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INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

The Parish Faith Formation Handbook explains and clarifies the policies and practices that will shape the catechetical ministries of our diocese for years to come. The diocesan Office of Faith Formation has prepared this handbook for you. The staff of this office has worked collaboratively with many other departments in the diocesan administration, the Children's' Faith Formation Advisory Council, the Adult Faith Formation Network and key catechetical leaders at the parish level. This book is the result of nearly two years of collaborative work. It is now ready to serve you and your colleagues in the formational ministries across our diocese.

This handbook presents new policies and standardized terminology for catechetical ministries. In particular, the book outlines a revised listing of the various leadership positions for parish catechetical ministries, along with the prerequisites and responsibilities for each. It is my intent that the parishes of our diocese learn and follow these guidelines and policies, especially regarding the qualifications for catechetical leaders.

I urge you to receive this handbook with gratitude and study it with care. I hope that every parish in the diocese will explore and benefit from the profound, comprehensive, and practical information that is found in this handbook and that you will refer to it often as you look to the coming year and to the future that lies beyond. I pray that it will be a valuable resource as you plan and develop catechetical programs for the community you serve. Pastors, catechetical leaders, catechists and volunteers who serve in related ministerial roles will find practical information and helpful support.

In my 2005 pastoral letter, "*Learning, Living and Loving our Faith*," I set forth a vision for Faith Formation in the Diocese of Orange that focuses on adult faith formation, while strengthening our formational ministries for children, teens and families. This focus remains a high priority for me and for our local Church. We are at a crossroads in the life of the Church and our response to the call for stronger, more consistent, more effective faith formation efforts will determine whether the Church flourishes or withers under our collective leadership.

In the video that introduced *"Learning, Living, Loving Our Faith,"* I invited ministers and viewers "to take the next step." This handbook is an important step for our diocese and will help you to take the next steps in your own area of faith formation ministry.

May this moment be a turning point for the Church of Orange as we increase our efforts to build a stronger, more knowledgeable, more committed, and more faithful Church. As always, my prayers are with you in your ministry.

The Most Reverend Tod D. Brown
Bishop of Orange

INTRODUCTION TO HANDBOOK

The Parish Faith Formation Handbook is an important resource tool for those involved in catechetical ministry in the Diocese of Orange. This edition replaces the 1995 edition of the *Religious Education Handbook*. It contains vital information along with guidelines, policies and resources that pertain to catechetical ministry in a parish setting.

Each catechetical leader will be able to go online and download the most up-to-date version of the Parish Faith Formation Handbook to become familiar with and follow the guidelines and policies it contains. The distinction between POLICIES, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES is important.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines describe current reflections on the direction of the larger Church with regard to the works of Evangelization and Catechesis. This content is intended to create a bridge between the official guidance documents and the realities of our local Church.   They indicate faith formation practices that are based on the experience of catechetical leaders and are highly recommended for implementation. These are contained in the main section of the handbook.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures identify expectations of the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation. Because of their importance, they are located in a separate section of the handbook. Many of the policies are derived from Canon Law, requirements set by the California Catholic Conference, conditions set by diocesan insurance and pension plans, and county, state and federal legal codes. It is essential that these policies be implemented in Parish Faith Formation programs at each ministry site in the Diocese.

RESOURCES

This section provides resources, templates and formats that currently correlate with the above Guidelines, Policies and Procedures. Many have been developed from pastoral practice over time. Others are a response to specific issues that may arise. They are chosen for inclusion in the handbook because of their effectiveness and adherence to professional standards. They are located in the appendix in the back of the handbook and are identified in the text by this symbol ☞.

ESSENTIAL CHURCH DOCUMENTS & ABBREVIATIONS

Many sections of this handbook make use of citations from relevant church documents. The titles and abbreviations for these documents are listed here. This handbook is not intended to replace these but to support them for local application. Each quotation from these documents will be set apart in a text box.

CCC	*Catechism of the Catholic Church*
CCL	*Code of Canon Law*
CCP	*Creating a Catechetical Plan: A How-To-Do-It Resource*
CG	*California Guidelines for Obtaining the California Catechist Certificate or California Master Catechist Certificate*
CGTM	*Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*
CIC	*Code of Canon Law, New English Translation*
CWVL	*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*
CT	*On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae)*
DMC	*Directory for Masses with Children*
EJA	*Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching on the Economy*
EN	*Evangelii Nuntiandi – On Evangelization in the Modern World*
GDC	*General Directory for Catechesis*
GIRM	*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*
GMD	*Go and Make Disciples – A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*
LEM	*Lay Ecclesial Ministry – The State of the Questions*
MFGH	*Many Faces in God's House*
NAB	*New American Bible*
NDC	*National Directory for Catechesis*
OHWB	*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*
RCIA	*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
RTV	*Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*
SDL	*Sons & Daughters of the Light*

NURTURING THE SEEDS OF FAITH

CATECHESIS AND EVANGELIZATION

The message of Pope Paul VI, *On Evangelization in the Modern World* was issued ten years after the close of Vatican II and is still inspiring much thought and activity in the Church. In this document, evangelization is defined as "bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself." (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 10)

At its essence are two equally important elements:
1. the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and
2. the response of the person in faith.

Pope John Paul II spoke of the new evangelization as a "new springtime" and has invited people everywhere to open wide the doors to Christ. "The new evangelization," he says, "seeks abundance by proposing the message of Christ with faithful originality to those who have already heard the proclamation of the Gospel, but who have fallen into routine, grown cold, or turned away from participation."   (*Redemptoris Missio*, #30, 1990)

Catechesis is so central to the Church's mission of evangelization that if evangelization were to fail to integrate catechesis:
- **Initial faith aroused by the original proclamation of the Gospel would not mature**
- **Education in the faith through a deeper knowledge of the person and message of Jesus Christ would not transpire**
- **Discipleship in Christ through genuine apostolic witness would not be fostered.**

Catechesis nurtures the seed of faith sown by the Holy Spirit through the initial proclamation of the Gospel. It gives growth to the gift of faith given in Baptism and elaborates the meaning of the sacraments. Catechesis develops a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ, encourages more profound incorporation into the Church, and nourishes Christian living. It encourages discipleship in Christ and instructs in Christian prayer.   NDC, 22

Evangelization and Catechesis are intimately linked. Catechetical leaders can be vigilant for opportunities to reawaken the faith of those who have fallen into routine, grown cold, or turned away from participation.

"Catechesis is an ecclesial ministry that calls both individuals and the community to conversion. This call is not just to those joining the church for the first time, but it is a lifelong continuing summons to transformation of life to every member of the community. Catechesis calls for a holistic change that affects the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of life. It is a continuing call to recognize that life is a death-resurrection process in which the community and each member experience both the joys and pains of rebirth in Christ."   *The Prophetic Spirit of Catechesis*, Mongoven, 2000

Catechesis strives to lead all persons to a deep and fully developed faith. The U.S. Bishops emphasize that **adult faith formation is a priority** and the prototype for all catechetical activity.

> Catechesis "includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life." CT, 18

THE PURPOSE OF CATECHESIS

The purpose of catechesis is to assist each person in developing faith that is living, conscious and active.

> "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion intimacy with Jesus Christ." GDC, 80

Catechesis shapes informed disciples to carry out the Church's missionary call to transform the world. Catechesis addresses this fundamental task in the following ways:

Catechesis must shape informed disciples...

- by faithfully communicating the knowledge of the faith
- by calling the believer to conversion which leads to transformation
- by inviting the believer to prayer and spirituality
- by encouraging the conscious celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments
- by fostering a spirit of community and active participation in the life and mission of the Church
- by promoting action on behalf of justice.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CATECHESIS

The National Directory for Catechesis lists nine characteristics of catechesis. These provide a foundation for the development of catechetical ministry in the Diocese of Orange.

> **"The Word of God contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition is the source of the fundamental criteria for the presentation of the Christian message. The presentation of the Christian message:**
> - **Centers on Jesus Christ**
> - **Introduces the Trinitarian dimension of the Gospel message**
> - **Proclaims the good news**
> - **Comes from and leads to the Church**
> - **Protects the historical character**
> - **Seeks enculturation and preserves the integrity and purity of the message**
> - **Offers the comprehensive message of the Gospel and respects its inherent hierarchy of truths**
> - **Communicates the profound dignity of the human person**
> - **Fosters a common language of faith."** NDC, 25

INTER-CULTURAL AWARENESS

The Diocese of Orange is an inter-cultural reality. Catechetical leaders need to make every effort to appreciate and respect the variety of cultures within the Diocese. Religious education programs will benefit from the use of bilingual textbooks and program materials, whenever these are available. Providing for parent communication in the native language of the people is essential. When a parish is served by multiple coordinators, representing various cultures, regular and frequent communication and cooperation will lead to a greater sense of collaboration. As a result, calendars, parent meetings, liturgical prayer, the use of space, and resources can be shared in a way that best meets the needs of the various cultural groups. This will provide a foundation for building community and a stronger sense of unity throughout the parish.

Our God-given human diversity challenges all Catholics to achieve ecclesial integration, "to discover ways in which we as Catholic communities, coming from diverse cultures and ethnicities, can be one Church."   **Many Faces in God's House**, Introduction

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The Gospel is intended for every people and nation; it finds a home in every culture. Those who proclaim the Christian message must know and love the culture and the people to whom they bring the message in order for it to be able to transform the culture and the people and make them new in Christ.   NDC, 17

In the Fall of 2008 the General Assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops agreed to grant five task forces the authority to tackle issues including cultural diversity in the church as priority initiatives through 2011. Their work is to identify best practices and develop models to pastor multicultural parishes, especially those with a growing Hispanic population, and invite various cultures in the Catholic community to collaborate in addressing issues and developing initiatives that affect the whole church.

It is essential that Catechetical Leaders collaborate with parents and ministerial leaders of the various cultures to identify best practices and develop models for faith formation in inter-cultural settings. To respect each other's understanding of his or her own humanity and faith experience, and recognize that experience as valid, requires a radical openness. It is helpful to spend time in inter-cultural social and family settings and to discover ways to learn and worship together. Catechetical Leaders need to be active participants in addressing needs, as they arise, in a culturally sensitive manner. In addition, they are called to be leaders in bringing about a truly inter-cultural conversation—the context of true community. See additional resources in **Appendix ☞ Tab #2.**

PARISH CATECHETICAL PLAN

DEVELOPING A CATECHETICAL PLAN

> **The Diocese of Orange requires each parish to develop a written, comprehensive catechetical plan by August 15, 2013.**

The National Directory for Catechesis (NDC) mandates that every diocese and parish develop a systematic plan for the ministry of catechesis. In order to fulfill this mandate the Diocese of Orange will assist parishes in developing a Catechetical Plan that is consistent with the diocesan plan. Using the resources available, the Diocese will schedule practical work sessions, beginning in the Fall of 2010, which will assist parishes with the various steps in the process.

It is the role of the Pastor, in collaboration with the Catechetical Leader, Adult Faith Formation Director, Catholic School Principal, Youth Minister and any other coordinators to work together in developing a parish-wide plan that integrates all aspects of faith formation. The ultimate goal is for each community to go about the task of catechesis in a more thoughtful and systematic way.

> **The NDC suggests how the plan will be developed and what shape it will take. It is important that the following characteristics be included in each plan:**
> - **Articulate a clear understanding of the fundamental mission of the Church and major objectives to advance its mission**
> - **Analyze the social, cultural, ethnic, and religious landscape of the diocese and parish**
> - **Assess the catechetical needs and available resources**
> - **Develop long and short term goals**
> - **Identify concrete strategies to reach goals**
> - **Create conditions for utilizing the strategies identified**
> - **Establish a budget based on stewardship principles**
> - **Review and evaluate biennially**
> - **Restate goals and strategies when necessary**   NDC, 9

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING A CATECHETICAL PLAN

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) publishes a workbook *Creating A Catechetical Plan: A How-To-Do-It Resource* by Fr. Bob Duggan. Written in 2006, the workbook provides a clear, straightforward process, broken down into practical steps and worksheets for accomplishing this task.   It is available at www.ncea.org.

The University of Dayton offers a 3-week on-line seminar *Designing a Parish Catechetical Plan*. Visit vlc.udayton.edu and click on *Calendar* to find out when this seminar will be offered. See **Appendix ☞ Tab #3** for outline of seminar.

CATECHETICAL METHODS

"Circumstances demand that catechesis should adopt widely differing methods for the attainment of its specific aim: education in the faith ... The variety in the methods used is a sign of life and a resource."

Catechesi Tradendae, 51

Most parishes will use more than one method for faith formation. To choose the appropriate methods, the pastor and catechetical leaders start by identifying the specific needs of the people, paying careful attention to the religious, cultural, educational, and economic makeup of the community. These are then "matched" with the most effective methods for meeting the identified needs. Regardless of the chosen catechetical methods, the Sunday worship experience remains the center of parish life – the source and summit. The catechetical leader challenges families to make Sunday Mass their first priority.

METHODS FOR ADULTS

Adult catechesis should be the organizing principle, which gives coherence to the various catechetical programs offered by a particular parish.

GDC, no 275

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us suggests three goals for Adult Catechesis:
> Goal 1: Embrace the invitation and challenge of an ever-deepening faith in Jesus.
> Goal 2: Promote and support active membership in the Christian community.
> Goal 3: Call and prepare adults to act as disciples in mission to the world.

According to chapter seven in the NDC, the major tasks of adult catechesis include the following:
- To promote formation and deepening of life in the risen Christ through sacraments, prayer of the Church, works of charity and justice, retreats and spiritual direction
- To promote evangelization as the means of bringing the Good News to humanity
- To educate toward the development of an informed moral conscience
- To clarify religious and moral questions
- To clarify the relationship between the Church and the world, especially in light of the Church's social doctrine
- To develop the rational foundations of the faith and demonstrate the compatibility of faith and reason
- To encourage adults to assume their baptismal responsibility for the Church's mission and be able to give Christian witness in society
- To develop creative ways to interest and encourage adults to take advantage of various programs of enrichment and spiritual development being offered

Whatever method is chosen for adult catechesis, it is always a basic organic formation in the faith that includes a serious study of Christian doctrine integrated with formation in Christian living. Effective adult catechesis relates the content of faith to life experiences.

NDC 48 A, 4

There are several ways to provide effective programs for adults in the Catholic community.   The Diocese of Orange offers networking meetings every other month, along with resources and support for the following:

Intergenerational Catechesis (Whole Parish Catechesis) promotes faith formation as an ongoing and lifelong process that can be supported by intergenerational learning, interaction, and service. Whole parish catechesis presumes a connection with the assembly at weekend liturgies. It gathers intergenerational groups of households and individuals for prayer, meal-sharing and event-centered formation. Additional resources are available in **Appendix ☞ Tab #4**.

Bible Study is essential for every parish. Knowledge of scripture lays the foundation for following Jesus. While some people are ready for more advanced study which is available in the Biblical Institute from the Diocesan Institute of Pastoral Ministry (IPM), there are still many people filling the pews who need to be invited to a non-threatening, non-judgmental experience of learning the most basic information. Several good Catholic bible study programs, based on respected, up-to-date biblical scholarship are available for preview in the diocesan Library/Media Center. Depending on the need, there are resources for small discussion groups on a particular topic or book of the Bible. In addition some groups prefer to prepare for or reflect back on the Sunday readings. A list of approved resources is available in **Appendix ☞ Tab #5**.

Small Christian Communities (SCC) are a powerful vehicle for adult faith formation, providing opportunities for learning, prayer, mutual support, and the shared experience of Christian living and service to Church and society. By their very nature, SCC's have been tied to the everyday life and concrete realities of their members. In their various forms, these small groups provide genuine relational support to people in living their faith in daily life. For additional resources go to **Appendix ☞ Tab #5**.

> We are called to create small communities of faith, which will become a means of evangelization of the gospel and a source of new ministries.
>
> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*

Retreats and Parish Missions help parishioners to take time out of their busy schedules to renew their relationship with God.   Southern California has a wealth of resources when it comes to retreat centers. Some parishes choose to have an "in-parish" retreat where people gather each day and return home at night to sleep. This can assist in keeping the cost down so that everyone can participate.

> The catechumenate is an inspiring model for all catechesis.   GDC, nos 59, 68, 88-91

A Parish Mission is another option. It is customary for the presenter to speak at all the weekend Masses prior to the mission. Depending on the needs of the parish and the availability of the speaker, missions can last anywhere from 3-5 days.

There are many good presenters for parish missions and retreats in the Diocese of Orange. Some parishes choose to bring in an individual or team known nationally, following the proper protocol for approval. This information is usually discussed at networking meetings held every

other month.   For additional resources and protocol for speaker approval see **Appendix ☞ Tab #5.**

Returning Catholics is an RCIA-like process for reaching out and inviting inactive Catholics to return "home" to the Church and resume an active practice of their faith. It is conducted in a non-judgmental support-group format. The process is both formational and informational. There are several programs to choose from in **Appendix ☞ Tab #5**.

On-line Classes offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere via the Internet. The Diocese of Orange is a partner in the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) at University of Dayton. The goal of VLCFF is to support the Church's professional ministry of religious education and faith formation in cyberspace. Classes are offered in seven cycles, which begin approximately every 8 weeks. Additional information is available on the university's website http://vlc.udayton.edu or in **Appendix ☞ Tab #6**.

John Roberto, founder of the Center for Ministry Development and president and founder of LifelongFaith Associates, an organization dedicated to nurturing faith growth for all ages and generations in the parish and at home, draws on a number of studies and sources to identify nine best practices that contribute to effectiveness in adult faith formation:

- "Pays attention to what is going on in the lives of adults and listens very carefully to what adults are talking about.
- Targets the times of transitions and change in the lives of adults.
- Is centered on spiritual growth processes in the lives of adults.
- Connects with the motivations and interests of adults.
- Is guided by learning goals and measures the outcomes of programs
- Utilizes a variety of program models to address the diversity of adult backgrounds, faith maturity, interests, and learning needs.
- Is designed using a variety of learning methods that respect the diversity of learning styles of adults.
- Creates hospitable learning environments and builds relationships among adults.
- Requires effective leadership in a variety of roles: pastors, a faith formation leadership team, and teachers."

Best Practices in Adult Faith Formation
by John Roberto and Cathy Minkiewicz in **Lifelong Faith** Fall/Winter 2007

METHODS FOR LATER YEARS

> **The practical experience, wisdom, attitude, and example of many older people make them especially valued gifts to the life of the Church.**   NDC Chapter 7, B

The catechetical life of the Catholic community includes adults of all ages. Over one quarter of Americans are age 50 or older. This sizable group has unique needs and requires specialized ministry. The most effective catechesis for older persons occurs within the context of a comprehensive program of pastoral care specifically developed for them.

> Such programs can be built on these fundamental principles summarized from the USCCB document *Blessings of Age.* People in their later years:
> - Are providers, not simply recipients, of pastoral care.
> - Help to identify their pastoral needs and decide how they are met.
> - Are as diverse as other generational groups, if not more so.
> - Need a mix of activities that connect them with each other as well as the larger faith community.
> - Exhibit the effects of their physical, emotional, mental, and social health on their spiritual health.
>
> While the faith community is especially concerned about meeting spiritual needs, it cannot ignore these other realities.

For many in this age group, catechesis helps develop an attitude of thanksgiving and hopeful expectation. For others who have not practiced their faith, catechesis becomes a new opportunity to rediscover the experience of God in their lives. Seniors provide some of the most effective catechesis for their own peer group.   However it is important not to completely isolate them from those in the other age groups that make up the parish. Opportunities such as Generations of Faith, mentoring teens in various parish ministries, or assisting with childcare for young mothers who desire bible study encourage senior members of the parish to stay connected and focused on the needs of the community. Additional information is available in **Appendix ☞ Tab #7.**

> The pastoral activity of the Church must help everyone to discover and to make good use of the role of the elderly within the civil and ecclesial community, in particular within the family. In fact, "the life of the aging helps to clarify a scale of human values; it shows the continuity of generations and marvelously demonstrates the interdependence of God's people. The elderly often have the charism to bridge generation gaps before they are made."   Familiaris Consortio, 27

METHODS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The purpose of a parish young adult program is to attract and involve the young adult population, welcoming them into the life and spirit of the parish community as adults. For many, this be a new experience and will help them to see themselves in a new context. For this reason, it should be a structured process in which healthy maturation of the faith can occur.

The phrase "young adult" refers to persons from ages 18 - 39. In order to offer age-appropriate programs and activities, the Diocese of Orange approaches this age range as two groups:

YA 20's (18-28) Most often members of this group are attending college, discerning vocation, and experiencing new work settings.

YA 30's (25-39) Members of this group often reflect a desire to seek support for their relationships, professional development and spiritual life.

Young adults undertake numerous developmental tasks that can be described in four areas:
- developing personal identity
- pursuing relationships
- finding meaning in work
- establishing an adult spiritual life

To help young adults deal with the issues listed above, ministry for this age group can help to make or strengthen several important connections:
- Jesus Christ, through formation, spiritual direction, and vocation discernment.
- The Church, through evangelizing outreach, invitation to participate in life-giving prayer and worship, and pastoral care.
- The mission of the Church in the world, through the formation of a Christian conscience, education, development of leaders, and work for justice.
- A peer community, through activities for single young adults, programs to assist the newly married, and support for families with young children in their need to be actively involved in the parish

> Pastoral care for young adults requires that parishes be a home for young adults where they are personally touched in their faith journey. Parish leaders need an awareness of life patterns, transience, and mobility of young adults. Those who work with them will need an approach that is nonjudgmental yet challenging.   *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, pg 27

Parishes are encouraged to identify young adults who reside in the parish and select several with leadership potential to work as a team with the Diocesan Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Ministry. Starting with a needs assessment, the YA team can match needs with available resources. The Diocese provides opportunities and activities such as training, sports leagues, service, justice and advocacy opportunities, mission trips, YA events, and other interactive experiences. Further information is located in **Appendix ☞ Tab #8**. Parishes might find it helpful to cluster when providing services to young adults. At the very least, when an event is planned, an invitation can be extended to the young adult community in parishes throughout the Diocese.

A comprehensive approach to Catholic Young Adult Ministry shares its main characteristics with those of youth ministry, listed in the section that follows.

METHODS FOR YOUTH

Youth Ministry serves young people of high school age. Ministry with, for and by adolescents works with an ever-changing population in constant transition. In *Renewing the Vision*, three goals are articulated:

> Goal 1: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
> Goal 2: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
> Goal 3: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.
>
> *Renewing the Vision* pgs 9-15

While many programs can assist the youth minister in this work, the ministry is essentially relational. No one program or strategy can fully address the three key goals above. Flexible and adaptable program structures that provide both formal catechesis as well as social interaction will ensure the development of a ministry that attends to the needs and life situations of today's young people, their families and communities. For additional resources go to **Appendix ☞ Tab #9**.

> **A comprehensive youth ministry program, whether it is based in a single parish or represents the cooperative efforts of several parishes, includes the dimension of structured or formal catechesis.**   NDC 53, B, 6

In the work of evangelization and catechesis, successful models of youth ministry always include opportunities for adolescents to be involved in the following:

- small groups
- large groups
- retreats
- service
- extended trips and activities
- liturgy

> Human development and growth in faith is a lifelong journey. Effective ministry with adolescents provides developmentally appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content, and processes to address the unique developmental and social needs of young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families.
>
> *Renewing the Vision* p 20

Renewing the Vision names eight components of comprehensive youth ministry:

- Catechesis
- Justice & Service
- Evangelization
- Advocacy
- Community Life
- Leadership Development
- Pastoral Care
- Prayer & Worship

Sometimes sacramental preparation is incorporated within youth ministry. This can provide an important core experience and allow an opportunity for youth to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. It is essential to recognize that youth ministry and sacramental preparation are distinct from one another.

METHODS FOR EARLY ADOLESCENTS

As children enter into the early teen years, addressing their developmental needs becomes essential in providing an effective formational ministry. Grades 7 and 8 are a transitional time between childhood and adolescence. Not yet ready for high school, young adolescents need a structured combination of social interaction, content, service and prayer. Several publishing companies have materials appropriate for this age group. Some are set up as mini-courses and others follow a school model. Approved options are available to preview in the Diocesan Library/Media Center. See a list of resources in the **Appendix ☞ Tab #10.**

> **School-age children enter a world wider than the family. They should receive formal and systematic catechesis in which the content of faith and the experience of Christian life are presented authentically and completely. This means that parents, pastors, catechists, and teachers need to cooperate closely to ensure that the catechesis offered children is consistent with Christian values lived in the family. The most important task is to provide, through the witness of adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith.** NDC, 48

In 1989, the Carnegie Corporation of New York issued *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, a landmark report, based on ten years of research, which recognized the need to strengthen the academic core of middle schools and establish caring, supportive environments which value adolescents. In 2000, Carnegie issued an in-depth update of the 1989 report - *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*. For the past 20 years Carnegie has endeavored to synthesize the best available knowledge and wisdom about young adolescents and to consider how families and other pivotal institutions can meet young people's human needs for healthy development. It recommends the following:

- *Social Support Systems.* Although there is no substitute for caring parents, young people can still thrive if a group steps in to meet their developmental needs.

- *Adult Mentoring.* A fundamental need of young people is for a stable, supportive bond with caring adults who can help them prepare for social roles that earn respect, direct them to needed resources, and encourage them to persist in education.

- *Peer-Mediated Counseling and Peer Tutoring.* Education and health-oriented programs led by trained, supervised peers can be a credible source of knowledge and advice to youth.

- *Life Skills Development.* Adolescents who learn certain basic skills will be able to solve problems with human relationships, develop healthy lifestyles, cultivate intellectual curiosity, access the social systems they need, and meet the demands of the workplace.

The Office of Faith Formation offers *Crossover*, a curriculum that meets the needs of this age group. A copy of this curriculum will be given to any parish that participates in the Early Adolescent Summer Training Program.

This low-cost, highly effective option is based on a ratio of one adult per every 5-8 students, working as a team, to facilitate this experiential program. Addressing the developmental needs of young adolescents, the program uses religious content to help them understand the current reality of their lives. It comes complete with student handouts and teaching plans with permission to duplicate for parish purposes.

METHODS FOR CHILDHOOD:

School Model (SRE) is taught in parish classroom. There are ordinarily 15-20 children per class with one or two teachers and/or an assistant. This model includes the use of a textbook series approved by the Diocese. For a listing of approved texts see **Appendix ☞ Tab #11**.

Religious Education Classes in the Home are necessary when a parish does not have adequate facilities for classes.   A variation of the school model, classes taught in the home use a textbook series approved by the Diocese. Class size is smaller (8-10 students) and less formal. Some parishes choose this because of the benefits of small group learning.

Partnering with Parents is a method of coaching parents to teach their own children. The parents' materials for each lesson are emailed ahead to parents. Parents and children then gather in a large room at tables. The Catechist leads the parents through the session by introducing a concept or activity and then giving parents time to work with their own child. Sessions last about an hour. To see plans for preparing for sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation (restored order) go to www.growingupcatholic.com. Additional resources are available from www.pastoralplanning.com. An alternative way of using this technique is to have parents and children meet monthly at the parish for mentoring, and then work at home on the remaining materials.

Lectionary-Based Catechesis can be offered in a school model or intergenerational format. This method integrates catechesis with the ongoing life of the parish community at Sunday Eucharist. The church year and the lectionary, around which the lessons are created, tell the story of the Paschal mystery, the heart of Christian teaching. The curriculum builds on the foundation of the Sunday Gospels. Worksheets and leaflets on the Sunday readings are also available and can be used as a supplement to an approved textbook series to bring the two methods together. For a list of resources see **Appendix ☞ Tab #11**.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based approach to the religious formation of children that is rooted in scripture and the liturgy of the Church. Children gather in an *atrium*, a room containing materials that focus the child's attention on key scripture passages or liturgical moments. After a brief presentation by the catechist, the children are invited to work with the materials on their own.   In an atrium, the child can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and working with it in various ways, e.g. placing wood figures of sheep in a sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, setting sculpted apostles around a Last Supper table, or preparing a small altar with the furnishings used for the Eucharist. For additional information go to the CGS national website at www.cgsusa.org. For a list of resources see **Appendix ☞ Tab #12**.

Home School/Parent Catechist is an approach chosen by parents who prefer to instruct their own children in a family environment. It is centered in the home and emphasizes the importance of family members' participation in the lifelong process of catechesis. Parents are required to fill out the Home School Registration Form, use the same approved textbook used in the parish religious education program, and meet with the Catechetical Leader at least annually. For additional information, see the section of the handbook titled *Evangelizing Parents through Support and Formation*.

Safe Environment (all models): Regardless of the model chosen, catechetical leaders must follow diocesan policy as well as the guidelines offered by the Offices of Risk Management and Safe Environment to ensure the safety of children.

METHODS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Part of the diversity found in parishes is the presence of persons with special needs. While mainstreaming is encouraged, there are reasons for separating those with special needs due to their limitations or the limitations of the volunteer catechist. For a list of resources see **Appendix ☞ Tab #13**.

The following summary of NDC guidelines may prove helpful

- Catechesis can best serve the needs of persons with disabilities when they are adapted in content and method to each individual's particular situation.
- Specialized catechists can help persons with disabilities interpret the meaning of their life and give witness to Christ's presence in the local community in ways they can understand and appreciate.
- Sharing resources, personnel, and funding at the deanery level offers significant advantages in the catechesis of persons with disabilities.

> Although providing such services is challenging to parishes and dioceses, the Church owes persons with disabilities her best efforts in order to ensure that they are able to hear the Gospel of Christ, receive the sacraments and grow in their faith in the fullest and richest manner possible.
>
> NDC, Chapter 7, no. 4.

PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY IN A PARISH SETTING

LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY

In 1995, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a reflection on the Apostolate of the Laity entitled *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*.

> *Lay ecclesial ministers are professionally prepared men or women, including vowed religious, who are in positions of service and leadership in the Church."*
>
> LEM, pg. 11

CATECHETICAL LEADERSHIP

Chapter eight of the *National Directory for Catechesis* presents an overview of the role and responsibilities of a parish catechetical leader. The NDC lists seven main areas:

> 1. **Overall direction of parish catechetical programs for adults, youth and children.**
> 2. **Planning, implementation, and evaluation of parish catechetical programs.**
> 3. **Recruitment, formation, ongoing development, and evaluation of catechists.**
> 4. **Implementation of diocesan and parish catechetical policies and guidelines, including areas of catechist certification and supervision and administrative policies related to negligence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and the safety and protection of minors.**
> 5. **Collaboration with pastor, other parish ministries, and appropriate committees, boards and councils.**
> 6. **Assistance in liturgical planning.**
> 7. **Attention to personal, spiritual and professional development.** NDC, 8

The broad range of ministerial and professional skills and competencies needed by an effective catechetical leader can be learned and developed. The National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) has published the *National Certification Standards for Professional Parish Directors of Religious Education* defining the necessary personal, theological and professional competencies.

In the Diocese of Orange, catechetical leaders are professional ministers who, under the supervision of the pastor, are responsible for all or a particular aspect of the parish catechetical program. The National Directory for Catechesis makes this responsibility clear.

> **"The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader."** NDC, 8

One of the most effective ways to develop candidates for catechetical leadership responsibility, when possible, is through a process of formation that includes a degree of mentoring. Ideally, an individual might be identified for development as a Coordinator, Director or Youth Minister two or three years prior to placement.

This development process can occur while the candidate works as a program volunteer or subsidiary employee in the parish's faith formation ministry. This allows the candidate to benefit

from the expertise and wisdom of the current catechetical leader and learn about the parish community. The mentor can assist the identified candidate in several ways:

       [1] to meet the professional, educational and certification standards,

       [2] to learn about the pastoral and demographic realities of the parish and

       [3] to manage the transition in a way that will maintain program stability and continuity.

TITLES AND DUTIES FOR PARISH CATECHETICAL LEADERS

Policy 1001.2 contains titles used for Catechetical Leaders in the Diocese of Orange. Consistent use of professional titles and distinctions allows a common terminology and understanding of catechetical roles and responsibilities throughout the Diocese. Each parish can configure its catechetical leadership in a way that is effective in meeting parish needs, yet consistent with other parishes in the Diocese. For best results, a pastor might conduct a needs assessment process in collaboration with a committee of competent parishioners, before determining which title and role can best serve the needs of the parish. Staff members from the Office of Faith Formation are available to assist pastors in this determination.

The following guidelines are offered to assist pastors in determining the most appropriate position titles for local use. The distinction between these titles is based on several criteria:

- the needs and resources of the parish
- the scope of responsibility articulated in position description
- the qualifications, experience and education of the individual hired

The table below offers detailed specifications for each of the approved positions along with the proper title to describe each one. Clarity in the job description is essential in conveying the responsibilities of any given position to the catechetical leader who will fill it. Sample job descriptions are included in **Appendix ☞ Tab #14**.

APPROVED TITLES FOR PARISH CATECHETICAL LEADERS
IN THE DIOCESE OF ORANGE

TITLES	Pastoral Associate - PA	Director of Parish Faith Formation - DFF Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry - DYYA	Director of Catechetical Ministry – DCM Director of Adult Faith Formation – DAFF Director of Youth Ministry – DYM	Coordinator of Religious Education Eucharist Coordinator Coordinator of Early Adolescence Coordinator of Youth Ministry Confirmation Coordinator
Supervision	A generalist, responsible to Pastor within an overall pastoral vision that is comprehensive. May include direction of Formational Ministries in the parish.	Responsible to Pastor for overall vision and direction of all Faith Formation and/or Youth & Young Adult Ministry in the parish.	Responsible for two or more areas of faith formation in the parish i.e. Elementary Religious Education, Family Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult, RCIA, or Whole Parish Catechesis.	Responsible for one aspect of faith formation in the parish i.e. Elementary Religious Education, Sacrament Preparation, Youth Ministry, Confirmation, RCIA, or Whole Parish Catechesis
Administration	May supervise DCM, DFF, DYM, CRE, CYM, CC, or any combination of these, depending on the structure of the pastoral leadership.	Supervises catechetical ministers and support staff. Completes diocesan census reports by deadline.	Recruits, supervises, orients, trains, and evaluates volunteers. Completes diocesan census reports by deadline.	Under supervision of the Director, recruits, supervises, orients and evaluates volunteers. Submits data to Director for diocesan census reports.
Safe Environment	Oversees those who are responsible for safe environment training and follows diocesan standards	Takes leadership role in administering diocesan safe environment policy and oversees communication of information to the Diocese.	Adheres to diocesan safe environment policies by conducting background checks, training and parent communication.	Supports diocesan safe environment policies and provides what is necessary to meet them.
Financial Responsibilities	May prepare or oversee preparation of budget for Parish Faith Formation.	Prepares annual budget for supervisory areas.	Assists in preparing budget and works within the approved budget for areas of responsibility.	Works within the budget established for areas of responsibility.
Communication	Communicates regularly with the pastor, attends parish staff meetings and collaborates with other staff members on parish initiatives. Attends applicable diocesan and deanery meetings	Communicates regularly with the pastor, attends parish staff meetings and collaborates with other staff members on parish projects. Attends diocesan and deanery meetings	Communicates regularly with Pastor (or DFF/PA), attends parish staff meetings and collaborates in appropriate catechetical programs. Attends diocesan and deanery meetings	Communicates regularly with Pastor (or DFF/PA), attends appropriate staff meetings and collaborates with other coordinators on catechetical programs.
Collaboration	Provides leadership and facilitates the various ministries in accord with their gifts and the needs of the parish faith community.	Facilitates communication among all catechetical staff members along with parents and adults in the parish.	Provides ongoing, clear communication with parents, prepares parent handbook, and promotes active parent involvement in program.	Provides ongoing, clear communication with parents
Classification	Full time position	Full time position	Full time position	Can be part time or full time position
Education Required	Masters Degree in Divinity, Pastoral Theology, Theology, or Religious Studies. Participates in ongoing formation.	Masters Degree in Theology, Pastoral Theology, Catechetics, Youth Ministry or Religious Studies.	BA in Theology, Religious Studies or related field or holds current Advanced Master Catechist Certification or Youth Ministry Certificate.	Basic Catechist Certification and complete Advanced Master Catechist Certification or Youth Ministry Certificate within three years from date of hire.
Experience Desired	Three years full-time experience in a broad range of parish ministry.	Five years experience in the various coordinator positions	Two years experience as a catechist and an additional two years as an assistant in some aspect of administration of the program	Two years experience as a catechist and one year as an assistant in some aspect of administration of the program

The Diocese of Orange strives to have professionally trained and well-educated catechetical leaders working in all parishes. Educational training and certification offer assurance of a clear awareness and working knowledge of the church's tradition as well as an understanding of catechetical methodology.

In addition to professional qualifications, a successful catechetical leader will be personally well matched for this ministry and compatible with the particular parish faith community. Discernment of the suitability of a candidate for this work requires consideration of the individual's spirituality and personality, intertwined in the mystery of the human person. These characteristics are the product of a person's culture, environment, education, experience and the action of grace. They include:

1. Practicing Catholic in good standing, living a lifestyle consistent with the Church's moral teachings.
2. A living, conscious, and active faith nourished by a regular pattern of worship and prayer.
3. Genuine love for other persons and the capacity to be present to them.
4. A demonstrated capacity for leadership and self-confidence with a collaborative leadership style.
5. A well-developed sense of Church and a respect for church leadership: parish, diocesan, national and universal.
6. Openness to the creative and prophetic Spirit working through self and others.

HIRING OF A CATECHETICAL LEADER

The Office Faith Formation is available to assist parishes with the hiring process to help ensure the selection of qualified professionals in catechetical ministry throughout the Diocese.   When a position becomes open, the pastor contacts the Office of Faith Formation. Please refer to **Policy 1001.3**, which contains additional steps to be followed in the hiring process.

How to Hire a Director of Religious Education, published by NCCL, is available for $6.95. This book provides a seven-step process for parishes to use when hiring and contains samples of job descriptions, interview questions, and questions to ask references.

Hiring for Youth Ministry from NFCYM also provides a step-by-step guide, practical tips, and reproducible handouts to assist in the hiring of a Youth Minister for $12.95.

These resources can be purchased through the Office of Faith Formation. You can email nhardy@rcbo.org, call (714-282-3060) or order them on-line directly from the national organizations.

COMPENSATION

The compensation of catechetical leaders is in accordance with guidelines set forth by the Diocese, the application of principles recommended in this handbook, and the Church's teaching on just wages.   The U.S. Catholic bishops affirmed this need for just salaries in their 1986 letter, *Economic Justice for All*:

> "The first line of attack against poverty must be to build and sustain a healthy economy that provides employment opportunities at just wages for all adults who are able to work."
>
> *Economic Justice for All* #196a

Current Salary Guidelines for Catechetical Leaders are regularly reviewed and updated by the Office of Faith Formation and reviewed by the Diocesan Office of Human Resources. Current Salary Guidelines are located in **Appendix ☞ Tab #15**.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

Catechetical leaders are accountable to the pastor, unless other arrangements have been agreed upon and specified in the job description. Competency and measurable performance in the following areas are essential characteristic of a successful candidate:

Communication
- Regular contact and appropriate communication with the pastor and the parish staff.
- Appropriate and regular communication with parents.

Management and Training for Catechists and Staff
- Preparation and training of catechists in Safe Environment procedures
- Motivation and encouragement of catechist participation in certification programs.

Program Oversight
- Knowledge and implementation of diocesan Safe Environment procedures for all volunteers, parents, and children.
- Regular and documented classroom observation of catechist performance
- Textbook selection (from diocesan-approved list)

Office Administration
- Management of resources
- Adherence to approved annual budget
- Maintenance of organized recordkeeping system, in accordance with guidelines outlined in this handbook.
- Accurate and punctual submission of diocesan and parish reports

In addition to regular reports to the pastor, pastoral council and other advisory groups, catechetical leaders are to conduct periodic self-evaluations and on-going evaluation of programs.

An annual, written performance appraisal by the pastor or his delegate, based on the job description, is required. This evaluation process can be helpful in identifying areas of strength and weakness. Each year, an updated plan can detail professional and programmatic goals for the coming year. Any needed improvements are to be discussed, documented, and incorporated into the plan. Both the pastor and employee sign the completed plan. The employee retains one copy and the other is placed in the employee's personnel file. For a sample evaluation tool, see **Appendix ☞ Tab #16.**

BUDGETING AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
Catechetical leaders are called to be good stewards of the money, resources, and facilities entrusted to their care.

Budgeting
In most parishes, preliminary budget work begins in January continuing until the proposed budget is submitted in March or April. This allows time for review and approval by the Parish Finance Council before submitting it to the Diocesan Finance Office by the April 30 deadline.

The proposed budget needs to be based on facts and well-researched projections. A sample budget planning worksheet is located in the **Appendix ☞ Tab #17.** The parish business manager can help develop or provide a system for recording and reporting expenditures. A monthly financial report is recommended to help with the accuracy of record keeping.

Receipts & Expenditures
While the Faith Formation Office in the parish must properly account for and credit fee payments, checks and cash should be turned in to the business manager and not retained in the Faith Formation Office. Catechists should not collect or handle cash. A policy (with security checks and balances) should be implemented to record and credit all cash receipts. Catechetical leaders are not to maintain separate accounts or checkbooks. All income and disbursements are to be made through the parish office in accordance with established procedures.

Program Fees
It is recommended that class and sacrament fees be set after consulting with parishes in the deanery. Consistent fees will help to discourage parents from "shopping around." Families who cannot afford the fees are never to be turned away from parish programs. An assistance request form can be used to document need. It is essential that fees, budgets and planned expenditures be reviewed and approved by the pastor or his designate.

PARISH FAITH FORMATION ANNUAL CENSUS

Participation in diocesan record keeping is an important professional duty of each parish catechetical leader. The statistics and data obtained from the annual census enable the Diocese to evaluate pastoral needs, determine program effectiveness and monitor changing trends.

Once the census is submitted it is tabulated electronically. The template for submission for the annual census is accessible on-line at https://www.rcbo.org/faithformation_census/index.php. Each year, the census form is accessible by December 1. The deadline for each parish to complete the census is January 31.

Information requested in the annual census includes:
- The number of children who:
  - Are enrolled at each grade level
  - Are enrolled in sacrament preparation programs
  - Have special needs
  - Receive individual religious instruction at home
  - Participate in Safe Environment training or whose parents sign a waiver
  - Take part in Youth Ministry programs
- The names of all volunteers, with the grade they teach, their certification status, and background check/safe environment status.
- The names and degree/certification status of professional staff working under the faith formation umbrella.
- The various programs offered for adults and the number of adults participating in each of the programs, including RCIA.

These statistics are compiled for diocesan records and annual audit. In reports to the Diocesan Executive Committee and the Children's Faith Formation Advisory Council, the Director of Parish Faith Formation submits an analytic report indicating notable trends and changing patterns. The observation and review of this data is useful in setting goals, articulating problems and planning programs

CATECHETICAL OFFICE RECORD KEEPING

It is the responsibility of the Catechetical leader to oversee the maintenance of an organized system of records and files in the Parish Faith Formation Office. These files are to contain appropriate student, staff and program information, some of which is requested in the census. A list of what is required for these files can be found in **Policy 2001.3.**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing professional development is an important component of the parish catechetical program. Professional development opportunities and ongoing ministerial formation help to keep the ministry and the minister updated, refreshed, and renewed. The parish and/or program budget includes funds for at least one class, workshop, or conference annually (**Policy 1001.4**). Areas of interest and particular programs can be investigated by the catechetical leader and submitted for approval by the Pastor.

> "The quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel."   GDC 234

Collaborative coordination with the larger community of the Church is an important component in program effectiveness. There is an annual meeting for Catechetical Leaders who minister to children and adults on the third Thursday of October. In addition, those who coordinate children's programs meet every other month September through May in their deanery groupings. The members set the dates and times for deanery meetings for the next year at the last meeting in the spring. You can view the meeting attendance **Policy 1001.5** in the policy section of the notebook.

Spiritual growth is an essential and necessary component of ministerial effectiveness. Each year, the Office of Faith Formation provides a Day of Prayer in January and a three-day retreat option for catechetical leaders. When possible, the parish assists with the cost of these opportunities in the annual budget. If a parish lacks sufficient means, the pastor or catechetical leader may inquire about financial assistance from the Office of Faith Formation. Catechetical leaders are not required to use vacation time for these annual retreats (**Policy 1001.6**).

The Institute for Pastoral Ministry offers a full range of adult faith development and ministry formation opportunities in the areas of theology, scripture, liturgy, and spirituality. The Office of Faith Formation offers workshops that keep catechetical leaders apprised of the best materials, methods, and latest developments in catechesis. These are communicated through the *Latest News* emails.

> **Every professional minister in the diocese "should continue his or her personal, spiritual, and professional development and participate in diocesan programs of in-service, training and formation, catechetical institutes, conventions, retreats, and accredited programs."**
> NDC, 54

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, AND HARASSMENT

This handbook contains policies, information and procedures, which are particular to the ministries of catechetical leadership. The Diocesan Office of Human Resources maintains and regularly updates a manual of diocesan employment policies entitled *In Service to the Body of Christ, A Handbook for Lay Employees in the Diocese of Orange.* All diocesan employment policies contained in that publication are also applicable to catechetical leaders (**Policy 1001.7**). No part of this handbook will be understood to exempt, supersede or replace any other employment policy of the Diocese.

> "The Diocese maintains a standard of conduct as a guide for its employees in an effort to ensure an effective level of service to the community it serves, and a work environment commensurate with its pastoral mission and ethics." Lay Employee Handbook, 32

The Diocese of Orange enforces strict policies regarding sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. *In Service to the Body of Christ, A Handbook for Lay Employees in the Diocese of Orange* contains details and procedures regarding these policies. Additionally each employee is required to sign an *Acknowledgment of Receipt* form for the ***Policy Against Sexual Misconduct for Lay Employees, Non-ordained Religious Woman and Men, and Lay Volunteers*** for the Diocese of Orange and agrees to abide by the terms of the policy (**Policy 1001.8**). The signed *Acknowledgement of Receipt* is kept in each employee's personnel file.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

The following list of theological, organizational, and catechetical skills needed by catechetical leaders is intended to assist parish faith communities to understand and define the needs and expectations which will guide their selection of personnel for position of catechetical leadership. While no two individuals will display the same level of proficiency in each of the listed areas, each catechetical leader should demonstrate strength in the following areas:

Theological Competencies

❑ Challenge people to understand and interpret their life (and faith) experience in light of Scripture and Tradition.
❑ Articulate an understanding of the person and mission of Jesus.
❑ Help members of the parish community articulate Catholic beliefs and sacramental practices.
❑ Reflect upon and explain the movement and work of the Holy Spirit in persons, parish, the larger Church, and in the world.
❑ Explain the foundational elements of the Second Vatican Council, particularly to catechists, parents, and other adult learners.
❑ Provide relevant and up-to-date Catholic Bible study opportunities throughout the parish.
❑ Present an overview of the Church's social teaching to catechists, parents, and other adult learners.
❑ Cultivate openness among members of the parish community to those of other faith traditions and practices.
❑ Describe the place of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and the saints, in the life of the Church.
❑ Help adult Catholics to understand the process of conscience formation and the application of moral teaching to real life situations.
❑ Develop in parish members and groups the capacity for theological reflection.

Catechetical Competencies

❑ Articulate a vision for catechesis based on the major catechetical documents of the Catholic Church
❑ Apply principles of human, faith and moral development to catechetical planning
❑ Utilize appropriate methodologies for each developmental stage.
❑ Make catechist formation a priority and implement a program of training in collaboration with IPM and other parishes in the deanery.
❑ Involve parents and families in the faith formation process.
❑ Use media and technology wherever appropriate.
❑ Encourage participation in service opportunities for all age levels and link these opportunities to peace and justice efforts.
❑ Understand and appreciate various cultural expressions of faith within the community
❑ Creatively integrate cultural expressions into programs, activities and liturgical celebrations.
❑ Provide opportunities for participation in prayer and communal worship.

Administrative Competencies

- ❑ Identify and call forth the talent and charisms of a variety of individuals to develop and sustain catechetical leadership in the parish.
- ❑ Create, maintain and evaluate programs, mission statements, and long-and-short term goals & objectives.
- ❑ Keep accurate records on students, families and catechists.
- ❑ Follow parish budget guidelines and stay within approved expenditures.
- ❑ Use technology where appropriate and helpful.
- ❑ Meet legal responsibilities and diocesan policies for Safe Environment and Risk Management
- ❑ Maintain professional confidentiality in dealings with parents and volunteers, as well as parish and diocesan staff members.
- ❑ Communicate with parents and staff members in a timely manner
- ❑ Plan, organize and manage one's time in relation to job priorities and responsibilities.
- ❑ Extend opportunities to groups and individuals when there are language differences
- ❑ Collaborate with other parish staff members and maintain professional ministerial relationships with parish ministry leaders, the diocesan offices, and colleagues in the field.

EVANGELIZING PARENTS
THROUGH SUPPORT AND FORMATION

The religious education of children and youth is the responsibility of parents, pastors, catechetical leaders, and the local parish community. Assisting parents with their part of this work requires a coordination of efforts throughout the parish. The Code of Canon Law outlines several important roles and tasks.

> Canon 226-2 - Because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian Education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the church.
>
> Canon 773 – Pastors of souls especially have the proper and serious duty of seeing to the catechesis of the Christian people, so that, through doctrinal formation and experience of the Christian life, the faith of the people may be living, manifest, and active.
>
> Canon 774 - The care for catechesis, under the direction of lawful ecclesiastical authority, extends to all members of the Church, to each according to his or her role. Before all others, parents are bound to form their children, by word and example, in faith and in Christian living.

In several of his encyclicals, Pope John Paul II challenged Catholic Christians to undertake a new evangelization of the world.   Catechetical leaders have many unique and significant opportunities to bring parents to a deeper sense of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

> **"I sense that the moment has come to commit all the Church's energies to a new evangelization. The Good News of Jesus Christ must be carried forth to every person so that it may penetrate the heart of each individual and renew the human race. The Church can spare no effort in leading all humanity to Christ…."**
>
> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio,* quoted in NDC, 17

Parents cannot teach their children what they do not know. They cannot pass on to them what they do not live. Those who bring their children to catechetical programs can be evangelized and catechized through the learning process in which their children are involved. Parents will benefit and the church will be enriched as parish communities develop effective methods for adult evangelization and catechesis as a component of ministry to children and youth (**Policy 2001.4**).

The goal of all catechesis is to recognize each person's vocation to be a disciple, to know what that means in terms of their personal mission, and to understand the church as the community of Jesus' disciples.

Parenting, in itself, is a ministry for which skills can be developed. Recognizing this is the first step to supporting the faith development needs of the parent generation. Parenting programs can be the foundation for a new level of connection with the parish. Such programs can meet an important need in the community.   See **Appendix ☞ Tab #18** for parenting program suggestions.

Quality hospitality and childcare are crucial to the success of pastoral outreach to parents. When the church recognizes the importance of this service, parents feel understood, affirmed and welcomed. This is a very effective way to build trust in parents. As a result, parents may become open to additional possibilities for their own growth in faith.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Ongoing and regular communication with parents provides a foundation of mutual trust. As a catechetical leader, it is essential to provided a simple, straightforward parent handbook either in booklet form or online (**Policy 2001.5**).

The parish parent handbook includes information about attendance policies, arrival and dismissal, supervision in the classroom, student safety, illness, accidents, and emergency procedures. With a handbook, parents will become knowledgeable of program expectations. If conflicts arise, the handbook will provide an objective reference and guide. See **Appendix ☞ Tab #19** for a sample Parent Handbook.

Catechetical leaders who chat with parents during breaks and visit with them before and after classes quickly learn what issues are important to them. Matching those needs with simple, straightforward, high quality educational and prayer experiences, outreach opportunities, and family-centered activities will continue to build and strengthen these relationships.

Regular communication will help to keep parents aware and involved. An annual calendar with important dates is foundational to parent communication. Parent meetings, special events, and program breaks are listed so that parents can plan ahead (**Policy 2001.6**). Many parents work outside the home. Family schedules are complex, crowded and busy with activities and work. Regular reminders of important dates will recognize the challenging demands that parents experience.

HOME SCHOOL WITH PARENT AS CATECHIST

Some families choose to provide religious education for their children at home. Even so, this effort cannot be effective if attempted independent of the parish. Each family is an integral part of the larger ecclesial community. The parish catechetical leader has a duty to serve home school families, and these families have a responsibility to present the faith in a manner that is consistent with the pastoral practice of the parish faith community. All religious education, even home school catechesis, is to be carried out in a way that builds unity within the Church.

Families that provide religious education for their children at home are required to register as a *home school religious education* family in their parish (**Policy 2001.7**). It is important that they purchase and teach from the same age-appropriate texts used in the catechetical program, in order to ensure their consistent conformity with the Church's teaching. Parents may choose to supplement this foundation with additional activities, prayer experiences, etc. All parish families are expected to participate in the parish Sunday liturgy each week.

Parents who wish to provide faith formation in the home have the responsibility to participate in catechist formation; basic catechetical certification is a minimum qualification for *home school religious education* (**Policy 2001.8**).

Catechetical leaders meet with home school children and their parents at least once each year to verify that the child is making adequate progress and grasping grade-level content. A simple chat with the child about the content of the textbook will help to determine the level of knowledge.

Faith formation is a responsibility shared by the whole parish community. Pastors, parents and catechetical leaders collaborate to ensure that the children/young people are appropriately catechized and prepared for first reception of sacraments. Parents involved in home school religious education are responsible for their child's participation in the immediate sacramental preparation (as required or approved by the parish.) Such preparatory activities may include: interviews for sacramental readiness, rehearsal for sacramental celebrations, appropriate initiation rites and retreats. Home school parents are expected to participate in all regular sacrament preparation parent meetings and required classes.

CULTIVATING MINISTERIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Professional ministers understand, cultivate and maintain relationships on many levels. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, professional organizations, diocesan offices and leaders, peers and colleagues, parochial leaders and ministers, faith formation staff, volunteer catechists and various constituencies within the parish community. Relationships in each of these groups can be significant factors in successful ministry. Each of these areas is addressed below.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Catechetical leaders in the Diocese of Orange are encouraged to belong to one or more of the following organizations and participate in their annual conferences:

National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) has been a leader in Catholic religious education in the United States since 1967. It is dedicated to bringing the teaching ministry of Jesus to every Catholic child, youth and adult. Its members represent the full spectrum of catechetical leadership: bishops, pastors, diocesan and parish directors of religious education, academics and publishers of catechetical materials. Today, it is the only independent national organization exclusively dedicated to serving the church's catechetical mission in the United States. For more information go to www.nccl.org.

National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors (NPCD) is part of the Department of Religious Education of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). Rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the NCEA is a professional membership organization that provides leadership, direction and service to fulfill the evangelizing, catechetical and teaching mission of the Church. NPCD was founded over 25 years ago to meet the needs of parish catechetical leaders. It supports members in their role of advancing the catechetical mission of the Church and enhances the professional development of parish catechetical leaders. For additional information go to: www.ncea.org/departments/npcd/

National Association of Catholic Youth Ministers Leaders (NACYML) is a professional, member-driven organization of ordained and lay ecclesial ministers dedicated to the field of youth ministry. It is open to adults who:
- view their role in youth ministry as a vocation,
- are committed to ongoing professional development and ministry formation,
- are connected to a Catholic parish, school, diocese, or youth serving agency,
- are dedicated to strengthening and supporting its members in their ministerial practice and professional development.

For additional information go to www.nacyml.org

National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA), whose mission is to drive excellence and growth in the ministry to and evangelization of young adults in their late teens, twenties, and thirties, married and single, in the Catholic Church. It encourages parishes and dioceses to create a bridge from adolescent faith to a fully integrated adult faith. The organization develops and delivers resources for training and networking those who minister with young adults in parishes, diocese, and Catholic organization across the country. www.ncyama.org

National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (La Red) is an inclusive association of Catholic organizations and pastoral ministers whose purpose is twofold:

- To promote the evangelization, holistic development, and formation of Hispanic Catholic youth and young adults in the United States
- To create a collaborative relationship of support and mutual mentorship among its members at the parish, diocesan, regional and national levels as well as with other institutions www.laredpjh.org

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE DIOCESE

Diocesan Bishop

> The bishop, as local apostle and *chief teacher of the faith* in his diocese, is entrusted with the management of catechesis in his particular Church. As the *chief catechist of the diocese*, the bishop ensures that catechetical goals and priorities are established, that the necessary structures exist, and that appropriate programs are designed, carried out, and evaluated.
> <div align="right">NDC, 59A</div>

Apostolorum Successores, published by the Congregation for Bishops in 2004, states:

> "Foremost among the different ministries of the Bishop is that of proclaiming the Word of God, as did the Apostles, announcing it with courage and defending the Christian people against error."
> <div align="right">Apostolorum Successores, 119</div>

> "Together with preaching, one of the Bishop's principal tasks is the promotion of an active and effective catechesis, providing for the different forms or catechesis in ways best suited to the needs of the faithful."
> <div align="right">Apostolorum Successores, 128</div>

Office Of Faith Formation

The Bishop of Orange directs catechesis through the Office of Faith Formation, thus giving a sense of unity among the various areas of catechetical ministry. The office is under the leadership of the Vicar of Faith Formation. The Associate Director of Faith Formation, the Diocesan Director of Parish Faith Formation, the Director of the Institute for Pastoral Ministry, and the Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Ministry collaborate to provide assistance, guidance and support to pastors and parish catechetical leaders.

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Mission Statement - Office of Faith Formation

The Office of Faith Formation proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ
by planning programs and supporting ministries which grow and strengthen
the Catholic faith within the Diocese of Orange. Its ministries include:

</div>

Adult Faith Formation	**Catholic Schools**
Institute for Pastoral Ministry	**Religious Education Programs**
Safe Environment	**Youth and Young Adult Ministry**

Through the efforts of this office, the Diocese provides a structure of meetings, professional development opportunities, workshops, and consultation. By frequent communication and regular gatherings, these individuals advise catechetical leadership of diocesan policy, guidelines and procedures.

Institute For Pastoral Ministry
The Institute for Pastoral Ministry (IPM) seeks to cultivate and support the ongoing formation of adults through spiritual, theological, and pastoral studies. IPM carries this out in the following ways:
- Certification of Catechists and Master Catechists through a series of adult learning classes and opportunities.
- Training adults to teach the Sacred Scriptures effectively.
- Preparing adults to minister with a deeper understanding of Catholic spirituality.
- Offering leadership formation for parish ministers.
- Facilitating development of a collaborative network among parish volunteers.
- Offering certificate programs through the Center for Religion and Spirituality of Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles), and the Center for Ministry Development (Hartford, CT).
- Sponsoring on-site program for a Master's Degree in Pastoral Theology through Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles).

Certification through IPM follows guidelines set forth by the California Conference of Catholic Bishops and is recognized in all dioceses in the state of California. The IPM Student Portal offers additional information, registration procedures and forms needed for the various areas http://www.rcbo.org/education/ipm/ipm.php.

Library/Media Center
The Diocese of Orange provides this resource to parish leaders and volunteers and anyone interested in deepening their knowledge of the Catholic faith. Books, periodicals, DVDs and videos in English and Spanish are accessible. Staff is available to assist with reference questions and individual consultations as requested.

An atrium, located in the Library/Media Center, provides a model of the room where the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* takes place. By visiting the atrium at Marywood, parishes will be able to view and copy materials, practice presentations, and show pastors and parents how this Montessori-based program operates.

Missions Office
The Missions Office of the Diocese of Orange promotes faith in Jesus Christ in mission lands throughout the world. Catechetical leaders are encouraged to contact the office to learn about the Church's worldwide missionary work through four Pontifical Mission Societies:
> The Society for Propagation of the Faith
> Holy Childhood Association
> The Society of Peter Apostle
> Missionary Union of Priests and Religious.

Catholic Relief Services www.crs.org provides justice education resources to parishes such as:
- Food Fast – a 24-hour hunger awareness program designed to engage teenagers in addressing the needs of their brother and sisters around the world. www.foodfast.org

- Operation Rice Bowl – challenges people to put their faith into action and walk in solidarity with neighbors in need around the world. It brings families, parishes, schools, and other faith communities together during the Lenten Season to pray, fast and give. http://www.crs.org/org.

The Missions Office helps parish leaders become informed about the Church's worldwide missionary work. This office provides information and resources, which can be used for mission promotion. It encourages all to participate in these efforts through prayer and sacrifice. More information is available at www.rcbo.org or by calling 714-282-3000.

Office For Worship
The Office for Worship assists the bishop in his role as principal liturgist of the Diocese and plans and coordinates liturgies at which the bishop presides. In addition, the director assists the bishop in approval of any renovations, remodeling or construction of churches or worship spaces.

The Office for Worship can assist anytime with general questions about the Liturgy. It serves as a resource to diocesan parishes, schools, offices and institutions regarding liturgical matters (music, sacramental celebrations, devotional practices and liturgical formation). In addition, the office works with diocesan parishes to implement the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), which includes teens, children and families.

Orange Catholic Foundation
The Orange Catholic Foundation is a nonprofit corporation intended to be a permanent source of funds supporting the religious and educational activities and ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Orange. The Foundation connects donors and beneficiaries, offering donors a way to support the works of Christ carried out in parishes, schools and diocesan programs and to support the education of seminarians and the educational and retirement needs of priests.

In the pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the American bishops describe the Christian steward as "one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord." Under the auspices of OCF, the Coordinator of Stewardship provides ongoing education, motivation, and invitation to stewardship as a way of life by providing practical support and tools to assist parishes as they facilitate the conversion of individuals, families, and parishes in sharing their abundant gifts with the Body of Christ.

A comprehensive catechetical approach in any parish will include the concept and practice of stewardship.

Respect Life, Justice And Peace
Through a strong network of Respect Life, Justice and Peace ministers, this office works to energize the people in the parishes of the Diocese to actively pursue the protection of all life, justice and peace. The office advocates for public policy that affirms a consistent ethic of life in conjunction with the efforts of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and the California Catholic Conference of Bishops (CCC). The office promotes programs that encourage prayer, education, pastoral care and advocacy. Each parish has a Respect Life Representative and a Justice and Peace Representative who, working with their pastor, coordinate and organize activities around the many issues related to the respect for life, justice and peace. Each Deanery sends one representative to each of the task forces. The Office of

Respect Life, Justice and Peace maintains a web page on the Diocesan website www.rcbo.org with information regarding upcoming events, Catholic social teaching, resources and organizations.

Risk Management Office
Risk Management is responsible for the overall safety of participants, parents, volunteers and employees. The office is dedicated to the safety of all who visit and use our facilities in the Diocese of Orange by reducing the frequency and severity of injury and accidental losses. This is done through a combination of loss prevention and control as well as the purchasing of insurance. For additional information, visit the diocesan extranet at www.rcbo.org and view the *Risk Management Quick Reference Guide*.

Safe Environment Office
The National Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was adopted in 2002 by all of the bishops in the United States. The Diocese of Orange has been faithfully complying with it since then. In January 2004, the bishops of the Diocese of Orange announced *The Covenant with the Faithful,* in which they reaffirmed their pledge to do all in their power to ensure that the sexual abuse crisis never happens again. The Safe Environment office oversees the implementation of this covenant by providing train-the-trainer programs for:

- A team from each parish to provide the Safe Environment training
- Those responsible for the annual Safe Environment training *Kids & Company*

The Safe Environment office maintains the schedule of fingerprinting sites and oversees the database for background checks for volunteers. This office receives the safe environment data collected in the Office of Faith Formation **Annual Parish Census** detailing the numbers of volunteers, teens, children and parents who have received Safe Environment training. For more detailed information, a complete booklet of policies and procedures *Your √ List for Background Screening and Safe Environment Procedures* is available on-line or from the Safe Environment Office at www.rcbo.org.

Relationships with Other Catechetical Leaders
The Diocese of Orange is divided into seven deaneries. (See diagram in **Appendix ☞ Tab #20**). The parish catechetical leaders in each of the seven deaneries meet together at least quarterly to coordinate policies, procedures, sacrament programs, registration fees, and calendars. These meetings also provide an opportunity to review diocesan projects and provide consultative input to the Office of Faith Formation. Each deanery has a representative on the Religious Education Council, which meets five times per year.

Youth Ministers are encouraged to work together in deaneries a minimum of twice a year to create an event, service component, or a prayer experience for youth in their parishes. Through this effort relationships between parishes will be strengthened and programs for youth that lack the resources of a youth minister will be supported.

Peer relationships with other catechetical leaders are the foundation for healthy ministry. The ability to come together for prayer, sharing, support, and fun surrounds the minister with a network of support. It can help to provide the balance needed to deal with the day-to-day stresses of parish ministry.

In addition to the deanery meetings the Hispanic and Vietnamese Catechetical Leaders have monthly meetings in their native languages.

RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE PARISH

Pastor

The pastor ensures that formation in faith is an ongoing, vibrant process, available to every age group, using effective methods and age-appropriate content. Pastors commonly hire a professional minister(s) who oversees and directs this effort.

> **"Pastors have the duty to provide catechesis; parishioners have the reciprocal duty to participate in and support the catechetical activities of the parish."**   NDC, 60

Parents

> "Parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice the Christian life by word and example."   New Code of Canon Law, Canon 774

It is essential that every parish catechetical program take into consideration the role of parents as "…the most influential agents of catechesis for their children." [CCC 2222-2226]. The formation given by parents precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.

It is essential that the catechetical staff provide parents with ongoing, appropriate communication that respects the dignity and supports the role of parents in the faith formation process. By providing convenient opportunities for adult catechesis, designed especially for parents, the catechetical leader will help nourish the faith of parents and support them in their effort to model and provide life-long formation for their children.

Catechists And Other Volunteers

Each volunteer will bring a unique blend of specific gifts and needs.   The catechetical leader works to develop relationships of mutual respect and support with all volunteers. Successful relationships with catechists and program volunteers are strengthened when catechetical leaders:

- identify clear and reasonable expectations through written volunteer job descriptions
- utilize a written volunteer agreement for all catechists, classroom aides, office assistants and other volunteers (Sample in **Appendix ☞ Tab #21**)
- conduct a getting-acquainted interview in which the person's gifts, skills, history and background are identified prior to the beginning of their service
- match the person's abilities with parish needs (discernment)
- communicate frequently and effectively. A well-planned orientation precedes all volunteer service. Frequent communication and periodic meetings will support and encourage volunteers. Such efforts will help volunteers to understand the overall vision of the program and thus have a wider context for their own personal contribution.
- provide a Catechist Handbook so that expectations and procedures are clear. **(**Sample in **Appendix ☞ Tab #22**)
- periodically assess how well the volunteer has been matched with the needs (evaluation).

Catechetical Office Staff

The Faith Formation office staff at the parish is often the first point of contact with parents. It is important that those who volunteer or work in this capacity be excellent ambassadors for the program. When families encounter the office staff, it is important that they experience a clear sense of welcome, hospitality, professionalism in addressing expressed needs, patience with questions, and understanding when things do not go as planned. The relationship is enhanced with well-defined and clearly communicated procedures. Anything said in the office needs to be treated with utmost confidence.

Parish Staff

Collaboration among catechetical leaders and other members of the parish staff is essential. Establishing excellent communication, providing helpful information and seeking input when planning will offer a foundation for mutually respectful relationships. When conflict arises, it is important to acknowledge and manage it in a healthy and appropriate way. Guidelines for management of conflict in the workplace are outlined in *In Service to the Body of Christ, A Handbook for Lay Employees in the Diocese of Orange.* Such efforts model Christ-like behavior and serve the mission of the parish well.

Parish School Principal

In parishes where a Catholic school is a part of the overall faith formation ministry, the principal and catechetical leader work collaboratively with the pastor to establish a common vision of total Catholic education. This cooperative relationship will ensure that the use of shared space, resources and equipment will best serve the needs of the entire parish. Coordination in scheduling can result in a creative and positive experience in the sharing of spaces. A user or group that leaves each space fully ready for the next is showing hospitality to their neighbors in the name of Christ and the faith community. Classroom teachers and staff, catechists and volunteers, children and parents all need to understand that space belongs to the whole community; all are welcome to its use in ways that promote good stewardship of materials and equipment.

Boards, Councils, and Committees

In some parishes, pastoral councils or education/religious education boards, committees or commissions may advise the pastor and/or catechetical staff on policies and procedures for parish catechetical programs. In some cases, board members may lack sufficient knowledge or expertise in these areas. Catechetical leaders can assist in educating members so that they might more intelligently participate in their advisory role.

> **"The parish is the preeminent place for the catechesis of adults, youth, and children."** NDC, 60

MINISTRY OF CATECHIST

> **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. The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens it.**
>
> NDC 54 B 8

Catechists receive and respond to a ministerial call, which comes from Christ through participation in the life of the Church. The response to this call includes willingness to give time and talent, desire to catechize others, and a commitment to their own lifelong faith formation.

> **Candidates should rise from within the community of faith, be invited to consider becoming a catechist, be known to the pastor, and prayerfully consider becoming a catechist.**
>
> NDC 55, B

Catechists proclaim Christ's message by:
- creating an environment where formation and information are integral
- providing age-appropriate materials
- basing class presentations on an understanding of faith development
- presenting the content of Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church

Catechists participate in efforts to build community by:
- affirming the gifts people bring to their family, church, and community
- modeling biblical hospitality which is sensitive to the social, familial, and cultural issues of individuals and/or groups

Catechists lead others to prayer and worship by:
- recognizing God's unique relationship with each individual
- providing opportunities to experience various forms of prayer and rituals which integrate life experience, cultural expressions and a growing relationship with God
- modeling sacramental life and faith-sharing

Catechists motivate people to serve others by:
- encouraging others to seek out ways to serve the human community, locally and globally
- committing to stewardship of time, talent, and treasure
- expressing the gratitude of the community for the service offered

CATECHIST FORMATION

Catechetical leaders have the privilege of serving as instruments of the Holy Spirit's call to discipleship. Parishioners who respond by volunteering as catechists are using their gifts for the building of the Reign of God. An important part of the ministry of the catechetical leader is the opportunity to lead, guide, nurture and assist those who are called to join this ministry by direction and mentoring.

It is essential that catechetical leaders understand and support the need for the ongoing formation of all who respond to this call. This formative work requires empathy, sensitivity and genuine concern for the personal and spiritual advancement of the volunteer. As in other areas of ministry, this formation is best achieved in the context of personal relationships.

As persons accept their call to catechetical ministry, the catechetical leader and team have the opportunity to build a relationship with each volunteer. Knowing volunteers by name, assessing their needs for formation, and designing supportive training to meet these needs are some of the ways to cultivate volunteer catechists.

The formation process starts with an interview. The catechetical leader can use this opportunity to guide catechists toward and through the process of catechist certification, which will build upon and deepen their call. It is the responsibility of the catechetical leader to monitor and support the progress of those catechists who are in the certification process, bring catechists together in fellowship and prayer, and instruct volunteers in the use of equipment and resources. Such efforts will help the catechist to be successful in their classroom, deepen their call to serve God's people and help to build an effective ministerial relationship. Affirmation, common prayer, and mutual support are also essential efforts that the catechetical leader can provide.

A parish Catechist Handbook, including procedures, guidelines and other resources, will complement the catechist formation process. Such a handbook may clarify policies about shared space in the parish while providing a good base for the thoughtful planning of each session.

Basic certification followed by ongoing formation is necessary for all catechists in the Diocese of Orange, whether they are volunteers or paid employees (**Policy 2001.9**). Every person who volunteers as a catechetical minister needs to be well prepared and supported in his or her work. The Diocese provides several ways to achieve this end.

- **The Institute for Pastoral Ministry (IPM)** regularly offers certification classes at Marywood and in parishes who request their assistance. Volunteers who attend these classes will have the valuable opportunity to meet and interact with others in the Diocese who are preparing for the same ministry.
- **The University of Dayton VCLLF** partnership for on-line classes can be used to complement in-person classes. This virtual learning opportunity can provide an additional method for individuals who are unable to attend a weekly class.
- *Echoes of Faith* is an option for those who are not able to attend basic certification classes and are not comfortable taking an online class.

California catechist certification is available to those who complete the certification process in the Diocese of Orange. In consultation with the Diocesan Directors of Catechetical Ministry, the Catholic School Superintendents, and the Directors of Youth Ministry, the California Catholic Conference (Roman Catholic Bishops in the State of California) has published statewide guidelines for Catechist and Master Catechist Certification. This set of standards

guarantees consistency in programming and allows mutual recognition of catechetical certification among the eleven archdioceses and dioceses located within the State of California.

In addition, every catechist who is certified in the Diocese of Orange is eligible for a California Catechist Certificate. Thus, a certified catechist or catechetical leader can work in any California diocese, provided the certification is kept current.

California Guidelines for Obtaining the California Catechist Certificate or California Master Catechist Certificate, recently revised, are available from the Office of Faith Formation or on line at http://www.cacatholic.org/index.php/links/guidelines-catechist.html.

PROTECTING CHILDREN
BY CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

To create and sustain a safe environment for children is a primary and basic responsibility for anyone working in catechetical leadership ministry. Child abuse, whether physical, psychological, sexual, or by neglect, can often be prevented through accurate information and understanding. The Diocese mandates the steps that catechetical leaders are to follow for background checks and Safe Environment training for all employees and volunteers.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a landmark document drafted and passed by the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States at their June meeting in Dallas in 2002. The document is a response to the sexual abuse crisis in the Church. It is their "Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal."

There are four focus areas:
- To promote healing and reconciliation with victims and survivors of sexual abuse.
- To guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors.
- To ensure the accountability of procedures.
- To protect the faithful in the future.

In order to protect the faithful in the future:

> "Dioceses will establish Safe Environment programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses will make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse."
>
> Article 12 *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

This policy, which mandates that every diocese create a safe environment for children and young people who pray, study and worship in our schools and churches, is the basis for the diocesan Safe Environment program.   It is very important that all Catechetical Leaders do their utmost to ensure the safety of every child and teen.

Volunteers having contact with children, and all paid parish staff are required to undergo a background check and to participate in Safe Environment training *__prior__* to beginning any volunteer ministry or employment. (**Policy 2001.10**) The requirements are spelled out in a booklet of policies and procedures entitled *Your √ List for Background Screening and Safe Environment Procedures.*   Copies of the booklet are available at www.rcbo.org or from the diocesan Safe Environment office.

Compliance for Safe Environment training must be updated or renewed every three years. In addition to the 2-hour class, regularly offered in parishes and at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, training is available on-line at www.shieldthevulnerable.org.

This program, available in Spanish and English, is for those who cannot attend a live class. Upon completion of the on-line program, a certificate will be available to print and bring to the parish. The current and most recent training certificate is kept in each volunteer's file.

Responsibilities of Catechetical Leaders for Safe Environment Programming:

What	To	When	Purpose
Safe Environment Training for children	All children registered in programs *(except when parents sign waiver)*	Annually in Fall completed prior to January census.	Train children to recognize and report inappropriate behavior
Provide background information, grade level outlines, and training dates for safe environment	Parents	Prior to Safe Environment training for children	Parents may opt out of this training for their children by signing a waiver. Waivers are kept on file until the child's 26th birthday.
Report on the number of children trained, by grade level	Faith Formation Office, via annual census	January 31 of each year	Proper record keeping at the diocesan level to prepare for audits
Provide a make up class for those children who were not in attendance when the training was first done.	Those children who missed Safe Environment training	Prior to March 1 *(when finished notify the SE office of the # of additional children trained)*. Update census figures with Office of Faith Formation	To ensure that all children receive this training.

The Safe Environment Office has access to the information reported on the Annual Faith Formation Census. It is crucial that all Safe Environment training for children be complete and records be accurate by the deadline of January 31 each year. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops annually audits compliance with this requirement.

REPORTING SUSPECTED SEXUAL ABUSE
To report suspected sexual abuse by clergy, religious or diocesan lay employees in a parish or school setting, call Child Protective Services and local law enforcement. In addition to reporting to authorities, the victim should be encouraged to call the toll free diocesan reporting line: 1-800-364-3064

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE
As an administrator, employee or volunteer in a public or private organization whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children, catechetical leaders and classroom volunteers **are required by California law to report child abuse and neglect**. (**Policy 1001.9**) When the victim is a child (a person under the age of 18) and the perpetrator is any person (including a child), they are required to report any reasonable suspicion of the following types of abuse:
- A physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means
- Sexual abuse, including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation
- Willful harming or injuring of a child with unjustifiable physical pain, mental suffering, or serious emotional damage, including willful infliction of cruel or inhuman corporal punishment, injury resulting in a traumatic condition or

neglect of a child by act or omission, harming or threatening to harm the child's health or welfare.

All diocesan employees and volunteers are required to follow diocesan reporting policy in the Policy Against Sexual Misconduct, Article 6.

Please see the condensed version of the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law in **Appendix ☞ Tab #23.**

SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES AND PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS
There are two aspects to the effective handling of emergencies: preparation and immediate action. This section recommends actions to help catechetical leaders become and remain prepared for various emergencies, should they arise.

Appendix ☞ Tab #24 includes a guide called "The First 30 Minutes." Catechetical leaders need to be familiar with these procedures in advance of any immediate need. It is strongly recommended that a list of volunteers and staff who have CPR and First Aid training be kept in the office. Ideally each deanery's catechetical leaders would plan and offer this training annually at one of the parish sites for volunteers and parents.

Emergency phone numbers need to be readily accessible on every phone and in every office, including the utility companies (water, gas, and electric). In the fall orientation process each year, it is important to familiarize the volunteers and children with basic emergency procedures through occasional practice sessions.

EARTHQUAKE OR FIRE PREPAREDNESS
Every parish or site in the Diocese has a plan to ensure that staff, volunteers, and children are aware of and properly trained in the emergency procedures. Included in the **Appendix ☞ Tab #25** is a Disaster Preparedness Check List showing supplies every parish should have on hand.

Fire
- All parish facilities are required to have a dependable and operative fire warning system that meets the California uniform fire code signal specification.
- All staff and volunteers need to be aware of fire drill procedures and evacuation routes (posted in each room).
- Periodic fire drills can be held during class time to familiarize the children with evacuation routes.

Earthquake
- Every parish is required to have an earthquake emergency procedure system with a building disaster plan for maintaining the safety and care of children, volunteers and staff. The plan ought to be communicated to all groups that use the facility. Appropriate supplies must be accessible and ready for use at any time.
- After an earthquake it is important to remain calm until clearance is given to move out into open space. Those who are uninjured would check for injuries, and ensure that no one touches downed lines or exposed wiring. Children need to remain in a designated open area until they are released to a parent or emergency contact.

The Office of Risk Management manages the property and casualty program for the Diocese of Orange, which includes liability, property, and workers' compensation insurance. This office provides Certificates of Insurance when ministries are contracting with an outside facility or transportation company for retreats or special events. Forms are available at www.rcbo.org under the **Employee Extranet**. To obtain a Certificate of Insurance from a vendor, please consult your parish business manager or the Office of Risk Management.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

Recently the Bishops of the United States invited all Catholics to a deeper relationship with Jesus and the Church through a renewed formation effort focused on Sacred Scripture, Sacraments, and Sunday Eucharist.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

The adaptation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* for children is found in the first chapter of the second part of the rite. It states, "*This form of the rite of Christian initiation is intended for children, not baptized as infants, who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age*" (252). The Christian initiation of children is similar to that of adults (253); however, the rite provides for adapted language, catechetical process, and ritual celebrations that are more appropriate for children. Therefore, the process for children of catechetical age envisions the following:

> **Process of Conversion:**
> The process of initiation "requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed." It will need to be adapted to the children's growth in faith, and to the catechetical instruction they receive."

> **Rites:**
> Initiation of children is marked by several steps, "the liturgical rites of acceptance into the order of the catechumens, the rite of election, penitential rites or scrutinies, and the celebration of the sacraments of initiation."

> **Parental Involvement:**
> The rite envisions that the child's parents or guardians are involved in the process. "The children's progress in the formation they receive depends on the help and example of their companions and on the influence of their parents." (254)

> **Parish Support:**
> In addition to the parents, the rite suggests that a peer group of the children to be baptized participate in the process as companions in the catechetical sessions and rituals. Sponsors would offer an additional form of support for children and their family, particularly if the family is uncatechized or has not been actively involved in the Church for some time. By the time of the Rite of Election, godparents should be selected for the children and should begin to take an active role during these rituals.

The rite envisions that all three sacraments of initiation be celebrated at the Easter Vigil. In the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate,* the United States Bishops make this directive clear: children of catechetical age "should receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the other catechumens." (18)

PREPARATION FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION

Children are first prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Grade 2, prior to preparation for first communion. As a sacrament of healing rather than of initiation, its preparation takes place in the context of the faith formation program or the Catholic school community so that parents, siblings and peers may participate in the celebration. For a list of approved materials for use in preparation go to **Appendix ☞ Tab #26.**

PREPARATION FOR FIRST EUCHARIST

Eucharist is a sacrament of initiation and as such is celebrated in the context of the parish, after age-appropriate preparation. The Diocese of Orange has determined that a minimum of two years' attendance in the catechetical program is required – one year of participation in the regular grade level program and the second year with specific preparation.

When preparing for first Eucharist, it is important that there be a single, unified program that respects the needs and diversity of all the families involved. The catechetical leader initiates the planning process, working closely with the pastor, Catholic school principal (if there is a school), and other appropriate parish staff to choose a methodology, curriculum, and establish the schedule of meetings, classes and celebrations. It is essential that the details of parent/family participation in the program be communicated in writing to parents well in advance of the start date (a minimum of three weeks).

Preparation for Eucharist can be an evangelizing moment in the life of parents, families and the parish at large. Each program ought to include an adult/parent formation component. Ideally, parents are coached to form their own children. The purpose is to prepare children and their parents for a lifelong journey of faith as Catholics.

Providing a welcoming, hospitable environment for each part of the preparation is crucial. Proper adult learning principles and a sound process will ensure a positive experience for all. Eucharist is a sacrament of initiation and as such is always celebrated with the larger parish community present. For additional resources and guidelines see **Appendix ☞ Tab #27.**

PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

In the Diocese of Orange, Confirmation is normally celebrated with teens in the sophomore year of high school after a two-year period of preparation. The preparation process reflects the developmental needs of people at this stage of life so that the celebration of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of each Christian will be vibrant and meaningful.

A well-formed preparation program for Confirmation will include the following components:
- Participation of parents and sponsors
- Candidates' attendance at Sunday Mass
- Candidates' involvement in the life of the parish community
- Catechesis to deepen knowledge and understand practices of Catholic faith
- Annual retreats
- Experiences of Christian service
- Spiritual guidance and mentoring
- Celebrating the Rites within the assembly

If a young person has not been participating in the catechetical program for two or more years, the parish can require an additional year of catechesis before preparation begins. This additional year would provide an opportunity to review Catholic Identity and practices before beginning sacrament preparation. Additional parish resources and guidelines for preparing young people for Confirmation are located in **Appendix ☞ Tab #28.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN

In 1973, the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome issued the *Directory for Masses with Children*. This document offers principles and guidelines for adapting the liturgy for children to enable them to take a more conscious and active part in liturgical celebration.

> "If the place itself and the nature of the community permit, it will be appropriate to celebrate the liturgy of the word, including a homily, with the children in a separate, but not too distant, room. Then, before the Eucharistic liturgy begins, the children are led to the place where the adults have meanwhile celebrated their own Liturgy of the Word." DMC, 17

The Liturgy of the Word for Children, as described above, is unique in that it is a part of the Liturgy and not a catechetical activity that takes place during the Mass. Ideally, it will be the work of both catechetical and liturgical leaders, so that the children's experience is one of worship that enlightens through Word and ritual. (See **Appendix ☞ Tab #29** for additional resources). The principles of good liturgy apply, including active participation, vivid symbols, and a clear connection with the main assembly through environment, song, and an atmosphere of prayer and worship.

The purpose of adapting liturgical celebrations to make them more accessible to children is always to lead the children to full, conscious and active participation in the Sunday liturgical assembly as they become able.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

BOOKS AND WORKBOOKS

Catholic Youth Ministry: The Essential Documents, St. Mary's Press, 2005. Available from www.smp.org.

Creating a Catechetical Plan: A how-To-Do-It Resource, NCEA, 2006. Available from www.nccl.org or www.ncea.org.

How to Create a Parent Handbook for your Parish Religious Education Program, NCCL, 2001. Available from www.nccl.org

How to Hire a Director of Religious Education – A Seven Step Process for Parishes. NCCL, 2002. Available from www.nccl.org

Hiring for Youth Ministry, A Process for Success, NFCYM, 2001. Available for $12.95 from www.nfcym.org

National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers serving as Parish Catechetical Leaders, Pastoral Associates, Parish Life Coordinators, NALM, NCCL, NFCYM, 2003. Available from www.nalm.org.

National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis, NFCYM, NCEA and NCCL, 2008. Available from www.nfcym.org.

Perspectives on Leadership and Catechesis, NCEA, 2001. Available from www.ncea.org.

Religious Education, Parish and Youth Ministry Legal Issues for Catechetical and Youth Leaders. NCEA, 2006. Available from www.ncea.org.

Renewing Catechetical Ministry, by Richard Reichert, Paulist Press, 2002. Available from the Paulist Book Store in Costa Mesa, CA $21.95

University of Dayton on-line program *VLCFF*, go to Vlc.udayton.edu

Your Rights in the Catholic Church, by Kevin McKenna, Ave Maria Press, 2006. Available from www.avemariapress.com

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Apostolorum Successores, Congregation for Bishops, 2004.

Asian and Pacific Presence, USCCB, 2001. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, USCCB, 2005. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org

National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB, 2005. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, USCCB, 1999. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org

Renewing the Vision, USCCB, 1997. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org

Sons and Daughters of the Light, USCCB, 1996. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us, USCCB, 2000. Available from www.usccbpublishing.org