stands on one foot for a short time
- Enjoys participating in and listening to music
- Is a great "doer"

Emotional and Social

- Gains security in "routines" (same people, same activities, same times) May have a short attention span if uninterested Begins to test limits set by others
- Learning to make choice between two alternatives Plays with modeling clay, blocks, art materials likes to dramatize
- Enjoys finger plays, dramatized songs, moving around and other activities

Intellectual and Language

- Understands language and follows directions more accurately.
- Learns rote counting and some letters

Moral

- Depends on family to provide sex role models, esteem, sense of security, direction for physical safety, family values and goals, control of aggression

Developmental Characteristics: The Four Year Old

With People

Self
- Is assertive, boastful
- Shows pride in achievement
- Is energetic to the point of adult exhaustion
- Wants to find out things
- Is becoming more independent

Family
- Expresses caring behavior for others; beginning strong feelings toward family and home
- Learns family expectations

Others
- Plays cooperatively with peers; may need fresh ideas
- May have preconceived ideas of what or with whom to play
- Challenges adults by asking questions. needing more supervision and testing limits
- Develops qualities of leadership
- May have an imaginary companion (20-50% do)

Development

Physical
- Has more highly developed motor skills (can throw a ball, is learning to catch it)
- Is highly competitive
- Runs, jumps, climbs with more confidence; walks on balance beam with ease
- Uses eating utensils easily
- Dresses independently when given manageable clothing (zippers, large buttons, elastic waistbands)
- Large and small muscle coordination is increasing
- Has increased physical energy
- Small muscles are better developed. Likes to print capital letters; uses modeling clay; makes cookies

Emotional and Social
- Tries to gain attention; shows off
- When disappointed, expresses displeasure loudly or through aggression; can tolerate some frustration
- May be more fearful (strange circumstances, darkness, aloneness)
- Likes to play with other children in a small group or with another child
- Begins to develop a sense of humor (riddles, jokes, nonsense words)

Intellectual and Language
- Increases in language; likes to talk
- Asks why and how questions and really listens to the answers
- May have an imaginary playmate, either human or animal
- Visually discriminates some shapes and colors
- Shows interest in books and printed words. Likes some stories over and over again

Moral
- Is learning to distinguish between right and wrong
- Is learning to separate from parents and function independently

Developmental Characteristics: The Five Year Old

With People

Self
- Seeks approval; avoids disapproval of adults
- Is self-assured and conforming
- Is generally dependable

Family
- Feels rather secure in the family
- Receives sex role expectancies from parents

Others
- Shows preference for children of own age and gender
- Has protective attitude toward younger siblings
- Enjoys sustained cooperative play
- Faces new demands upon entering school; admires teacher; eager to learn
- May have imaginary companion

Development

Physical
- Handles self well in bathroom routines
- Eats well; handles utensils well
- Has good body control; can throw and catch a ball; climb, jump, skip with coordination
- Dresses self, can tie shoes
- Jumps rope, walks in a straight line, rides a two-wheel bike.
- Physical skills are important with peers
- Can draw simple geometric figures and shapes
- Better small muscle and eye-hand coordination; cuts and pastes, less difficulty when coloring with pre-drawn lines

Emotional and Social
- Tends to be obedient, cooperative, desires to please
- Friendly; begins to be empathetic
- Spends more time on projects (painting, building)
- Brags about new accomplishments and skills
- Tends to have frequent but short-lived quarrels
- Expresses feelings freely, often in extreme form (fear, joy, affection anger, shyness, jealousy)
- Likes projects; prefers small group; can play alone

Intellectual and Language
- Speaks in full sentences, using clauses and idioms
- Still may have trouble pronouncing some sounds or letter combinations
- Discriminates beginning sounds, phonic differences and similarities, understands rhyming, enjoys playing with words
- Asks serious questions and wants honest answers
- Differentiates some between truth and make-believe
- Relates past and present events
- Understands more language than is able to use
- May use language aggressively Loves stories
- Can remember sequences of numbers, letters and more than two ideas
- Is an eager learner

Moral
- Shares and takes turns
- Is cooperative in cleanup routines if approached in a cooperative way
- Is able to give more thought to judgments and decisions
- Is relatively truthful

Developmental Characteristics: The Six Year Old

Characteristics for Six- through Nine-Year-Olds from:
Grapevine-Coffeyville Independent School. District, Grapevine, Texas

Physical Development

- Perpetual motion, squirming while sitting, gesturing while talking, runs, tumbles, throws and catches
- Gaining control of fine motor activities
- Enjoys testing muscle strength and skills. Loves to skip, run, dance
- Developing a good sense of balance
- Can catch balls, tie shoelaces, manage buttons and zippers
- Sloppy, in a hurry
- Noisy in a classroom
- Developing the ability to copy designs and shapes
- Learning to distinguish left from right
- Engages in oral activities - chews pencils, fingernails, hair

Social and Emotional Development

- Beginning to think about how they look to others; self-conscious
- Moody; friendly and enthusiastic at times, and rebellious and irritable at others
- Wants to make friends, but can be bossy and not understand why friendship is rebuffed
- Can be very competitive
- Fascinated by rules
- Sometimes a "poor sport" or dishonest, may invent rules
- Sensitive to criticism; thrives on encouragement Strong desire to perform well, do things right
- Generally enjoy caring for and playing with younger children
- Tends to prefer playmates of the same gender
- Can be helpful with chores
- Has a strong need for love and attention from parents and teachers
- Determines what is good and bad based on parents' and teachers' opinions
- Beginning to develop a moral sense (understanding honesty)

Intellectual Development

- Views things as right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- May reverse printed letters
- Increased problem-solving ability
- Attention span still short, but long enough to enjoy more involved stories
- Loves to ask questions

- Learns best through discovery and active involvement with people and materials
- Interested in real life tasks and activities; wants to make real jewelry, take real photographs, create real collections
- Extremely rapidly expansion of speaking and listening vocabulary
- Can begin to understand time and days of the week
- Begins to understand past when tied closely to the present
- Sometimes two children play and talk together but carrying on separate monologues
- Uses language and words to represent things not visible

Developmental Characteristics: The Seven Year Old

Physical Development

- Differences in size and abilities of children may affect self-concept
- Large muscles in arms and legs more developed than small muscles
- Learning to use small/fine muscles
- Long arms and legs may give gawky, awkward appearance
- When tired, may not want to rest
- Sometimes tense
- Many physical hurts, real and imagined

Social and Emotional Development

- Touchy; may say or think, "Nobody likes me"
- Loves to talk, even exaggerate
- Works hard to please teachers, parents and other adults
- Sensitive to adult evaluation
- More independent, but still relies heavily on teacher
- More emphasis on fairness
- Likes structure; dislikes changes in routine
- Compares self to others; can be self-critical
- Establishing friendships becomes very important, although they often lack the skills necessary to do so
- Views things as right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with little middle ground
- Seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs

Intellectual Development

- More serious and less impulsive than six-year-olds
- Realizes there are many things to be learned, leading to less confidence than earlier
- Begins to reason logically and organizes thoughts coherently
- Most thinking is done about actual physical objects; has difficulty handling abstract reasoning
- Often makes decisions based on influence of others Instead of by reasoning
- Develops more skill in reading
- Wants to assume more responsibility
- May reverse printed letters (b/d)
- Speaking and listening vocabulary expanding at a rapid pace
- Likes to collect, organize and sort things
- Longer attention span
- Learns to evaluate what they do
- Needs closure, wants to complete assignments

- Likes to work slowly
- Wants work to be perfect; erases constantly
- Needs manipulatives to learn effectively
- Likes to know how things work
- Egocentric, but beginning to understand others' perspectives

Developmental Characteristics: The Eight Year Old

Physical Development

- High energy
- Enjoys rough and tumble games, as well as team sports
- May be physically daring
- Fine motor skills showing increased speed and smoothness
- Some write with tiny letters and artwork becomes more detailed
- Large muscles in arms and legs more developed than small muscles
- Large differences in size and abilities of children may affect the way they get along with others, how they feel about themselves and what physical activities they do
- Enjoy testing muscle strength and skills
- Good sense of balance

Social and Emotional Development

- Begins to define self-based on certain attributes or achievements, such as "I wear glasses"
- Can become self-conscious based on how they believe they look to others
- Establishing friendships is important, although they may lack skills to do so
- Emergence of a sense of humor - telling jokes
- Less dependent on adults and more dependent on peers
- Begins to question authority and test limits
- Often over-estimate abilities
- Interested in rules and rituals
- Generally play with own gender
- Strong desire to perform well, do things right
- Find criticism and failure difficult to handle
- View things as right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with little middle ground
- Need a sense of security in groups, organized play and clubs
- Friendship groups may be larger
- Generally enjoy caring for and playing with younger children

Intellectual Development

- Concrete Operations Stage of Thinking is solidifying. Can reason logically about actual objects and organize thoughts coherently. Cannot handle abstract reasoning well unless it relates to real experiences
- Learn best through active, concrete experiences, but see books as sources of information; reading may become a major interest
- Developing a longer attention span
- Enjoys collecting, organizing and classifying objects and information
- Enjoys imaginative play - skits, plays, puppet shows
- Likes groups and group activities

- May reverse printed letters (b/d)
- Enjoys planning and building
- Speaking and listening vocabularies are expanding rapidly; talkative
- Increased problem-solving ability
- Interested in magic and tricks
- Learning to plan ahead and evaluate what they do
- When something is suggested, may say, "That's dumb" or "I don't want to do that."
- Beginning to see and understand the perspectives of others
- Listens well, but are so full of ideas cannot always recall what has been said
- Like to explain ideas - may exaggerate
- Engrossed in activity at hand; love to socialize at the same time
- Industrious; often works quickly
- Basic skills begin to be mastered; begin to feel a sense of competence with skills

Developmental Characteristics: The Nine Year Old

Physical Development

- Girls generally ahead of boys in physical maturity
- Improved coordination and reaction time
- May have poor posture, lots of habitual movements - fingers in hair, slouching, picking nails
- Stomach aches, headaches, and leg pains common
- High energy, often playing to the point of fatigue Inconsistent appetite and sleep patterns

Social and Emotional Development

- Enjoys being a member of a club
- Increased interest in competitive sports
- Learning to take responsibility for his/her own actions
- Begin to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings; sees adult inconsistencies and imperfections
- Peer conformity in dressing is important
- May begin to be interested in the opposite sex
- Self-aware
- Concerned about being right or wrong, being fair, may complain about fairness issues
- Have great need to be in a group, but are also individualistic
- Need to be in control of some choices
- May become deeply attached to a best friend
- Can be sullen and moody.

Intellectual Development

- Concrete Operations Stage of Thinking is solidified for most. Can reason logically and organize thoughts coherently. Most thinking is done about actual physical objects. Cannot handle abstract thinking well unless they are related to direct experience
- Showing signs of being more responsible, inner directed, an independent worker
- Appreciates being trusted
- Interested in different types of reading: fiction and non-fiction, magazines, how-to book
- May develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- Better able to understand concepts
- Becoming less egocentric and able to understand perspectives of others; better understanding the concept of "audience" when writing
- Less interested in fantasy; more involved in the real world
- May have problems with increased homework demands
- Age of negatives: "I can't," "boring"
- May be less imaginative than at earlier grades

Developmental Characteristics of Adolescents

It is helpful for adults ministering with youth to be aware of the developmental characteristics of young people at various stages in their life. Of course, the following descriptions are "broad brush" pictures of young people. It is also important to remember that development does not occur uniformly within ages or even within individuals.

YOUNGER ADOLESCENTS

10 - 15 years of age

Physical
o are in a period of rapid change
o are developing secondary sex characteristics and mature reproductive systems
o are sensitive to physical changes and confused over sexual identity
o body image greatly influences self-image

Cognitive
o begin abstract thinking
o base reasoning on possibilities, not only on experience
o use a more complex decision-making process
o develop reflective thinking
o tend to be self-conscious and critical
o begin to base behavior on abstract thinking
o are often idealistic, argumentative, and self-centered

Identity
o want to belong
o begin self-questioning

o distance self from childhood (family, parental figures) and identify with peers
o seek limited independence and autonomy

Moral
o reason morally at conventional level
o resolve dilemmas on the basis of expectations outside of self, such as peers, laws and significant adults

Interpersonal
o see peer-group identification and friendship as important
o value friendships based on mutuality, trust, and loyalty

Faith
o reflect an affiliative style of faith
o desire active involvement and are open to doing service
o depend on the community for the content and expression of their faith
o begin to define their own image of God and explore a personal relationship with God