

## GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

While we recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children and that some parents may “choose to provide catechesis for their children in their home, their catechesis must be both complete and authentic.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, #3, *Home-Based Catechesis*) “Complete” catechesis includes on-going catechesis of children from Grade 1 through Grade 12, with a minimum of thirty (30) instructional hours per year for all students not enrolled in a Catholic school.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states that “the bishop of the diocese, the pastor of the parish, the parents, and the children all have God-given responsibilities that must be respected in considering home-based catechesis.” (*NDC*, 3)

“Parents who would like to provide catechesis at home should make themselves known to the local pastor and consult with him or his delegate to ensure that the catechesis provided in the home is the catechesis of the Church. Dialogue between the pastor and the parents is essential to the complete and authentic catechesis of children in their home.” (*NDC*, 3)

With this guidance from the United States bishops in the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of New Orleans provides the following guidelines for those parents wishing to catechize their children in the home.

1. “Parents who choose to be not only the primary educators of their children but also their catechists must adhere to all guidelines for catechists outlined by the diocesan bishop.” (*NDC*, 3) Because the Archdiocese of New Orleans requires all catechists to be certified as such through participation in the *Archdiocesan Catechetical Certification Program (ACCP)*, all parents who wish to catechize their children in a home-based program must also be taking courses toward certification through the *ACCP*. (See the Office of Religious Education website, <http://www.orearchdio-no.com>, for *Certification Policy* and dates, times, and locations of classes.)
2. Catechesis may be permitted in the home for a *SERIOUS* reason, such as serious illness or in the case of a student unable to take instruction in a regular classroom setting, such as severe developmental or cognitive delay or disability, or physical disability. This allowance does NOT cover scheduling conflicts, such as sports or other extracurricular activities.
3. Families who wish to catechize their children in the home according to the above description must follow Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the age level of the their child(ren). These may be obtained online on the Office of Religious Education website: [http://www.orearchdio-no.com/files/ANO\\_Curriculum\\_K-12.pdf](http://www.orearchdio-no.com/files/ANO_Curriculum_K-12.pdf).

4. “Parents who would like to provide catechesis at home should make themselves known to the local pastor and consult with him or his delegate to ensure that the catechesis provided in the home is the catechesis of the Church. Dialogue between the pastor and the parents is essential to the complete and authentic catechesis of children in their home.” (*NDC*, 3) In the Archdiocese of New Orleans, this means that the parents must **FIRST** contact the pastor of their parish to determine if this is possible. There must be sufficient catechetical staff to supervise the catechesis to be done in the home. The pastor will make the final decision regarding home-based catechesis.

5. Textbooks to be used in home-based catechesis must be the same as those used in the local parish. These may be purchased through the parish religious education program. Other supplemental materials may also be used for home-based catechesis. However, these additional materials must be approved by the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education and must be in conformity with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

6. Students who are catechized in a home-based program are required to take quarterly exams to ensure that progress is being made in accordance with the Archdiocesan curriculum for that grade level. Exams may be, but are not limited to, written questions specifically on material from the text. In addition, there may be oral exams on prayers and practices/traditions of the Catholic faith as listed in the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines. This accountability is necessary to ensure that the child(ren) are receiving religious instruction in accordance with the standards of the Parish School of Religion and Catholic schools in the Archdiocese.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION AND HOME-BASED CATECHESIS**

“Immediate preparation” for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation is to be done in the parish. Any family who is engaged in home-based catechesis must present their child(ren) for the immediate preparation for the above-named sacraments, in communion with students in the parish school of religion and/or the Catholic school. Because the parish is the basis of the spiritual and sacramental life of all members of the parish community, this preparation, as well as the reception of the sacraments, is done within and supported by the members of the parish community.

“Since the celebration of the sacraments continually integrates the children into the Body of Christ, preparing children for reception of the sacraments should always be undertaken in collaboration with the local pastor and catechetical leader. These children should be encouraged to participate in non-instructional, preparatory activities of the parish peer group preparing for the sacrament.” (*NDC*, 3)

## **PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

“All parents have an obligation to involve their children in the life and mission of the church. Since their children are being initiated into the life of the Church, which is fundamentally realized in the local parish, parents who provide catechesis for their children in their homes should participate fully in the life of the local parish. They should celebrate the Sunday Eucharist in the local parish, involve themselves in its charitable works, and attend appropriate training and formation sessions the parish or diocese provides.” (*NDC*, 3)

(Revised 1/15)