

Total Parish Catechesis

*The source from which catechesis draws its message
is the Word of God:*

*“Catechesis will always draw its content
from the living source of the Word of God
transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures,
for sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up
a single sacred deposit of the Word of God
which is entrusted to the Church”
(Catechesi Tradendae 27).*

*The deposit of faith is like the treasure of a householder;
it is entrusted to the Church, the family of God,
and she continuously draws from its things new and old.*

*All God’s children, animated by His Spirit,
are nourished by this treasure of the Word.
They know that the Word is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
and that His voice continues to resound
in the Church and in the world
through the Holy Spirit.*

*The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit
has to interpret the Word continually.
She contemplates the Word with a profound spirit of faith,
listens to it devotedly,
guards it with dedication
and expounds it faithfully.
(GDC 94)*

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Total Parish Catechesis (GDC 58 – 59)

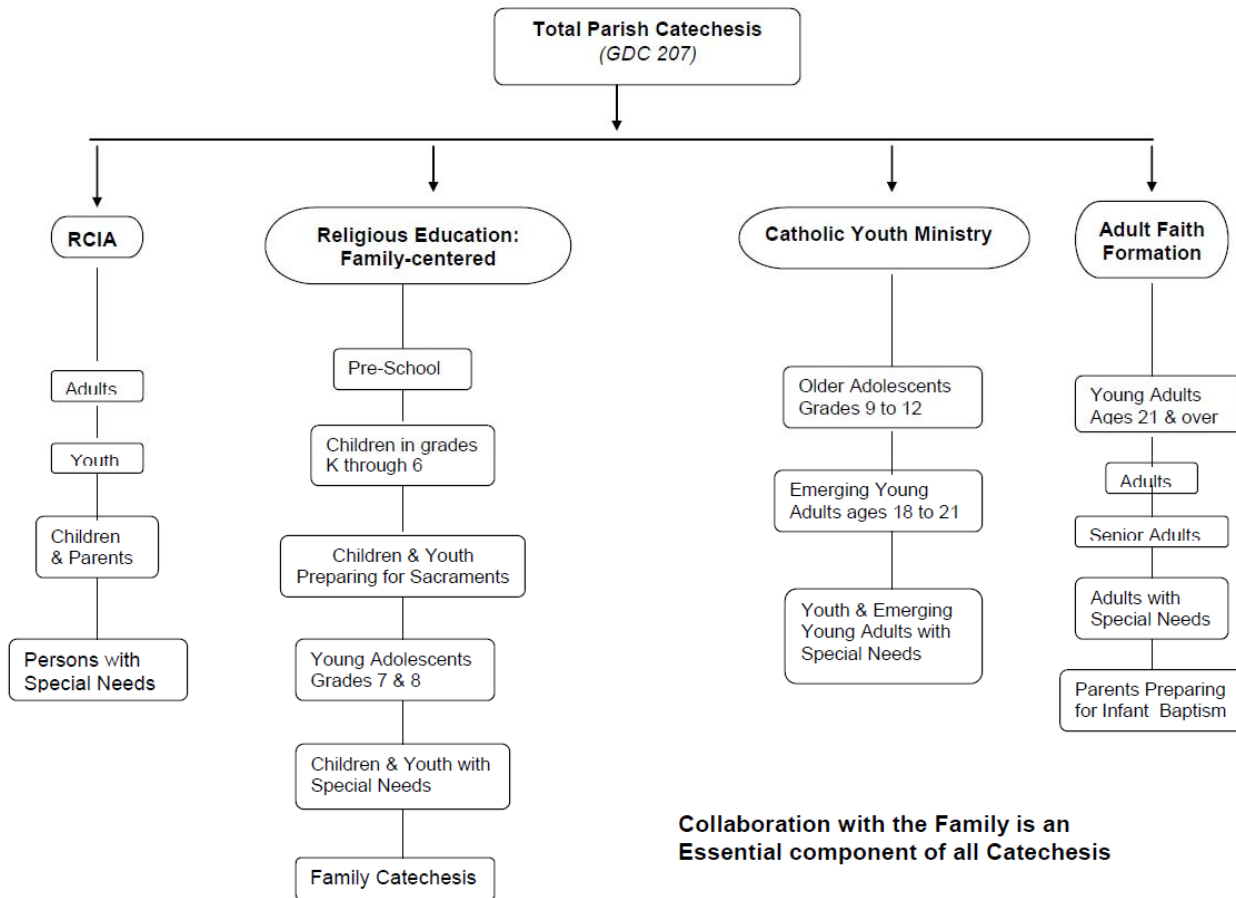
Total Parish Catechesis is the essential context for the parish Religious Education Program.

The effectiveness of catechesis depends to a great extent on the vitality of the Christian community in which it is given [for this] is the context in which individuals undertake their journey in faith toward conversion to Christ and discipleship in his name.

In the parish the faithful are nurtured by the word of God and nourished by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. From the parish the faithful are sent on their apostolic mission in the world. The parish serves as an effective catechetical agent precisely to the extent that it is a clear, living and authentic sacrament of Christ. On the other hand, where a parish is lifeless and stagnant, it undermines both evangelization and catechesis. (NDC # 29 C)

By Canon Law (Canons 519, 528, 773, 776, 777), the Pastor has the responsibility to provide faith formation to all members of the parish community at each stage of their growth and development. This is called “Total Parish Catechesis.”

The Total Parish Catechesis chart on the following page organizes all the members of the parish community according to their specific needs for faith formation.



Catechetical Plan for the Whole Parish

From the *National Directory for Catechesis*

Like the diocese, every parish needs to develop a coherent catechetical plan that integrates the various components of the overall program and provides opportunities for all parishioners to hear the Gospel message, celebrate it in prayer and Liturgy and live it in their daily lives.

That plan should reflect the priority of adult catechesis, take into account the needs of everyone in the parish and provide special accommodation for cultural, racial and ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, the neglected and those unable to represent their own rights and interests.

The parish catechetical plan should be adequately financed and staffed by professionally trained catechetical leaders so that the teachings of the Church are readily accessible to all the Christian faithful in the parish. (NDC # 60 A)

Because a single Pastor cannot adequately provide for the faith formation of all the parishioners, nor have within himself alone the vast scope of Catechetical expertise demanded, the Pastor gathers a nucleus of mature Catholic adults who are well- educated in their faith. He delegates to them catechetical responsibilities for serving the needs of the parishioners in the various sections on the Total Parish Catechesis chart such as: Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Adult Faith Formation, the Catechumenate. (*c.f. National Directory for Catechesis, # 60: The Parish*)

In order to assist the Pastor in providing excellent faith formation for all the parishioners, the Church demands that the catechetical leaders chosen by the Pastor be well-educated and trained for the ministry entrusted to them.

Archdiocesan Handbook for Parish Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education

This Handbook has been developed to serve the needs of one segment of Total Parish Catechesis: the Religious Education of children from pre-Kindergarten to the end of 8th grade.

It is written to assist the parish Director and Coordinator of Religious Education in building and administering an excellent and effective parish Religious Education Program, Kindergarten through Eighth Grade levels, within the context of Total Parish Catechesis.

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 are 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 meet 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 Priest 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.