

## **Instruction: Catechetical Models for Children**

All parishes are expected to offer a comprehensive and systematic catechetical program for elementary age children (grades 1 through 8). This is crucial because of the fundamental importance of catechesis in the life of the parish, as leadership and all adult members strive to pass on a knowledge of and appreciation for the Catholic faith.

However, there may be situations where a particular parish may have so few children that the catechetical initiative would not realize the desired results. Therefore, in those rare circumstances, pastors, administrators, and parish life coordinators may use their prudent judgment in aligning their catechetical programs with those of another parish in order to provide jointly, to the best of their ability, for the catechesis of the children, utilizing people from each parish in the catechetical program.

The catechetical program will use as its basis a religion textbook series that has been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and will incorporate regularly scheduled sessions with the children.

In keeping with the framework recommended by publishers, the parish program will include from 28 to 32 sessions per academic year (September through May). Each session will range from 60 to 75 minutes in length. A schedule of this nature will insure that the treatment of the catechetical topics presented in the scope and sequence charts of the publishers is both complete and comprehensive.

These catechetical models are not intended to supplant parents as the primary educators of their children; rather they are meant to assist parents in this regard. Parental support of catechetical programs is essential. (*National Directory for Catechesis, pp. 234-235*) To this end, the parish must continually encourage and assist parents so that they may provide proper catechetical formation for their children through word and example.

## **1. Regular Formation Sessions**

- Children, in appropriate age level groups, meet regularly with a catechist at the parish site for a systematic, comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions.
- A grade level text series chosen from the USCCB's approved listing of parish student texts is used. The text series determines the curriculum and incorporates instruction on Scripture and Tradition, liturgy and the liturgical year, creed, sacraments, commandments, moral life, and prayer.
- Trained and formed catechists plan a variety of lesson formats, exhibiting an awareness of different learning styles.
- In addition to the comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions outlined in the texts, the program coordinator and the catechists are encouraged to plan opportunities for a variety of prayer experiences, celebrations of liturgical seasons, retreats, Liturgies, Reconciliation Services, and the like.
- As catechists continue to seek formation and growth in their personal faith and in their knowledge of Church doctrine and Scripture, the Office of Catechetical Services will offer programs and workshops on a regular basis in order to assist them.

## **2. Regular Formation Sessions (Off-Site)**

- Children, in appropriate age level groups, meet regularly with at least 2 catechists (or a catechist and an aid) at the homes of parishioners that have been approved as catechetical sites by the parish. Catechists facilitate a systematic and comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions.
- The parish approves family sites taking into consideration the physical environment of the home, family members in residence, and other safety considerations.

- A grade level text series chosen from the USCCB's approved listing of parish student texts is used. The text series determines the curriculum and incorporates instruction on Scripture and Tradition, liturgy and the liturgical year, creed, sacraments, commandments, moral life, and prayer.
- Trained and formed catechists plan a variety of lesson formats, exhibiting an awareness of different learning styles.
- In addition to the comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions outlined in the texts, the program coordinator and the catechists are encouraged to plan opportunities for a variety of prayer experiences, celebrations of liturgical seasons, retreats, Liturgies, Reconciliation Services, and the like.
- As catechists continue to seek formation and growth in their personal faith and in their knowledge of Church doctrine and Scripture, the Office of Catechetical Services will offer programs and workshops on a regular basis in order to assist them.

### **3. Regular Formation Sessions with a Service Component for Social Justice Education**

- Children, in appropriate age level groups, meet regularly with a catechist at the parish site for a systematic, comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions. This model, which is highly recommended for parishes able to embrace it, adds a significant component to each of the two above models in the area of service motivated by social justice.
- A grade level text series chosen from the USCCB's approved listing of parish student texts is used. The text series determines the curriculum and incorporates instruction on Scripture and Tradition, liturgy and the liturgical year, creed, sacraments, commandments, moral life, and prayer.
- Trained and formed catechists plan a variety of lesson formats, exhibiting an awareness of different learning styles.

- In addition to the comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions outlined in the texts, the program coordinator and catechists are encouraged to plan opportunities for a variety of prayer experiences, celebrations of liturgical seasons, retreats, Liturgies, Reconciliation Services, and the like.
- The service projects will be age appropriate and conducted under the supervision of the catechetical leader or the appropriate catechist(s). Moreover, they will be designed to help the children to appreciate the connection between our faith and our actions.
- As catechists continue to seek formation and growth in their personal faith and in their knowledge of Church doctrine and Scripture, the Office of Catechetical Services will offer programs and workshops on a regular basis in order to assist them.

#### **4. Family Based Catechesis (in the Home)**

- As the primary teachers of the faith for their children (*National Directory for Catechesis, p. 234*) parents provide catechesis for their children in their home.
- The parents meet regularly with their children for a systematic and comprehensive study of Catholic beliefs and traditions.
- A grade level text series chosen from the USCCB's approved listing of parish student texts is used. The text series determines the curriculum and incorporates instruction on Scripture and Tradition, liturgy and the liturgical year, creed, sacraments, commandments, moral life, and prayer.
- Catechetical leaders support this model by providing orientation and training for parents.
- At prescribed intervals, parents meet with the Pastor, DRE (or other appropriate parish leader) to monitor the progress the family is making in catechizing their child/children.

- In addition to the comprehensive presentation of Catholic beliefs and traditions outlined in the texts, parents are encouraged to take advantage of the variety of prayer experiences, celebrations of the liturgical seasons, retreats, Liturgies, Reconciliation Services, and the like as provided by the parish and as appropriate for their child/children. They are also encouraged to incorporate the service component from Model #3 (above) whenever possible.
- As parents continue to seek formation and growth in their personal faith and in their knowledge of Church doctrine and Scripture, the Office of Catechetical Services will offer programs and workshops on a regular basis in order to assist them.
- Parishes may periodically invite families using this model to come together to support and enhance the catechetical efforts of all involved.

Note #1: Since catechesis for children in grades one through eight must follow the guidelines established above, the “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd” is not to be substituted for catechesis which uses approved texts from the USCCB and an appropriate number of sessions per year (28-32). However, the “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd” may be offered in a parish *in addition to an approved program as outlined above*.

For children ages three through five, the “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd” may be offered as a “stand alone” program, since the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops does not require that programs for children in this age group meet the same criteria that programs for children in grades one through eight must meet.

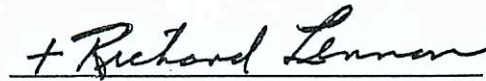
Note #2: Parishes may implement intergenerational catechetical sessions as a complement to the above Catechetical Models. When these are offered, they are not to replace the regularly scheduled formation sessions for children, but are to be held in addition to those sessions.

Note #3: The Office of Catechetical Services is prepared to assist parishes with the implementation of all the catechetical models described herein. Staff members can provide help with all aspects of the catechetical process, from choosing textbooks to designing programs. Moreover, the Office offers frequent courses, workshops, conferences and training sessions designed to assist parish leaders in their efforts to provide the best possible catechesis for their parishioners. The Office also has information on extensive on-line opportunities for catechist formation available through the University of Dayton. For assistance with any catechetical need, please call 1-216-696-6525, or 1-800-869-6525, extension 3260.

In accord with Canon 34, I hereby promulgate the above Instruction: "Catechetical Models for Children" on 9 August 2010, with the implementation date of 15 August 2011.



Sr. Therese Guerin Sullivan, SP  
9 August 2010



Most Reverend Richard Lennon