

**Coordination of Religious Education Program:
Pre-School through Eighth Grade
(Job Description)**

*Catechesis transmits the message of the Kingdom,
so central to the preaching of Jesus.
In doing so, the message is gradually deepened,
developed in its implicit consequences,
and thus manifests its great repercussions
for human beings and the world.*

*The message of Jesus about God is Good News for humanity.
Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God,
a new and definitive intervention by God,
with a transforming power
equal and even superior to His creation of the world.
In this sense, Christ proclaims salvation
as the outstanding element and the central point of His Good News.*

*This is the great gift of God:
not merely liberation from all those things
by which human beings are oppressed,
but especially liberation from sin
and from the domination of the evil one,
a liberation which incorporates that gladness
enjoyed by everyone who knows God and is known by him,
who sees God and who surrenders trustingly to Him.*

(GDC 101)

Table of Contents
Coordination of the Religious Education Program:
Pre-School through Eighth Grade

Purpose of the Parish Religious Education Program	JD-3
The Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis	JD-3
Essential Elements for Every Religious Education Program	JD-4
Coordination of Religious Education Program: Pre-School through Eighth	JD-6
Job Description of Religious Education Director/Coordinator	JD-6
Relationship with Catechists	JD-7
Collaboration with Families	JD-9
Support for Multi-Cultural Catechesis	JD-10
Program Development	JD-11
Organization of Space for Religious Education Program	JD-12
Program Administration	JD-13
Management of the Budget	JD-15
Worksheet for Religious Education Program Budget	JD-16
Essential Contents of Religious Education Office File	JD-18
Weekly Supervisory Responsibilities of Director/Coordinator	JD-20
Monthly Calendar of Director/Coordinator Responsibilities	JD-22

The Purpose of the Parish Religious Education Program

At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of the Father who suffered and died for us and now, risen, is living with us forever.

Catechesis aims at putting people in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ. Only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.

Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God as the urgent and definitive intervention of God in history, and defined this proclamation as “the Good News”, i.e. “the Gospel”. To this Gospel, Jesus devoted his entire earthly life. After his Resurrection, Jesus Christ, together with the Father, sent the Holy Spirit in order that He might animate His disciples to continue His mission in the whole world.

To catechize is to teach others that, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the whole of God’s eternal design is revealed. (Excerpts from Catechism of Catholic Church 426 and GDC 34)

The Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis

The six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis entrusted to the Religious Education Program by the Church are:

- to promote the knowledge of the faith
- to give moral formation,
- to provide liturgical education,
- to teach to pray,
- to educate for community life,
- to initiate into the missionary dimension. (GDC 85 – 86)

The guidelines for implementing the six Fundamental Tasks are to be found in Part 2 of the Handbook in *Profiles of Catechetical Leaders*. A reflection on the meaning of the Fundamental Tasks is to be found in Part 2 of the Handbook in *General Directory for Catechesis – Key Concepts*.

The child experiences Catholic life in the home and in the parish, learning from the experiences of these two environments how to live as a faithful Catholic person.

The role of the Religious Education Program is to provide intellectual enlightenment about the Catholic life which the child is already living, and to foster the child’s faith development by accomplishing the “Fundamental Tasks” in an age-appropriate way.

Thus, the Religious Education Program helps the child and his/her family to understand, ever-more-deeply, the meaning of the Sunday Mass which the family regularly attends.

Essential Elements for Every Parish Religious Education Program Pre-School through Eighth Grade

For a parish religious education program to be strong and effective, all the following essential elements are to be in place:

1. All parish Religious Education Programs for grade levels Kindergarten to Eighth are to use the title: *Religious Education Program*. Titles or terms like; “CCD”, “School of Religion” or “Faith Formation Program” are not to be used.
2. The parish Religious Education Program is to be administered according to the norms and directives found in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*
3. The parish Religious Education Program is to be offered for grade levels 1 through 8 consecutively and is to consist of a minimum of 30 sessions, ninety minutes long, held between September and June, plus a minimum of five hours of family catechesis offered between September and August. The immediate preparation for Sacraments is in addition to the regular 30 sessions of the Religious Education Program.
4. Immediate preparation for and the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and where possible, Confirmation, are to take place at the home parish.
5. Family Catechesis is to be provided by the home parish.
6. The parish Religious Education Program is to adhere to the Archdiocese of New York’s *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades Pre-K to 6 and Grades 7 & 8*.
7. The parish Religious Education Program is to take place on parish property in a site that:
 - meets the safety requirements specified by law,
 - is well maintained, comfortable and conducive to quality catechesis for the children from pre- school through the eighth grade levels,
 - can be readily supervised in all its areas throughout the duration of the program,
 - allows for the use of current technology,
 - has adequate storage space,
 - provides an office for the Director/Coordinator which is well equipped to enable the proper administration of the program,
 - is easily accessible to the families being served,
 - adequately meets the needs of children with disabilities.

In determining the best site for the Program, the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, the Archdiocesan Building Commission and the Archdiocesan Insurance Division are to be consulted.

8. The parish Religious Education Program is to have a catechetical leader who is certified as a Director/Coordinator of Religious Education by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office or who has completed the Catechetical Leadership Program or who is currently enrolled in the Catechetical Leadership Program offered by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
9. The Director/Coordinator of the parish Religious Education Program is to implement the job description as stated in the *Archdiocesan Handbook for Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education*. Adjustments may be made to the job description by the agreement of all the Pastors concerned. These adjustments are to be put in writing and must be approved by the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
10. Every Lay Director/Coordinator of Religious Education is to be paid according to the Compensation Guidelines of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office established by the Cardinal and the Presbyteral Council.
11. The budget for the parish Religious Education Program is to cover all program expenses, including the salary of the Director / Coordinator as determined by the Compensation Guidelines of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.
12. In the hiring of the qualified catechetical leader the Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, in collaboration with the Regional Catechetical Director, is to make recommendations to the Pastor as to those persons qualified for the position. First consideration is to be given to those who are certified as Directors/Coordinators or who have completed the Catechetical Leadership Program or who are currently enrolled in the Catechetical Leadership Program.
13. Religious Education Program catechists are to receive Level One catechist certification from the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office by the end of their fourth year of ministry with all things considered.

**Coordination of the Religious Education Program:
Pre-School through Eighth Grade**
(GDC 84 – 87)

Job Description of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education

By definition, the person designated by the Pastor to be the primary, on-site supervisor of the Parish Religious Education Program is the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education and is recognized by this title in the Catechetical Office documents, communications and files.

The Director* of Religious Education is the person who is actively present throughout the entire length of each session until each child* has been safely entrusted back to the care of the parent* or designated adult.

In the Religious Education Program, the purpose of supervision is to enable the ongoing formation of children as disciples of Jesus and members of the Catholic Church, a formation accomplished in an environment that consistently promotes the safety and well-being of each child.

The Director follows the policies and directives of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office by administering the Parish Religious Education Program under its guidance, working closely with the Regional Catechetical Director as well as with the Director and staff of the central office.

There are six areas of responsibility in the job description of the Director / Coordinator of Religious Education. They are:

1. Relationship with Catechists
2. Collaboration with Families
3. Program Development
4. Organization of Space for Religious Education Program
5. Program Administration
6. Management of the Budget

*For the sake of brevity, the title “Director” is used throughout and refers to the Catechetical Administrator of the Religious Education Program, whether Director or Coordinator.

Only the word “parent” will be used throughout the Guidelines to refer to the child’s primary caretaker, whether parent or guardian.

The word “child” will be used to refer to both children and adolescents.

1. Relationship with Catechists

- **Recruitment and Selection of Catechists**

- Communicate to the Parish an understanding of the role of the Catechist in the life and mission of the parish and the esteemed place Catechists hold in the tradition of the Church. (*GDC 163–164*)
- Recruit and select Catechist and catechist substitutes according to the guidelines in the Handbook section *Personnel Guidelines*.
- Secure Pastor's approval for the choice of each Catechist before final selection is made.

- **Formation of Catechists and Catechist Substitutes**

- Require participation in the Archdiocesan Catechist Formation Program, levels 1 and 2 according to Handbook section *Catechist Formation* to be completed within 5 years.
- Encourage Catechists who have completed Level 1 and 2 to enroll in the *N.Y. Catholic Bible School* which provides Levels 3 and 4 of Catechist Formation.
- Schedule the *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum* as a regular part of the year's program, and provide for the Catechists' attendance.
- Publish a Catechist Handbook, based on the Archdiocesan model and secure the approval of the Pastor before publication.
- Prepare a yearly calendar for the program, including those Archdiocesan regional and parish catechetical meetings and events in which Catechists are expected to participate. Secure the approval of the Pastor before finalizing it.
- Instruct the Catechists and Catechist substitutes and supervise them regularly in the fulfillment of their responsibilities for the safety and well-being of the students according to Handbook section *Safe Environment*

- **Personnel Management**

- Implement carefully all requirements listed in Handbook section *Personnel Guidelines*.
- Consult the Pastor in all personnel issues that are conflictual or have potential legal implications, recognizing that he is the ultimate authority of the parish.

- **Ongoing Formation of Catechists and Catechist Substitutes (GDC 156)**
 - Regularly observe each Catechist teaching, following the directives in Handbook section *Personnel Guidelines for Catechists: “Elements of Ongoing Supervision and Formation of Catechists”*
 - Meet with the individual Catechists at least once a semester.
 - Provide ongoing training in the use of *Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis* and in the Catechist’s manual of the basal textbook series used in the program.
 - Provide ongoing training in the management of the learning environment as needed by individual Catechists and Catechist substitutes.
 - Help Catechists to become effective leaders of prayer, able to use a variety of prayer styles; ensure that they include a prayer experience in each session.
 - Organize and conduct Catechist meetings approximately every six weeks.
 - Review at Catechist meetings the six fundamental tasks of catechesis --
 - to promote the knowledge of the faith,
 - to give moral formation,
 - to provide liturgical education,
 - to teach to pray,
 - to educate for community life,
 - to initiate into the missionary dimension (*GDC 85 – 86*),
 - Discuss ways to effectively accomplish the six fundamental tasks and invite the Pastor to participate in these discussions.
- **Development of Faith-community among Catechists and Staff (GDC158).**
 - Seek ways in which Pastor can participate in building faith-community with Catechists.
 - Organize a day or part of a day dedicated to reflecting and praying together at least once a year; include the celebration of a special Mass with the Catechists by the Pastor.
 - Provide for regular prayer together as a catechetical community before or after the program sessions.
 - Foster supportive relationships among the Catechists by such simple means as having refreshments available before and after religious education sessions.
 - Arrange appropriate celebrations and expressions of gratitude throughout the year and highlight the Pastor’s expression of gratitude whenever possible.

2. Collaboration with Families

- Work with the Pastor to create among Catechists, staff, parents, children, and families, a community of faith, centered on Jesus and united in His Holy Spirit so that faith formation takes place by experience as well as by teaching
- **Communication with Parents**
 - Establish clear channels through which Catechists may communicate with the parents of the children in their session, either as a whole group or individually.
 - All written communication with parents should be copied to the Director.
 - All notifications and letters sent by Catechist to parents must be pre-approved by the Director.
 - Catechists must follow the directives for use of social media found in the on-line section of the Handbook *Use of Internet and Social Media for Catechesis*
 - Advertise the Religious Education Program for several weeks prior to registration, using both public and parish means of communication.
 - Develop with the Pastor a program of parish outreach to find children not currently attending the Religious Education Program and give the identified families a personal invitation into the program.
 - Publish a Parent Handbook using the model handbook provided by Archdiocesan Catechetical Office; secure the approval of the Pastor before publication.
 - Send to all parents a calendar for the year which clearly identifies dates and times for Religious Education sessions, holidays, parent meetings, and special events of the program such as the celebration of First Eucharist and Confirmation.
 - Organize meetings for parents, such as an introductory evening when parents meet the Pastor and the Religious Education Program personnel and receive an overview of the year's program.
 - Incorporate a variety of prayer forms into the parent meetings such that each meeting includes praying with the parents.
 - Develop and maintain an evaluation system to communicate to Parents the progress of their children in the understanding of the faith.
 - Write letters to all parents as appropriate; encourage the Pastor to do so also.
 - Contact individual families when the needs of their children call for it.

- Be available to confer with parents, offering help and information, and, in collaboration with the Pastor, seeking appropriate assistance to problems that go beyond the Religious Education program.
- **Support for Multi-Cultural Catechesis** (*GDC 109, 202-206*)
 - Identify the racial, linguistic and ethnic groups in the Religious Education program.
 - Work with Pastor and Catechists to foster genuine appreciation and a sense of belonging for each culture represented in the program.
 - Affirm authentic values expressed in family traditions, social customs and religious devotions, and help people to discern those elements in their culture which impede their human and Christian development (*GDC21*).
 - Seek to understand, for the various racial and ethnic groups in the program, their present sense of identity with the Church and make this a starting point for Catechesis.
 - Build on the religious experiences of the group by incorporating into the Religious Education program the language, symbols and traditional values of the cultures of the participants (*GDC 110*).
 - Ensure that the various racial, linguistic and ethnic groups in the Religious Education Program take part as appropriate in the planning of Religious Education programs and events.
 - Be aware of the socio-economic and family circumstances of the families and plan programs that in actuality meet their needs and address their situations (*GDC 192*).
 - Be careful to address language requirements of children and youth in the program and their parents, who do not understand the language used by the parish majority.

3. Program Development

- Ensure that the Religious Education Program is offered every year for grade levels K or 1 through 8 according to the Archdiocesan mandate. A Sacrament-only Parish Religious Education Program is not acceptable.
- Provide preschool and kindergarten programs giving preference to the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* (see Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis, Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Six*) (GDC 177-180).
- Provide sacramental catechesis for reception of First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation according to Handbook section *Sacrament Programs*.
- Provide catechetical formation for the children of the parish who have special learning needs (see Catechetical Office book: *Recognizing the Gift: A Parish Resource Guide for Welcoming Children with Disabilities*).
- Ensure that unbaptized children in grades 2 through 8 are enrolled in the Children's Catechumenate. (Note: They return to Religious Education after Baptism.)
- Provide Family Catechesis for all in the program according to the Catechetical Office norms in Handbook section *Family Catechesis*.
- Select a single textbook series, grades 1 through 6, in accordance with the Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis, Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Six*, the needs of the children of the parish, and the capabilities of the Catechists (GDC 119).
- Select materials/program for effective seventh and eighth grade catechesis in accordance with the Archdiocesan *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grade 7 & Grade 8*.
- Ensure that the textbooks and teaching materials used in the program are in conformity with the *United States Catholic Conference of Bishops* (USCCB) list of approved textbooks.
- Collaborate with parish and archdiocesan leadership to encourage youth to continue their faith formation through youth ministry Programs and high school catechesis.
- Develop enrichment opportunities such as Summer Bible School and days of prayer.
- Discuss program development with the Pastor regularly and submit all major changes and innovations to him for approval.
- Encourage and direct Catechists to enhance their presentations by the use of media; facilitate access to the appropriate technological equipment.

- Organize liturgical celebrations of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance for all children at least once a year,
- Evaluate annually the various dimensions of the Religious Education Program. Plan and carry forward the evaluation with the Pastor; involve Catechists as appropriate.

4. Organization of Space for Religious Education Program

- Request from the Pastor the provision of adequate space to meet the needs outlined here and ensure that it is properly maintained and kept in good order.
- Set up a Religious Education office which includes desk and office furniture as needed, telephone, computer with internet access and the appropriate software, a printer and a copier to serve the copying needs of the Catechists.
- Ensure that the Religious Education office has adequate filing cabinets so that all records of children, youth, and Catechists can be kept securely in locked files.
Note: These records should not be maintained off parish property or stored in unsecured places on parish property.
- Ensure that throughout every session of the Religious Education Program, the Director has access to a system for alerting all Catechists and children immediately (*e.g. a public address system; a bell system*).
- Organize a gathering place sufficiently large for the Catechists to meet and which includes individual space for each Catechist's teaching materials.
- Set up Religious Education Office files according to the template provided in this section and entitled "Essential Contents of Religious Education Office File".
- Provide a resource library/media center for the spiritual, scriptural and professional development of the Catechists, including Catechists' manuals from major textbook series, CDs, DVDs, periodicals, and books, and access to the internet, along with guidance in locating the most helpful sites.
- Provide for the program learning spaces that are comfortable and conducive to learning, with good lighting and safe physical features.
- Work with the Pastor to secure the custodial services necessary to provide a clean and safe environment for all the sessions, offerings and services of the Religious Education Program.

5. Program Administration

- Ensure that all the requirements outlined in the Handbook section *Safe Environment* are fulfilled.
- Administer the Religious Education program in full accord with the Handbook section: *Program Requirements*.
- **Management of the Program**
 - Develop written program policies to be approved by the Pastor and made available as appropriate to parish leadership, Religious Education staff, and the families of children in the program; these policies are drawn from the Archdiocesan Handbook and adapted to the local parish situation. (*GDC 165*).
 - Work with the Pastor to provide secretarial assistance for the Program.
 - Ensure that the program name does not include the word “school”, a word which has connotations that are inappropriate and even incorrect for a parish Religious Education program.
 - Hold registration in the spring, keeping in mind the over-riding importance of doing all possible to accommodate families.
 - Handle late registrations with flexibility and compassion, doing all possible to provide for the religious education needs of each family.
 - Organize the program registration so that class lists and necessary instructional materials are available to the Catechists well before their first session with the children.
 - Plan at least 30 Religious Education sessions per year to take place between September 1 and June 30 in fulfillment of the Archdiocesan mandate.
 - Ensure that each session lasts at least 90 minutes in fulfillment of the Archdiocesan mandate.
 - Plan formal Family Catechesis sessions each year from September through August according to the approved Archdiocesan models. Plan a sufficient number of these sessions to ensure that each family with children in the program can attend 5 hours of Family Catechesis every year.
 - Organize non-graded sessions for children whose needs cannot be accommodated in the regular graded sessions.

- Structure ways to make up course material missed by children/youth who have registered late, have missed the material through absence, or have not sufficiently grasped the lessons taught.
- Implement carefully all contained in the Handbook section *Program Requirements*; keep the Pastor informed on any significant difficulties in this implementation.
- Develop and implement a Crisis Management plan according to the directives in Handbook section *Emergencies and Crisis Management*.
- Organize and hold fire drills, a shelter-in-place drill and a lock-down drill at least once a semester carefully following the instructions in the Handbook section *Emergencies and Crisis Management*.
- Become knowledgeable of the directives for accidents, illness and emergencies found in the Handbook section *Emergencies and Crisis Management* and *Program Requirements* in order to be ready to follow them at a moment's notice.
- Remain available before and after the Religious Education sessions each week to serve the needs of children and youth, parents, and Catechists.

6. Management of the Budget

Every Director of Religious Education makes and follows a budget for the program.

- Begin the budgeting process in the spring by discussing with the Pastor how the Religious Education budget expresses the high priority given to this central parish mission by the documents of the Church. (See *Budget Worksheet* in this section of Handbook)
- Prepare the draft of the budget recognizing the important role the budget plays in accomplishing the purpose and goals of parish Religious Education.
- Submit the draft budget to the Pastor whose responsibility it is to make the final budgetary decisions and to give the final acceptance of the budget.
- Arrive at a clear articulation of the Religious Education Program goals for the coming fiscal year as reflected in the budget and as mutually agreed upon between Pastor and Director of Religious Education.
- Understand that the Pastor may seek advice on the draft budget from the Parish Financial Manager. Upon receiving advice from the Financial Manager, the Pastor brings the budget back to the Director of Religious Education and together they work through the advice given. Or, preferably, the Director of Religious Education also attends the Pastor's meeting with the Parish Financial Manager. It is the Pastor who gives final approval to the Religious Education Budget.
- Work with the families who cannot or do not pay the registration fee in order that no child is refused participation in the Parish Religious Education Program for this reason. Seek the guidance of the Pastor throughout this process.
- Provide information and advice to the Pastor on recommendations from IPF which affect the parish Religious Education Program.
- Make all decisions in administering the Program in fidelity to the approved budget.
- Manage the program's weekly expenses according to the approved budget.
- Account accurately to the Pastor on the collection and disbursement of all Religious Education funds in accordance with Archdiocesan directives.

Worksheet for Religious Education Program Budget: 20__ 20__

Parish Name: _____

Parish Code: _____

Receipts (Income)

Budget

Actual

Registration Fees	_____	_____
Fundraising	_____	_____
Sacrament Fees	_____	_____
Gifts	_____	_____
Sale of Textbooks & Workbooks	_____	_____
Additional Fees	_____	_____
Transportation (e.g. bus hire):	_____	_____
Parish Support	_____	_____
Total Income	_____	_____

Disbursements (Expenses) (Totals from second page)

Salaries & Benefits	_____	_____
Professional Education for Director/Coordinator	_____	_____
Catechist Formation	_____	_____
Catechesis of Children & Youth	_____	_____
Program Administration	_____	_____
Maintenance	_____	_____
Total Expenses	_____	_____

Submitted to Pastor:

Director/Coordinator: _____ Date _____

Approval by Pastor:

Pastor: _____ Date _____

Detailed Descriptions

Budget

Actual

Salaries & Benefits

Director/Coordinator	_____	_____
Secretary/Secretarial Help	_____	_____
Benefits (<i>Medical</i>)	_____	_____
Pension Plan	_____	_____
FICA (<i>Lay</i>)	_____	_____
Unemployment Insurance (<i>Lay</i>)	_____	_____
Disability Insurance (<i>Lay</i>)	_____	_____
Workers' Compensation (<i>Lay</i>)	_____	_____
Total Salaries & Benefits	_____	_____

Professional Education for Director/Coordinator

Professional Inservice: Workshops, Courses	_____	_____
Meetings (incl. Travel)	_____	_____
Total Education for Director/Coordinator	_____	_____

Catechist Formation

Catechist Training & Enrichment	_____	_____
Catechetical Forum	_____	_____
Travel	_____	_____
Catechist Meetings (<i>incl. food</i>)	_____	_____
Celebrations	_____	_____
Books & Subscriptions	_____	_____
Total Catechist Formation	_____	_____

Catechesis for Children/Youth

Textbooks/Workbooks	_____	_____
Instructional Supplies	_____	_____
Technology Costs	_____	_____
Parent Meetings (<i>incl. refreshments</i>)	_____	_____
Family Catechesis	_____	_____
Guest Speakers	_____	_____
Transportation (<i>e.g. bus hire</i>)	_____	_____
Field Trips	_____	_____
Total Catechesis for Children/Youth	_____	_____

Program Administration

Office Supplies	_____	_____
Computer/Copier Costs	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____
Services Rendered/Gifts	_____	_____
Sacramental Expenses	_____	_____
Certificates/Forms/Record Cards	_____	_____
Postage	_____	_____
Total Program Administration	_____	_____

Maintenance

Office Equipment (<i>e.g. furniture</i>)	_____	_____
Instructional Equipment (<i>desks, tables</i>)	_____	_____
Utilities (fair % of usage cost)	_____	_____
Repairs	_____	_____
Custodial Services	_____	_____
Facility Rental	_____	_____
Total Maintenance	_____	_____

Essential Contents of Religious Education Office File

Children and Family Files which are always kept locked

Permanent record card

(This file is to be kept for 60 years.)

Child information record containing emergency information

(The record for each child is continuously updated as needed and kept on file for as long as child is in program.)

Signature Card signed by parent/guardian on receipt of Program Handbook

Child Progress Report

(These reports are to be kept for 2 years after child leaves program.)

Attendance registers

(These registers are to be kept for 6 years.) However, each child's attendance is also recorded on Permanent Record Card.)

Additional Information on absences

(This information is to be kept for 1 year after end of academic year.)

Accident Reports

(These reports are to be kept for 4 years or, if it involves a child, until the person turns 22)

Parental permission for trips

(These permission slips are to be kept for 1 year after end of academic year unless there is an incident or accident on the trip requiring a longer retention period.)

Documentation of unacceptable behavior, communication with parents regarding it, and decisions reached.

(These files are strictly confidential and should not be transferred to any other parish or individual.)

Safe Environment Parent Opt-Out Form *(if applicable)*

Catechist Files which are always kept locked

Catechist Application and references, including a written record of the date the reference was checked and by whom, and a careful summary of what was said.

Authorization & Disclosure for Background Check

(The parish may decide to entrust this file to an office other than Religious Education.)

Catechist Formation/Certification Record

Observation/Evaluation done during Catechist's first year & on a regular basis thereafter

Ongoing Formation Record

Catechist's Emergency Medical Information, if any, in a sealed envelope,

Documentation of undesirable behavior and communication regarding it:

When Catechist leaves parish program, this file is placed in inactive file & kept at least 7 years. However, if Catechist is dismissed for extremely poor teaching or misconduct, file should be kept "in perpetuity." This file contains only statements regarding the situation that are signed by both Director and Catechist. Director's personal notes about the situation are kept in Director's own, separate confidential file.

Administration Files

Annual Report for each year

(This should be kept always in Religious Education Program archives.)

Current year's Safe Environment Roster

Program Budget

Floor plans of all areas where Religious Education sessions are held .

(These should also be posted.)

Emergency procedures including Crises Management Plan

Record of each drill: fire, lock-down, shelter-in-place

Record of any emergency evacuation.

Note: The Building inspection report is kept in the parish file but the Director refers to it in deciding where Religious Education sessions will be held.

Summary of Supervisory Responsibilities of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education for each Weekly Session

This summary is drawn from the Job Description

- Assisted by a team of competent adults, supervise all children and youth in the program at every moment to ensure that no child/youth is ever in a potentially compromising or dangerous situation.
e.g. a catechist alone with a child behind a closed and windowless door, a younger child bullied by an older child in a bathroom, closet or hallway, adolescent(s) in an unsupervised situation.
- Maintain constant supervision of Catechists and other adults to ensure that their management of the children is according to state and archdiocesan norms.
- Supervise the Catechists as they teach their sessions, and correct any inappropriate teachings.
- Handle appropriately children who disrupt a session and need to be sent by the Catechist to the Director/Coordinator; work appropriately with the parents of this child.
- Maintain a fool-proof substitute system in case a Catechist cannot come to a session or becomes sick during a session.
- Monitor access to location where religious education is taking place to ensure that unauthorized persons report directly to the Director/Coordinator and are not in areas where there are children.
- Develop and follow proper dismissal routines which ensure that each child is dismissed into the care of the parent.
- Guard against the dismissal of a child to a non-custodial parent.
- Develop a procedure for parent notification of the absence of their child on a given week; maintain constant vigilance so that the parent is immediately notified if a child believed to be in religious education is in fact absent.
- Ensure that the rigorous Safe Environment requirements are followed, including background checks and training of all Catechists and adults working with the program.

- Remain alert to signs of child abuse or neglect taking place in a situation outside the religious education program; if such signs become apparent, follow the directives of the Safe Environment Office.
- Secure and maintain for each child, the medical records and written parental directives needed in case of a medical emergency, and follow these to the letter
e.g. allergic reaction to bee sting or food allergy, bodily harm to a child during Religious Education session.
- Develop and follow the state-required emergency procedures:
 - fire drills and actual fire emergencies,
 - crisis management plan and actual management of such emergencies as a lock down or shelter-in-place,
 - response to an unauthorized person in the building while classes are in session,
 - weather-related emergencies requiring immediate dismissal
- Conduct in a compassionate and professional manner interactions with parents and develop and oversee a clearly defined procedure for parent interaction with the Catechist.
- Ensure that the location for each grade-level is appropriate, safe and basically comfortable, including:
 - easy exit in case of fire, with all fire doors in working condition,
 - appropriate heat and ventilation,
 - each session visible from a corridor to supervising adult,
 - appropriate chairs and desks/tables for all children,
 - healthy space (e.g. no mold issues),
 - low noise level so teaching can be heard.
- Ensure that the Internet with its social media opportunities is used by Catechists and all adults in the program according to the norms of the Safe Environment Office.

Monthly Calendar of Responsibilities of the Director/Coordinator

(GDC 211)

August

- Meet with Pastor on plans for coming academic year.
- Mail parents: program calendar, parent handbook with signature card, Sacrament Programs calendar and instructions, any additional information for the coming academic year.
- Mail Catechists:
 - o program calendar,
 - o Catechist Formation Schedule,
 - o dates for Catechist meetings and events,
 - o Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum information and registration,
 - o agenda for September Catechist meeting.
- Prepare class lists; make provision for students with special needs.
- Prepare *Crisis Management Plan*.
- Note catechists' birthdays by month in order to give personal acknowledgements.

September

- Hold Catechist meeting to provide orientation for the new academic year.
- Have training sessions for new Catechists.
- Plan with Catechists how they will attend the Catechist Formation classes.
- Conduct Catechist Commissioning at Mass on Catechetical Sunday.
- Begin program no later than the 2nd week of September in order to complete the required 30 sessions by the end of June.
- Register Catechists for Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum if this has not yet been done.
- Mail out/request records of students moving to/coming from another parish.
- Send in *Crisis Management Plan* to Regional Catechetical Office by October 1.

October

- Have Parent open-house.
- Bring all Catechists to *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum*.
- Hold first fire-drill, lock-down drill, and shelter-in-place drill.
- For pastoral reasons, allow for late registration throughout the fall.
- Update *Safe Environment Roster* and return to Regional Catechetical Office by October 24.
- Complete *Annual Report* on-line by November 1.

November

- Hold Catechist Meeting.
- Begin formal class observations for Catechists to be certified as well as for a number of other Catechists so that within 2 years (3 for larger program) all will have been formally observed.
- Throughout the year follow a regimen of informal observation visiting 5 to 6 classes in an hour – listening and watching in the halls and going into the back of classrooms for a few minutes to get a sense of the teaching/learning situation.
- During the week of Thanksgiving, insure that the Pastor expresses public gratitude to the Director and Catechists of the Religious Education Program (e.g. in Parish Bulletin, from pulpit).
- Plan how Advent will be observed in the program.

December

- Hold staff Christmas celebration. Give each Catechist a meaningful gift to thank them in the name of the parish for all they do to bring the Good News into the lives of the children and families through the Religious Education Program.

January

- Hold Catechist meeting.
- Plan with Catechists how they will attend Catechist Formation classes.
- Begin individual meetings with Catechists to discuss their growth and development in catechetical skills as well as the progress of their class, and to share results of on-going supervision.
- Conduct Safe Environment educational sessions with all children/youth.
- Mail student evaluations to parents.
- Plan how Lent will be observed in the program.
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February

- Meet with Pastor for updating and evaluating the progress of the Religious Education Program.
- Work personally with Archdiocesan Compensation Guidelines to ascertain place on compensation scale; seek help from Regional Director as needed.

March

- Hold Catechist meeting.
- Begin advertising the spring registration for next year's catechetical program.
- Prepare and negotiate budget for coming year using *Worksheet for Religious Education Program Budget*.
- Hold fire drill, lock-down drill, and shelter-in-place drill.
- Make arrangements to obtain a Bishop for Confirmation for the following academic year.
- In first half of month, submit a letter of intent to the Pastor as defined in the timeline for negotiations regarding the Agreement of Employment.
- In second half of month, meet with Pastor for negotiations regarding the Agreement of Employment.

April

- Update Safe Environment Roster and send to Regional Catechetical Office by April 10.
- Complete Safe Environment Yearly Report of total number of children/youth on each grade level who received safe environment instructions. Send to Regional Catechetical Office by May 1.
- Hold program registration of children/youth for coming academic year.
- By April 15th both Pastor and Director/Coordinator sign Agreement of Employment.
- Plan summer sessions of Religious Education program (e.g. Vacation Bible School).

May

- Hold Catechist meeting.
- Mail children's evaluations to parents.
- Request evaluation of year's program from each Catechist.
- Discuss with each Catechist their experience of the year, their recommitment to teach the following year including the grade level, and any recommendations or conditions for their return or their termination if necessary.
- After last session, collect *Guidelines for Catechesis* and the Catechist's Manual from those not returning.

June

- Send in Early Bird Registration for *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum*.
- Meet with Pastor to evaluate year.
- Have an end-of-year celebration with Catechists and Pastor.
- Record First Communion and Confirmation information in parish book, unless this is done by parish secretary.
- Send notice of Confirmation to parish where each newly confirmed was baptized.
- Submit to Regional Office applications of those to be certified. Send names of Catechists who should receive Medal of Honor to Archdiocesan Director of Catechist Formation.

Summer

- Administer summer sessions (e.g. Bible School, Vacation Program).
- Formulate plans for coming year.
- Interview and select new Catechists.
- Review and update Catechists Handbook.
- Review and update Parent Handbook.
- Update files especially essential Religious Education Office files.
- Order books and purchase materials for coming academic year, including certificates for sacramental programs (First Communion, First Penance, Confirmation).
- Plan program calendar for coming academic year, including dates of all classes, holidays, snow days, parent & catechist meetings, Sacrament meetings, *Archdiocesan Catechetical Forum*.
- Submit to Pastor the final budget report on the actual Religious Education Program expenses.

Additional Responsibilities to be Scheduled into this Monthly Calendar:

- Attend Regional Catechetical Meetings.
- Attend ongoing formation opportunities offered by the Archdiocese.
- Plan for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation.

The planning sessions should include as appropriate, the Pastor, the Catechists involved in preparing the children for Sacraments, and where there is a school, the Principal.

Dates pertinent to sacramental preparation, such as the additional sacramental preparation sessions for children, parent sessions, ceremonies, days of prayer, interviews, should be included in the calendars that parents and catechists receive in September.

The Bishop for the Confirmation Ceremony should be invited at least six months before.

- Plan opportunities for spiritual renewal for Catechists on the local level (day or evening of prayer together), and take advantage of those offered on the regional and Archdiocesan levels.
- Attend regular meetings of Pastor with parish staff.
- Attend parish council meetings regularly.