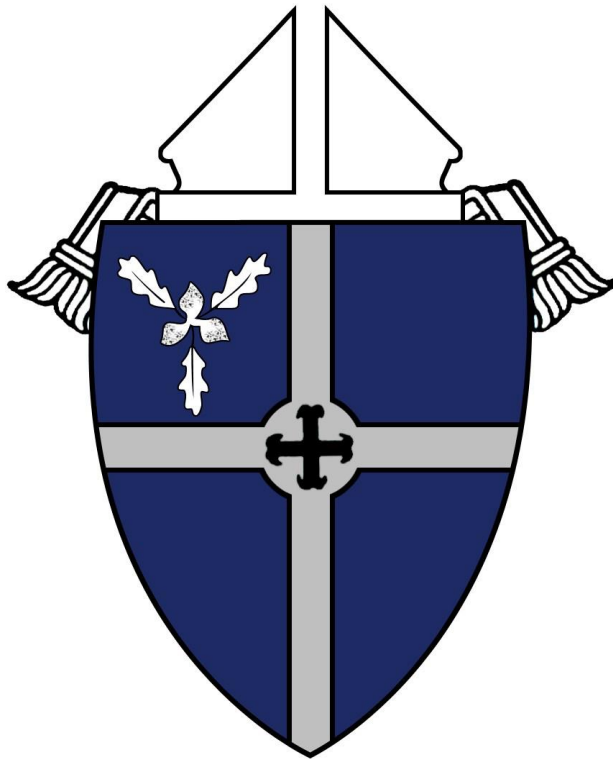


Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Catechesis



Diocese of Bismarck

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ROLES OF CATECHESIS

Series 100

“All members of the community of believers in Jesus Christ participate in the Church’s catechetical mission. Some are called to more specific catechetical roles. Parents, parish catechists, teachers, Catholic school principals, parish catechetical leaders for adults and children, youth ministry leaders, those who work in the diocesan and national catechetical offices, deacons consecrated religious, priests, and bishops are all catechists with distinctive roles.” **NDC, #53**

A clear, common understanding of the various roles will contribute to the orderly and effective accomplishment of the church’s catechetical mission.

101 Parents

101.1 The Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary and principal educators of their children. Catechetical programs assist parents in the Christian formation and the sacramental preparation of their children.

102 Bishop

102.1 The bishop is the chief representative of the teaching authority of the church in union with the pope and the college of bishops, and has the ultimate authority in his diocese in all matters of catechesis. He is a ‘teacher of doctrine’ (c. 375) and is moderation of the entire ministry of the word within the diocese (c. 756§2). He issues norms for catechetics and fosters and coordinates catechetical endeavors (c. 775§1).

103 Pastor

103.1 The pastor has specific responsibilities that derive from his particular catechetical role. Under the authority of the bishop, he exercises pastoral care for the total catechetical program of the parish. He accomplishes this responsibility personally and through his staff: associate pastor, directors of religious education, coordinators of religious education, principal and others.

103.2 “The pastor has the primary responsibility that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met.” **NDC, no.54.B1**

103.3 “In parishes with no resident pastor, pastoral administrators have the same obligation.” **NDC, no.54.B1**

104 Director of Religious Education (DRE)

104.1As administrator of *all* parish catechetical programs, the director of religious education, under the direction of the pastor, has the major responsibility for the comprehensive coordination of the program according to diocesan guidelines. As a catechetical leader, the director of religious education creates an atmosphere conducive to the proclamation of the Good News and prayerful worship, faith service and formation in Catholic doctrine.

105 Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE)

105.1The coordinator of religious education plans and directs session for a specific area of religious education/faith formation.

106 Office of Faith Formation

106.1 The Office of Faith Formation is directly responsible to the bishop for the successful administration of all catechesis within the Diocese of Bismarck. The Office of Faith Formation is responsible, in cooperation with the parish pastor and director of religious education, for the implementation of all policies and guidelines approved for catechetical programs in the diocese.

106.2 The Office of Faith Formation develops administrative procedures and offers services for diocesan religious education programs.

107 Parish Religious Education Advisory Committee

107.1 The religious education committee of an individual parish advises the director of religious education about issues related to religious education programs. The parish religious education committee is consultative to both the pastor and the director of religious education and advises the administration in areas of long-range planning, finances, policy development and public relations.

201 Vocation of Catechetical Leadership

201.1 Leadership in catechetical ministry has been affirmed by the Church as an authentic vocational call. As with any discernment of vocation, it is appropriate that a candidate for catechetical leadership engage in prayer, study and dialogue with spiritual advisors.

202 Professional Catechetical Leader

202.1 For those called to professional catechetical ministry, it is important to value

- a. the posture of servant-hood that must imbue all ministries done in the name of Jesus Christ and the Church
- b. the expectations of the people of God that leadership is sufficiently educated and trained to provide effective leadership
- c. the rights of catechetical leaders to justice in their pay, benefits, and fair working conditions

203 Director of Religious Education (DRE)

203.1 A director of religious education has the necessary personal qualities, catechetical understanding and skills, organizational and administrative abilities, academic preparation and professional experience to direct the entire religious education program of the parish including providing catechist training, curriculum development and selection of curriculum resources, program design, planning and evaluation as well as supervision of staff, both paid and volunteer, for all age levels (pre-school through adult).

203.2 The qualifications for the director of religious education are:

- a. to be a practicing Catholic
- b. to have a master's degree in religious education, theology or related field, or a bachelor's degree in a related area of study and completion of an advanced certification recognized by the Office of Faith Formation

204 Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE)

204.1 A coordinator of religious education has the necessary personal qualities, catechetical skills, organizational skills, training and experience to perform the administrative responsibilities which are an essential element of a parish religious education program. A coordinator of religious education is ordinarily responsible for recruiting catechists, arranging for catechist training, scheduling classes and programs, ordering materials, communicating with parents.

204.2 The qualifications for a coordinator of religious education are:

- a. to be a practicing Catholic
- b. to have 3 years of experience as a parish catechist
- c. to have a bachelor's degree in a theological, catechetical or related area, OR an advanced certification recognized by the Office of Faith Formation.

205 Selection of Personnel

205.1 The Diocese of Bismarck affirms and supports equal opportunity and treatment for its present and prospective employees and complies with those constitutional and statutory provisions.

205.2 The pastor and the Parish Religious Education Committee are responsible for the recruitment, interviewing, selection and employment of the director of religious education and the coordinator of religious education.

205.3 To insure the safety and security of all children and youth all employees and volunteer must comply with the policies set forth by the diocesan Office of Safe Environment.

205.4 Employers must have a file for each employee.

206 Employee Contract

206.1 Professional Catechetical Leaders employed within a parish are employed by contract. (*See: Appendix A: Sample Employee Contract*)

206.2 An equitable salary is determined by negotiation between the pastor and employee.

206.3 Employee benefits and job description are attached to the employee contract. The contract is signed by the pastor and employee. A copy of the contract, with job description and benefits is kept on file in the parish office.

206.4 When renewing contracts, salaries are adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living, the employee's job description, experience and educational achievement. (*See: Appendix B: Sample Job Description*)

207 Evaluation

207.1 Each director of religious education/coordinator of religious education receives an evaluation annually. (*See: Appendix C: Sample Evaluation*)

207.2 A written record of the evaluation, signed by the employer and employee becomes a part of the employee's personnel record.

208 Renewal and Non-Renewal

In the event that either the employer or a professional catechetical employee of a parish desire to end a contracted relationship, both parties will benefit from a well-defined procedure.

208.1 Upon expiration, contracts for professional employees shall be automatically renewed for the next ensuring year, unless terminated earlier as provided in this manual, or as provided in the contract for employment.

208.2 If a contract is not to be renewed, a written notice to this effect is to be given to the other party no later than the date of the issuance of the contract.

209 Termination of Employee Contract

209.1 An employee may be discharged for cause during the course of a contract. An employ who is being discharged “for cause” may be dismissed immediately.

209.2“For cause” as applies in this manual means:

- a. any expressed belief or conduct inconsistent with the church’s own faith or ethical norms,
- b. conduct that is not harmonious with Catholic morality, ethics, and/or church teachings,
- c. conviction of a crime,
- d. insubordination or use of abusive, threatening, or obscene language,
- e. neglecting one’s job, duties and responsibilities, or refusing to perform assigned work,
- f. inefficiency which the employee has failed to correct after written notice,
- g. falsifying any reports or records that are part of the business of the parish,
- h. impairment due to chemicals, drugs (prescription or non-prescription) and/or alcohol,
- i. theft or destruction of property belonging to the parish or the property of any other employee of the parish,
- j. release of confidential formation about the business of the parish,
- k. unexcused absence,
- l. continuing disability which prevents the employee from performing his/her duties,
- m. sexual misconduct as described in the *Diocese of Bismarck Sexual Misconduct Policy*.

209.3 A written notification is given to the employee who is to be discharged during the course of a contact and the notification is to specify the cause for the discharge.

209.4 Any contracted employee who is to be discharged during the course of a contract is to be granted opportunity for a hearing if he or she requests it within 10 days after receiving notification or as stipulated in the individual parish policy and procedure handbook.

210 Records

210.1 Complete records for each catechetical employee, both full-time and part-time are maintained by the employing parish. These records are confidential; however, employees may have free access to their records upon giving 24-hour notice to their employer. The administrator should be present during the examination of records.

210.2 Personnel records shall include:

- a. application form including letters of reference
- b. current transcript of credits
- c. diocesan certification records
- d. original of signed evaluations
- e. copy of contract with benefits
- f. signed form indicating that the employee read the Policies and Procedures Manual of that individual parish
- g. child safe training form,(signed)
- h. background check

211 Professional Development

211.1 Lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out conscientiously, zealously and diligently. (Canon 231)

211.2 All catechetical leaders are expected to engage in ongoing formation, regardless of title or length of service. Further development may be gained by continued studies through attendance at diocesan conferences and workshops, institutes, in-services, and/or college courses, and attendance at other recognized educational meetings and conferences relevant to their role as a catechetical leader in the parish, and through membership in various professional associations.

212 Networking and Collaboration

212.1 Catechetical leaders should participate in diocesan deanery meetings.

212.2 Information about the meetings are scheduled by the diocesan Office of Faith Formation and published in the monthly Catechist Newsletter.

PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR CATECHISTS /VOLUNTEERS **Series 300**

Consistent orderly procedures for the recruitment, selection, supervision and evaluation of catechists/volunteers contribute to clarification of mutual expectations, establish an objective basis for evaluation and provide catechists with periodic opportunities to recommit or to discontinue volunteer activities. These factors should, over the long term, increase volunteer satisfaction and facilitate recruitment and retention of catechists/volunteers.

301 Recruitment

301.1 The designated catechetical leader recruits and enlist volunteers for the ongoing needs of the catechetical programs.

302 Discernment to Ministry

302.1 Catechists are to be discerned and selected with regard to their:

- a. active Catholic practice and Christian lifestyle
- b. ability to proclaim Catholic faith
- c. willingness to share their lived Catholic faith

303 Requirement for Catechists

303.1 A catechist must:

- a. be a fully initiated and active Catholic, at least **18 years of age**
- b. background check
- c. safe environment training
- d. willingness to participate in ongoing faith formation

304 Prospective Volunteer Interview

304.1 All prospective volunteers are interviewed by the parish catechetical leader. (*See: Diocese of Bismarck website – Faith Formation – The Catechist pgs. 8-9*)

304.2 During the interview the catechetical leader:

- a. Reviews the job description with the potential volunteer.
- b. Outlines expectations and opportunities to achieve diocesan certification.
- c. Fulfills the requirements of the Diocesan Office of Safe Environment.

305 Job Description

305.1 Each parish has an accurate job description for each volunteer position in the catechetical program. (*See: Appendix D: Sample Catechist Job Description*)

305.2 Job descriptions indicate: skills required, time commitment (hours per week), duration of commitment (not to exceed one year) and what support the volunteer can expect from the parish.

306 Evaluation

306.1 Each volunteer receives an evaluation annually. (*See: Appendix E: Sample Catechist Evaluation*)

307

Formation

307.1 While catechists are most often ordinary parishioners wishing to share a part of their time and faith life, a certain level of competence is necessary for those who serve and form others in catechetical ministry. It is the primary responsibility of the catechetical leader to provide for the initial and ongoing faith formation needs of catechists.

307.2 All catechists are expected to participate in at least **six (6) hours** of ongoing faith formation each year. Parish catechetical leaders are encouraged to work with catechists to direct their ongoing formation efforts toward a Basic certification.

307.3 A copy of the catechist's ongoing faith formation hours shall be kept in their file until the required hours for Basic certification has been acquired. The catechetical leader will fill out the proper forms and mail to the diocesan Office of Faith Formation to receive the certificate signed and sealed by the bishop.

307.4 The catechetical leader shall make reference to the diocesan manual *The Catechist: Call, Mission, Formation and Certification* in regard to diocesan certification. (See: *Diocese of Bismarck website –Faith Formation*)

401 Participation

401.1 All members of the parish are eligible to participate in the parish catechetical programs.

401.2 Children and youth from outside the parish may be accepted into the program with the consent of the pastors of both parishes.

401.3 Acceptance of families shall not be based on the ability of the family to pay tuition nor shall it be based on a mandated amount of financial support to the parish.

402 Requirements

402.1 A student entering the program for the first time must present a copy of his/her record(s) of Initiation Sacraments.

403 Registration

403.1 The director/coordinator of religious education is responsible for registration and admission.

403.2 Each program shall have a well-publicized registration for new families.

404 Catechetical Tuition

404.1 Tuition is established by the catechetical leader and the pastor. It should reflect the mission of the parish and meet the demands of effective catechetical program.

405 Records

405.1 The accuracy, privacy and confidentiality of each student's records are preserved.

405.2 Information to be included in the admission record includes:

- a. name of student
- b. name of parent(s) or guardian(s)
- c. address and phone number where student resides
- d. day-time phone number of parent/guardian
- e. phone number for emergencies during class time
- f. sacrament history (sacraments received, dates and place of reception)
- g. special needs of student(learning, behavior, health, allergies)

405.3 Permanent records are retained until the child reaches the **age of 18**.

406 Attendance

406.1 The minimum number of formal catechetical formation for elementary programs is **twenty-five (25)** hours during a school year calendar

406.2 The catechists have the responsibility for keeping an accurate of attendance in the program.

407 Handbook

407.1 Program leaders prepare and distribute a handbook for children and parents which contains parish policies and procedures in regard to catechesis.

407.2 This handbook includes:

- a. the parish philosophy and mission statement for catechetical programs
- b. details of the catechetical sessions
- c. rules of behavior
- d. sacramental policies
- e. other policies and procedures affecting children and parents.

408 Fire Safety

408.1 Appropriate phone numbers for the police and fire departments are posted in each class room.

408.2 All volunteer staff members are instructed of the location and correct use of fire extinguishers.

408.3 Catechists and students are to review the fire drill procedures at the beginning of each year. Each room and hallway shall have fire drill routes posted.

408.4 During a fire drill everyone vacates the building. All windows and doors are closed. An orderly evacuation of the building under supervision of each catechist is imperative. Catechists take the attendance list with them and once outside, call roll to account for each student.

408.6 Fire extinguishers are serviced yearly. When the catechetical program is using premises which serve a catholic school, responsibility for posting fire drill routes and servicing of fire extinguishers is assumed by the school.

408.7 All chains are removed from all doors while sessions are in progress.

409 Health and Safety

409.1 It is the responsibility of the director/coordinator of religious education that all parish educational personnel know exactly what to do in an emergency. Emergency procedures and police, fire department and rescue squad phone numbers are posted.

409.2 The director/coordinator of religious education is notified immediately in case of an accident during a catechetical function.

- a. Parents are notified of the accident/injury as soon as possible.
- b. Basic first aid is administered when appropriate. First Aid kits are readily accessible.
- c. The director/coordinator of religious education keeps a written record of the circumstances of all accidents (e.g., date, time, injured party, immediate cause, involved parties, supervisory volunteer or staff and treatment or action taken).

409.3 Students excluded from regular school attendance because of communicable disease do not participate in parish catechesis.

409.4 Adult monitors shall be assigned to ensure the safety of students at dismissal.

410 Home-Based Catechetical Classes

410.1 Holding catechetical sessions in the homes of catechists may be necessary for reasons of space. These program settings must be closely monitored for safety. (*See Appendix F: Home-Based Catechetical Classes*)

411 Field Trips

411.1 Field trips are planned to enhance the catechetical program and expand the religious experiences of the student.

411.2 A permission form signed by the student's parent/guardian is obtained prior to the student's participation in a field trip. (*See: Appendix G: Field Trip Permission Form*)

411.3 Whenever possible, bus transportation is used. If a commercial carrier is used, the carrier provides a valid bus driver license and certificate of insurance.

411.4 If automobiles/vehicles are to be used to transport students on field trips parents are to be utilized. The drivers and/or the vehicle owners have liability, medical and uninsured motorist insurance coverage, and evidence to this effect is presented to the director/coordinator of religious education for approval prior to the use of the vehicle.

412 Early Release from the Program

412.1 Prudent care is taken in regard to early dismissal from any parish sponsored program.

412.2 The program administrator grants early dismissal to a child only if the request is made in writing by the parent(s) or guardian(s). The request states the reason, date and time involved. The written request is kept on file.

412.3 A child is never released early without the explicit knowledge of his/her parent/guardian. Children may not go home for assignments, books, or disciplinary reasons.

412.4 Under no circumstances may a child be released to anyone other than the parent (or parent with legal custody) or guardian as listed on the family record, unless authorized in writing by the parent/guardian.

413 Discipline

413.1 Disciplinary action is corrective, rather than punitive, with emphasis on developing, within the student, responsibility for his/her own behavior.

413.2 Each program formulates a set of rules and regulations regarding discipline consistent with parish philosophy and diocesan policies and guidelines. These rules are distributed annually in writing to children and parents.

413.3 The catechist manages the discipline problems of his/her classroom and enlists the help of the director/coordinator of religious education only in cases involving serious breach. Whenever the director/coordinator of religious education meets with a student to resolve a discipline problem, **a third party must be present**. In cases of significant or repeated behavioral difficulties, parents are to be informed.

413.4 Disciplinary measures do not inflict bodily harm, subject the student to ridicule, or use punishment for punishment's sake. The following actions are **explicitly forbidden**:

- a.) Corporal punishment,
- b.) Public humiliations,
- c.) Sending a student outside of the classroom where he/she will not be supervised,
- d.) Indiscriminate punishment of all pupils in a class for the disruptive conduct of one,
- e.) Send a student home without the knowledge of the parents.

413.5 If the director/coordinator of religious education believes it necessary to dismiss a student, the director/coordinator of religious education:

- a.) meets with the student, the student's parents, and a third party about the student's action.
- b.) provides written notice to the parents of the decision to dismiss the student.

414 Substance Abuse

414.1 Participants in catechesis may not possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of illegal drugs on the parish grounds, activity bus or at any parish related activity.

414.2 Any participant in a parish catechetical program who possess, buys, or sells drugs or alcohol, or is suspected of possession or consumption, buying or selling drugs or alcohol on parish property or at a parish-sponsored function, shall be referred immediately to the program administrator for action.

414.3 If illegal drugs are confiscated, the director/coordinator of religious education or delegate does so with a witness present. Parents are notified.

415 Suspected Child Abuse

415.1 All suspected cases of child abuse must be reported. For complete information in filing an alleged abuse of a child: *(See Diocese of Bismarck website- Protecting the Children)*

501 Comprehensive Catechesis

501.1 Each parish provides a comprehensive program of catechesis for all parishioners: children, youth and adults, including persons with special needs.

501.2 Parishes follow the diocesan guidelines for preparing for the sacraments. (*See: Diocese of Bismarck website: Faith Formation: Diocesan Policies for Sacramental Preparation*)

502 Adult Faith Formation and Education

502.1 “The catechesis of adults...is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibility and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.” (*On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae, no.43)*)

502.2 “Because of its importance and because all other forms of catechesis are oriented in some way to it, the catechesis of adults must have high priority at all levels in the Church.” (*National Catechetical Directory, no.188*)

503 Adult Faith Formation Professional

503.1 “Each parish will [should] designate an adult faith formation leader – authorized by the pastor and personally involved in ongoing formation – to assume primary responsibility for implementing the ministry of adult faith formation.” (*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, no.135*) This person should have a thorough understanding of the process of adult learning and faith formation, as well as the ability to develop and oversee a parish ministry of lifelong faith formation.

504 Principles for Adult Faith Formation Ministry

504.1 Since lifelong formation is important in developing and maintaining an adult faith, parishes should provide varied opportunities for continuing catechesis. Formation for such diverse groups as singles, the divorced or widowed, parents, and the elderly may take many different forms.

504.2 Adult learning principles should be applied to all adult faith formation ministry. These efforts should:

- a.) address the diverse needs of the parish adult population
- b.) include formation on topics and issues regarding faith development, morality, ministry, scripture, spirituality, liturgical practice, Catholic beliefs, prayer and lay leadership development
- c.) include timely and current topics that apply to living life as a Catholic today
- d.) be interactive, allowing for faith sharing and open dialogue between participants.
- e.) provide practical “take home” or problem solving applications for the adult
- f.) include sufficient time for immediate feedback to assist in processing the content
- g.) recognize that adults possess different learning styles that can be addressed by varied delivery methods.

504.3 Other forms of adult catechesis are the following:

- a.) *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA)
- b.) catechesis for parents and elderly
- c.) catechetical formation of parish and Catholic school teachers
- d.) catechesis for special experiences (e.g., sickness, death, bereavement, reception of sacraments and critical times in life)
- e.) catechesis adapted to the liturgical year
- f.) catechesis for persons with disabilities

505 Youth Ministry

505.1 *Renewing the Vision* is a call to make ministry with adolescents a concern for the entire church community, especially for leaders in parishes, schools, and dioceses. (*Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, pg.1, USCCB*)

505.2 In *Renewing the Vision*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) focuses on three essential goals in ministry with adolescents: (1) empowering young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; (2) drawing young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community; and (3) fostering the personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

505.3 It is recommended that, whenever possible, parishes have a professional (or designated) youth minister. This person is primarily responsible for planning, facilitating, and administering programs; developing a leadership system for adults and youth leaders (recruitment, training and support); and serve as an advocate and liaison between young people, the parish faith community, and the wider community beyond the parish.

506 Curriculum for Secondary and Elementary Catechesis

506.1 Catechesis for the secondary and elementary programs follow the diocesan guidelines manual; *Religion Curriculum Guidelines for Catechesis Kindergarten through Grade 12*. The *Guidelines* contain appropriate doctrinal and content statements clustered around the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Each statement is referenced to the *Catechism* and in many instances also referenced to Scripture. (*See: Diocese of Bismarck website: Faith Formation*)

506.2 All catechetical materials for **secondary** and **elementary** parish programs within the Diocese of Bismarck must be in compliance with the *Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series* approved and published by the USCCB. Current listing is available on the USCCB website.

By selecting religion textbooks from the *Conformity Listing* you will ensure that the students are receiving a comprehensive approach to the faith and that they are also receiving a faithful and complete treatment of the faith by the end of a given series of courses.

506.3 All secondary and elementary students shall participate in **one class each year** in personal safety awareness in compliance with Diocesan Policy for Protection of Children and Young People.

506.4 Sacramental programs will follow the *Diocesan Policies for Sacramental Preparation* available on the Diocese of Bismarck website under Office of Faith Formation.

508 Parish and School Catechetical Ministry

508.1 A Spirit of collegiality and the collaboration must govern the relationship between leaders of parish catechetical ministry and the parish school. The relationship of all administrative personnel should be that of peers sharing a common bond as professionals offering mutual support.

508.2 As far as possible, catechetical preparation and liturgical celebration of sacraments should be normatively viewed as a parish effort, with parish school and parish religious education participating in a joint and collaborative manner. Parent meeting should be held jointly.

509 Home Schooling Religious Education

509.1 “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children,” says the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2223). Catholic home educators have taken this to heart and have responded generously with their time, attention, and love to tutoring their children. The parish catechetical leaders are there to assist and support these parents’ making it a joint effort.

509.2 As part of the parish religious education program, parents who choose to homeschool meet the following criteria:

- a.) register in the parish
- b.) meet with the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education for an interview
- c.) select approved textbook with the DRE/CRE
- d.) the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation and Penance take place in the family’s parish of registration
- e.) the catechesis taught in the home is only for the children living in that home
- f.) include one class of personal safety awareness annually for each child
- g.) encouraged to attend catechist workshops and training programs

Sample Contract

Director of Religious Education Contract of Employment

This agreement is made and entered into this _____, by and between
(Date)

_____, hereinafter designated as the EMPLOYER,
(Parish)

and _____, hereinafter designated as the EMPLOYEE.
(Director)

whose address is _____

1. The EMPLOYER agrees to employ the EMPLOYEE as _____
for a term of _____ months beginning _____
2. The EMPLOYEE accepts such employment for a salary of \$ _____, which the
EMPLOYER agrees to pay in _____ equal installments of \$ _____ per month.
3. The services to be performed shall be those required by the EMPLOYER and described in the
Job Description attached to this contract.
4. The EMPLOYER agrees to permit the EMPLOYEE absence from parish duties during the time
required for participation in diocesan sponsored programs and EMPLOYER agrees to defray
actual direct expenses of the EMPLOYEE'S participation not to exceed \$ _____ per
diem.
5. The EMPLOYEE is entitled to _____ weeks of vacation leave, _____ days of medical leave,
and _____ days of personal leave annually, which must be taken in accordance with
EMPLOYER'S practices regarding accrual, advance notice, etc.
6. The EMPLOYEE acknowledges that he/she has been provided with a summary of other
available employee benefits, which may be available.
7. Upon expiration of the original contract period or a renewal period, this contract shall be
automatically renewed for a like period, upon the same terms and conditions. If either party
elects not to renew, a written notice to that effect shall be given to the other party no later than 15
days prior to the expiration date of the original contract period, or a renewal thereof, as the case
may be.

8. The contract may be terminated by the EMPLOYER for cause at any time. Cause is interpreted to include, but is not limited to the following:
- a. any expressed belief or conduct inconsistent with the church’s own faith or ethical norms,
 - b. conduct that is not harmonious with Catholic morality, ethics, and/or church teachings,
 - c. conviction of a crime,
 - d. insubordination or use of abusive, threatening, or obscene language,
 - e. e. neglecting one’s job, duties and responsibilities, or refusing to perform assigned work,
 - f. inefficiency which the employee has failed to correct after written notice,
 - g. falsifying any reports or records that are part of the business of the parish,
 - h. impairment due to chemicals, drugs (prescription or non-prescription) and/or alcohol,
 - i. theft or destruction of property belonging to the parish or the property of any other employee of the parish,
 - j. release of confidential information about the business of the parish,
 - k. unexcused absence,
 - l. continuing disability which prevents the employee from performing his/her duties,
 - m. sexual misconduct as described in the *Diocese of Bismarck Sexual Misconduct Policy*.
9. This contract shall be of no force or effect until signed by the Pastor and the EMPLOYEE.

(Parish)

(EMPLOYER)

(EMPLOYEE)

(Date)

Sample Job Description

Director of Religious Education

Job Title: Director of Religious Education

Reports to: Pastor

Job Summary

To develop, maintain, and administer catechetical programs for the children, youth, and adults of _____ parish.

Responsibilities

- Research the needs and preferences of parents to determine the best type of religious education program for the parish (formats, materials, scheduling)
- Develop and maintain catechetical programs for all age groups
- Review, select, and acquire suitable materials for these programs
- Develop curriculum in keeping with the guidelines of the diocese
- Develop summer Bible school program for children K-6
- Develop a new parent handbook of religious education policies (registration, attendance, discipline, evaluation process, sacramental preparation procedures, etc.)
- Assist staff in conducting the RCIA process

Recruitment and Training of Volunteer Personnel

- Recruit sufficient volunteers and aides to conduct the parish's catechetical programs
- Provide regular in-services to train volunteers in basic theology, the methods of catechesis, and the use of materials to be employed in their teaching
- Encourage volunteer catechists to obtain diocesan certification and support them in these efforts
- Provide periodic spiritual enrichment and community-building experiences (evenings of recollection, appreciation dinner, etc.)
- Evaluate catechists at least once a year and offer constructive suggestions for improvement as needed

Administration

- Supervise office assistant and volunteers
- Develop comprehensive calendar of all aspects of the catechetical program and coordinate this with the parish's master calendar
- Prepare annual budget and oversee expenditures after its approval by the finance committee
- Arrange for use of the facilities needed to conduct the catechetical program; oversee the proper use and maintenance of these facilities

- Maintain accurate records related to registration, attendance and student evaluations, as well as any required documentation related to sacramental preparation and celebration

Communication

- Attend parish staff meetings; update members regularly on matters pertaining to the catechetical program
- Inform parents in a timely manner of program events and policies: registrations, fee/tuition policy, sacramental preparation schedule and policies, parent meetings, enrichment opportunities, etc.
- Attend monthly meetings of the parish religious education committee; submit reports as requested
- Maintain regular contact with parochial school administrator to ensure cooperation and mutual support
- Maintain regular contact with diocesan office to stay informed of its policies and any programs it is offering

Continuing Education and Professional Development

- Maintain membership in the diocesan DRE organization
- Attend annual diocesan religious education congress; attend appropriate workshops when offered at other times of the year

Qualifications

- Master's degree in religious education or related fields (theology, education)
- Strong leadership and administration skills
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Basic skill in using a computer

(Note: The above are examples of what is usually contained in a job description and how these elements may be worded. Feel free to adapt both the elements and their wording to fit your parish's circumstances and needs. This job description can also be adapted for the Coordinator of Religious Education, Youth Minister, Catechetical Leader for Adult Faith Formation/RCIA)

Sample Performance Review Director of Religious Education

Name _____ Title _____

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Rating Scale | 4. | Consistently Excellent Performance |
| | 3. | Above Average Performance |
| | 2 | Adequately Performance |
| | 1 | Fails to meet job requirements |

(Please Circle One)

Job Related Criteria

Recruits, trains, and supervises catechetical staff 4 3 2 1

Plans, administers, assesses and evaluates the parish religious education program 4 3 2 1

Administration

Manages time effectively 4 3 2 1

Demonstrates effective organizational skills 4 3 2 1

Initiates new programs when appropriate 4 3 2 1

Exhibits effective communication skills 4 3 2 1

Demonstrates good leadership skills 4 3 2 1

Exhibits good evaluation skills 4 3 2 1

Coordinates new and existing programs 4 3 2 1

Delegates authority effectively 4 3 2 1

Actively participates on the parish staff 4 3 2 1

Budgets resources effectively 4 3 2 1

Community Building

Mediates effectively 4 3 2 1

Listens effectively 4 3 2 1

Networks well with other professionals 4 3 2 1

Works well within the parish environment	4	3	2	1
Contributes to a sense of community	4	3	2	1
Catechesis				
Displays effective training and formation skills	4	3	2	1
Enhances personal development	4	3	2	1
Facilitates groups effectively	4	3	2	1
Locates and evaluates new catechetical resources	4	3	2	1
Motivates and teaches others effectively	4	3	2	1

Comments _____

Next Year's Objectives _____

Signature of Reviewer _____

Position _____

Signature of DRE _____

Date _____

Sample Catechist Job Description

Job Title: Catechist for the Parish Religious Education Program

Job Description:

- Sharing in the mission work of the church by walking in faith and sharing the faith
- Teaching the Good News with school age children and building community with their families

Responsible to: Director of Religious Education and Pastor

Duties:

- Be prepared and prompt for classes and/or programs
- Maintain presence before and after classes to support, assist, communicate with other catechists and parents
- Cooperate with the rest of the Religious Education Team in facilitating special events
- Establish communication with the family of the student with opening postcard and occasional letters and let the office know if there is a continual absence
- Seek to grow and learn with continuing educational programs
- Record attendance in folder for each class
- In case of a planned absence, notify the Director or Office Assistant
- Read all communications, both emailed and those placed in weekly folder

Time Required

- Preparation time: 1-2 hours
- Class time: 1 ½ hours (10 minutes before, 1 hour with the class and possibly 15 minutes after dismissal)
- Additional seasonal/sacramental preparation (Advent, Christmas, Easter, end of year)
- Personal formation, continuing education classes toward diocesan certification

Length of Commitment:

- One year, preferably two

In-Service Training Provided:

- Meetings with the coordinators for guidance, direction and support
- Classes offered by the diocese, college or on-line
- Advertisement and consultation in the certification process
- Mandatory attendance at Diocesan Child Protection Workshop

Qualifications and Special Skills:

- Love of the Lord and love of Children
- Willingness to share faith and nurture the children's faith
- Be in communion with the Catholic Church
- Teaching experience is helpful, but not mandatory
- Willingness to work on a team and collaborate for the good of the community

Benefits of Involvement:

- Gain a sense of fulfillment in serving the community
- A sense of accomplishment
- Growing, learning and becoming personally enriched
- A sense of true joy in serving the Lord and helping others to know God (bringing about the reign of God)
- Becoming more familiar with the parish community through increased involvement
- Grow in knowledge and faith

Sample Catechist Evaluation Form

Evaluation is an important element in quality catechist formation. Separate copies of the following form can be completed by the catechist, the Program Director, or both. Each can use it to assess particular areas of strength and areas where growth is needed. This form can serve as an important springboard to a constructive evaluation discussion. (*Faith First Legacy Edition Parish Program Director's Manual*)

Name _____ Grade Level _____ Date _____

- Rating Scale**
- 4. Consistently
 - 3. Adequately
 - 2. Rarely
 - 1. Never

(Please Circle One)

Promoting Knowledge of the Faith

Teaches Catholic beliefs and traditions appropriate to the age level of children 4 3 2 1

Exhibits an enthusiasm for the Catholic faith and a desire to continue to learn about it 4 3 2 1

Participates in various workshops and courses to further knowledge about the Catholic Faith 4 3 2 1

Liturgical Education

Helps the children learn about and celebrate the Church's liturgical year 4 3 2 1

Encourages the children to fully participate in worship and the sacraments 4 3 2 1

Regularly participates in the liturgical life of the parish 4 3 2 1

Moral Formation

Fosters children's understanding of Christian morality and good decision-making skills 4 3 2 1

Helps children apply Catholic, Christian values to their everyday lives 4 3 2 1

Models Catholic values for the children 4 3 2 1

Teaching to Pray

Assists children in understanding the importance of prayer 4 3 2 1

Incorporates a variety of prayer forms into lessons 4 3 2 1

Prepares and utilizes a prayer area for the classroom 4 3 2 1

Takes time for personal spiritual renewal and has a regular practice of prayer 4 3 2 1

Education for Community Life

Makes the classroom a loving Christian community so that children can experience and understand its importance 4 3 2 1

Has good communication with parents and include parents from time to time in class sessions; encourages the children to share what they have learned with family 4 3 2 1

Recognizes and affirms the unique gifts of each child in the class 4 3 2 1

Makes an effort to spend time sharing ideas with other catechists 4 3 2 1

Makes catechist gatherings in the parish 4 3 2 1

Missionary Initiation

Encourages the children to participate in service activities offered either through the class or through the larger parish 4 3 2 1

Helps the children make faith connections to events and people in their families and communities and around the world 4 3 2 1

Challenges the children to think of the many different ways they can make a difference in the world 4 3 2 1

Classroom Management

Arrives in a timely fashion in order to appropriately prepare for the session 4 3 2 1

Prepares an overall lesson plan in advance of the catechetical session 4 3 2 1

Is flexible when lesson plans need to be adjusted for effectiveness 4 3 2 1

Includes a variety of methods and incorporates media in lesson plans to keep students interested and involved 4 3 2 1

Shows a familiarity with and utilizes the various components of the textbook series 4 3 2 1

Is attentive to different learning styles and intelligences 4 3 2 1

Demonstrates effective and appropriate discipline and management strategies 4 3 2 1

Shows an understanding of the impact of environment on the learner 4 3 2 1

Comments _____

Catechist

Date _____

Program Director

Home-Based Catechetical Classes

Parish premises and parish-sponsored activities are protected against third party claims for property damage and bodily injury by general liability insurance; whenever possible catechetical classes should be held on parish property. Some parish catechetical programs in our diocese involve meeting in private homes. In order to provide an environment that protects both the children and the catechists, the Diocese of Bismarck has implemented the following policies and guidelines for home-based catechetical classes. Catechetical classes in the home should always be a means of last resort.

The following diocesan policies are mandated and must be followed:

Home-based catechists must comply with all "Safe Environment" requirements including background checks and safe environment training.

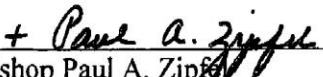
1. Two adults instructors (unrelated) must be present at all times for the classes.
2. To the extent possible, individual students, other than the catechist's own children, should not be in the catechist's home alone.
3. Students should remain in the designated learning areas of the house.
4. At no time should students be allowed in bedrooms or other secluded areas of the home.
5. Window coverings should be fully opened while classes are being held.
6. Learning spaces should be well lit.
7. The DRE (or catechetical leader) is encouraged to perform random site visits to each home-base location in which a class is meeting.
8. The DRE (or catechetical leader) should pre-approve the location of the home in which classes will meet.

Building Safety

1. Smoke detectors must be installed and functioning properly on each floor of the house.
2. A carbon monoxide detector should be installed.
3. Emergency evacuation plan must be posted and practiced.
4. A properly functioning and serviced fire extinguisher needs to be accessible and visible to the catechist.
5. Uneven areas of the sidewalk must be clearly marked.
6. The handrails into the home and to the basement and/or second floor must be installed and secure.
7. Snow and ice must be removed promptly from the walkways, driveways and stairs prior to the arrival of students.
8. Any loose rugs or buckled rugs need to be leveled to prevent trip hazards.
9. Furniture should be installed in such a manner to avoid an obstacle course.
10. Emergency battery back up lighting must be provided. (A battery flashlight is sufficient.)
11. No unrestrained pets are allowed in the area where the students will be arriving or attending the class.

The home owners insurance would be primary in the event of a claim. It should be understood that Catholic Mutual has the interest of the Dioceses and Parishes as a concern and does not extend the coverage to the home owner.

Policy Effective: January 1, 2010

+ 
Bishop Paul A. Zipfel
Diocese of Bismarck

**PERMISSION FORM
PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION**

I request that _____ Religious Education Program
Allow my child _____ to participate in the following
sponsored activity requiring transportation to a location away from the parish facility.

Name of Activity _____

Destination _____ **Date** _____

Method of Transportation _____

Designated Supervisor of Activity _____

I understand that the activity will take place away from the parish premises and that my child will be under supervision. I further consent to the conditions stated above on participation in this event, including the method of transportation.

I recognize and acknowledge that there are certain risks of physical injury to my child in this program and I agree to assume the full risk of any such injuries, damages or loss regardless of severity which I or my child may sustain as a result of participating in any activities associated with this program. I waive and relinquish all claims that I, my insurer, or my child may have for negligence against the Parish, its Parish Religious Education Program and its officers, servants, employees and volunteers from any and all claims from injuries, damages or loss which I or my child may have or which may accrue to me or my child on account of the participation of my child in this program.

Parent/Guardian name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Address _____

Home/Cell phone _____ **Work phone** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

**PARTICIPATION FORM
PARENT/GUARDIAN MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION**

Medical Matter I hereby warrant that to the best of my knowledge, my child is in good health, and I assume all responsibility for the health of my child.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Address _____

Home/Cell phone _____ **Work phone** _____

Of the following statements, sign only those that are applicable.

Emergency Medical Treatment In the event of an emergency, I hereby give permission to transport my child to a hospital for emergency medical or surgical treatment. I wish to be advised prior to any further treatment by the hospital or doctor. In the event of an emergency, if you are unable to reach me at the above number contact:

Name and relationship _____

Phone _____ **Family Doctor** _____ **Phone** _____

Family Health Plan _____ **Carrier Policy #** _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Other Medical Treatment In the event it comes to the attention of the diocese, it's employees, and agents or representatives associated with the Children's Activities that my child becomes ill with symptoms such as headache, vomiting, sore throat, fever, diarrhea, I want to be called collect if necessary (with phone charges reversed to myself.)

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Medications My child is taking medication at present. My child will bring all such medications necessary and such medications will be well labeled. Names of medications and concise directions for seeing that the child takes such medications, including dosage and frequency of dosage is as follows:

Signature _____ **Date** _____

No medication of any type, whether prescription or non-prescription, may be administered to my child unless the situation is life threatening and emergency treatment is required.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

I hereby grant permission for non-prescription medication (such as non-aspirin products, i.e. acetaminophen or ibuprofen, throat lozenges, caught syrup) to be given to my child, if deemed appropriate.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

