

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND HOME SCHOOLING

The Church has long recognized that parents have the primary responsibility for passing on the faith to their children (C797-9). When a parent chooses to home-school religious education it is the appropriate role of the Church to offer programs that support the parents' efforts.

We offer these guidelines as a source of information and a touchstone of cooperation between parishes and families.

Parents who wish to home-school their children in religious education should schedule a meeting with their pastor to discuss their plans for catechesis. Meetings should be ongoing throughout the year to ensure adequate support to the parents and to avoid miscommunication particularly when sacramental preparation is involved.

Ideally the materials used in home schooling will be identical to those used in the parish. However, parents may select comparable texts. All educational materials will be reviewed with the pastor and conform to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Assistance in this the selection of material is available through the Diocesan Offices of Education and Formation.

Parents will be given age appropriate Safe Environment material for discussion with their child and parents shall be invited to participate in parent presentations. Parishes will include home schooling families with any informational mailings dealing with the sacraments and surrounding events.

Home schooled children are expected to meet the same standards as other students and to participate in service projects and retreats. The parents may be entrusted to oversee the service or make alternate arrangements for the retreats or the child may participate with the parish faith community.

It is the pastor, in collaboration with the parish catechetical team, whom the Church has called to work with parents to determine a child's readiness for reception of the sacraments. In preparation for the sacraments the children shall attend rehearsals and where it is afford by the parish parents are encouraged to participate in catechesis to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the sacraments in the life of the Church and in their own lives.

A candidate whose parents do not participate in special preparation may not for this reason be deprived of the right to Eucharistic Communion (Canon Law 843:912).