

FAITH FORMATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

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DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

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July 31, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Catholic Church is called to be a light to the world and to bring the Good News to all people. Entrusted with the care of the Diocese of Arlington, I fervently desire not only to shine the light of truth for all to see, but also to set aflame the hearts of the faithful with this truth. This way, this light will share the warmth of Christ's love and allow His mercy to transform our society.

We must never forget, "The message of salvation in Jesus Christ is intended for all people despite their social, cultural, racial, ethnic, or economic differences" (NDC, 52). No longer can we rely on our cultural heritage or the reputation of our Church to draw people to Christ. Rather, it is the witness of individuals, formed in the faith and aflame with love for the faith, who will extend the invitation to the Kingdom of God and who will share His love with those most in need.

Every baptized person is called to bear witness and to share this Good News. Now, more than ever, dedicated and enthusiastic catechists are needed to teach what we believe, how to live what we believe, and how to respond in faith to the challenges of this world. Faith formation must occur in our homes, classrooms, and beyond our buildings. We must go out "to every stratum of human society in a wide variety of catechetical settings, with the resolute intention to transform all society and renew the face of the earth" (NDC, 52).

The ministry of faith formation is my priority for the Diocese of Arlington. I implore you to respond to this pressing need and to help me with this great work. I ask all Catholics to recommit themselves to faith formation, and I pledge diocesan resources and my prayerful support to the catechetical ministries of this diocese.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Church Document References

This manual contains references and quotations from the following documents:

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

Code of Canon Law (CIC)

Congregation for Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC)

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG)

Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae* (CT)

Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) (AN)

Pope Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis*

U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC)

U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Pastoral Statement of U. S. Bishops on Persons with Disabilities*

Vatican Council I, *Dei Filius* (DF)

Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* (LG)

Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum* (DV)

Policies and Guidelines

The Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines reflect the instructions and admonitions given in the modern catechetical documents of the Church and their pastoral applications in the Diocese of Arlington. This manual will be revised as necessary for pastoral applications of the catechetical ministry. The goal is to have the best faith formation programs possible so that we can fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord: “Go forth, and make disciples of all the nations.”

The mandatory policies for parish faith formation programs are in bold; these are to be observed in all parish throughout the Diocese. These policies will be reviewed through the accreditation program, which will evaluate catechetical ministries, ensure best practices, make recommendations for improvement, and provide transparency in our communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

I. The Need for Catechesis

A recent study¹ released by the *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate* at Georgetown University reveals that only 34% of Millennial Adults (born after 1981) who attended Catholic Elementary School and who still identify themselves as Catholic attend Mass weekly. Sadly, only 5% of Millennial Adults who did *not* attend Catholic Elementary School (including those who were homeschooled and attended parish religious education programs) and who still identify themselves as Catholic still attend Mass weekly. While those statistics are disturbing, they are exacerbated by a comparison with the “Pre Vatican II” generation: 49% of those who attended Catholic Elementary School and 45% of those who did not attend Catholic Elementary School still attend Mass weekly. What happened in the Post Vatican II period to cause such a significant decline, especially for those children who did not attend a Catholic school?

While this study raises some interesting questions about demographics, finances, and the long-term effects of religious education, the focus must be on the state of religious education in the Church in America today. The single greatest reason parents gave for enrolling children in a Catholic Elementary School was, “for a quality religious education.” The majority of parents make the sacrifice to send their children to Catholic School because they want their children to be raised in, and to continue living, the faith. Likewise, parents who cannot afford to send their children to Catholic Elementary Schools or who have other reasons for not doing so, have the same desire for their children.

Yet, these statistics show there is clearly a disconnection between religious education and life-long discipleship. Pope St. John Paul II, in an address to seminarians at St. Joseph’s Seminary in New York (1995), said, “If there is one challenge facing the Church and her priests today, it is the challenge of transmitting the Christian message whole and entire without letting it be emptied of its substance.”

Before formulating a strategy to meet this challenge, the catechist must understand the history and mission of this ministry.

II. A History of Catechesis and the Challenges of the Mission Today

In His love, God chose to reveal Himself to man. Through the work of creation and His mighty deeds God’s existence can be known. Through covenants established by God and recorded in the Scriptures, God calls man to union with Himself. God brings His people to know and to profess faith in the Holy Trinity, which will characterize the Church Jesus founded.

A catechetical reading of the Gospels reveals that Jesus taught His disciples to understand Who He is, and the Church by which mankind is to respond to our Lord, and to abide by His teaching.

¹ “Do Catholic Schools Matter”, <http://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2014/> as seen on 16 Jan 2019.

Jesus began His ministry preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God by saying, “Repent and believe in the Gospel” (cf. Mk. 1:15). He identified Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn. 14:6). Jesus then taught the essential “articles” of this Gospel to be believed with divine faith, which is summarized in the Creed. Jesus helped His disciples respond with a true conversion—the Christian way of life:

- the practice of the seven Sacraments;
- the life of the Gospel; and
- personal prayer.

Jesus taught and formed disciples with the deposit of faith so that He could send them out as Apostles with His own mission to teach Divine Revelation. This deposit is summarized as the four pillars of the faith, namely: Creed, Sacraments, Moral Life and Prayer.

At the Ascension, Jesus said to the Apostles,

Full authority has been given to Me both in Heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the Name “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world (Mt. 28:18-20).

Filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Apostles fulfilled Christ’s command. They established the Catholic Church throughout the pagan Roman Empire; this Church continues Christ’s saving mission to this very day.

The apostolic Church was a teaching Church. The concern of the Apostles was to hand on the faith as they had received it. They took to heart the command of Jesus to make disciples and to form witnesses of the faith.

From the very beginning described in the New Testament, the Catholic Church has treasured the faith which she teaches as a divine deposit entrusted to her by the Supreme Being of the universe. The very idea of catechesis always has been that of a teaching process which is abidingly faithful to this divine deposit.²

Every early Christian community had trained teachers who served as catechists.

As the Church grew, the deposit of faith was handed on devotedly and fully in union with the Apostles and their successors. A method developed through which beginners in the faith received an elementary level of education (a summary of the saving mysteries) for initiation into the Church community. Afterward, they were taught to understand a higher level of Christian doctrine that built upon that initial foundation. As they grew in age and knowledge of the faith, as St. Paul taught, they would “leave behind then all the elementary teaching about Christ and concentrate on its completion, without going over the fundamental doctrines again” (Heb. 6:1), thereby reaching maturity of faith. This program for faith formation was systematic and established communities where the faith was lived through discipleship.

The Catechumenate became the model for catechesis. Wherever the Church established apostolic centers, it nourished its believers with the same catechetical program for handing on

² Introduction by Msgr. Eugene Kevane, Oddi, Silvio. *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today: Twentieth Century Catechetical Documents of the Holy See ...* Daughters of St. Paul, 1982. p. xiv.

the faith. The “rule of faith” (Creed) was received with Baptism, and then the neophyte grew through teaching and modeling of conversion. This model of evangelization and catechesis was vital to the very life of the Church, for it formed the person in living the Christian way of life. St. Vincent of Lerins (d. 435) taught that the common practice was to hold fast and teach the faith that was believed everywhere, always, and by all³. The Catechumenate did not end with the patristic age but continued to develop over time to teach Catholics—both adults and children—in the ways of discipleship.

As the West was Christianized, the Catholic faith became part of the culture. The faith was passed from parent to child and was taught in parish classes. Art, architecture, music, and theatre – all that was noble and beautiful reflected the glory of God. Cathedrals with stained glass and statues brought the beauty of the faith to the poor and illiterate, elevating the heart and mind in prayer to God. Despite wars and plagues, the Catholic Church was a beacon of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

Starting at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church expressed greater concern for the means of passing on the deposit of faith with the onset of the protestant movement. In response to the Protestant errors, the Council of Trent (1545-63) clearly presented, refined, and defined the truths of the faith. The council also called for a greater pastoral and catechetical care of souls. As Mother, the Church sought to ensure that Her children “might receive the Sacraments with accurate personal knowledge regarding their nature, purpose, and power for the life of grace.”⁴ To this end, the *Roman Catechism* (also known as *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, published 1566) was written so the faith could be clearly communicated fully, authentically, and authoritatively. Catechisms developed from the *Roman Catechism* allowed the faith to be communicated efficiently and free from doctrinal error; nevertheless, catechists living out their faith as disciples and witnesses were essential for effectively forming disciples.

Beginning in the later seventeenth century, the age of enlightenment brought a darkening of the mind to God, the supernatural, and a rejection of absolute truth. To face this challenge, the First Vatican Council (1870-71) presented and defined the nature of Divine Revelation and the infallibility of the Supreme Magisterium. To secure the foundations of catechetical teaching, the council taught,

All those matters must be believed with divine and Catholic faith that are contained in the Word of God, whether in Scripture or Tradition, and that are proposed by the Church, either by a solemn decision or by the ordinary and universal magisterium, to be believed as divinely revealed.⁵

Vatican I also proposed the composition of a uniform catechism for children with its use to be mandated throughout the universal Church; unfortunately, this council was cut short by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and the call for a new catechism was not fulfilled.

³ Vincent of Lerins, *The Commentaries*, I, 2; in Rudolph E. Morris transl. *The Fathers of the Church* (New York: The Fathers of the Church, 1949), Vol 7, p. 270.

⁴ Introduction by Msgr. Eugene Kevane, Oddi, Silvio. *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today: Twentieth Century Catechetical Documents of the Holy See ...* Daughters of St. Paul, 1982. p. xxix.

⁵ Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, chapter 3; John F. Broderick, S.J., op cit., p. 44.

However, the Bishops in America at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore fulfilled this task in 1885 by producing the *Baltimore Catechism*, which remained an essential catechetical tool until Vatican Council II.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Pope St. Pius X continued to address the ongoing problem:

We are aware of the disquiet which agitates certain groups of men at the present time with regard to the faith... We see even Catholics allowing themselves to be seized by a kind of passion for change and novelty...[giving] rise, as is unfortunately seen in these days, to disturbance and doubt in many faithful souls.⁶

To combat this crisis, which he termed “Modernism,” Pope St. Pius X proposed effective catechesis as the solution: “The task of the catechist is to take up one or other of the truths of faith or of Christian morality and then explain it in all its parts..., moving his hearers and clearly pointing out to them how they are to regulate their own conduct.”⁷ This statement captures the heart of the catechetical method—a simple, clear, and practical method for handing on the truths of the faith and forming real disciples and witnesses. Furthermore, St. Pius X has a clear message to meet the challenge at hand: “There is no authentic and effective care of souls apart from the deposit of faith. Without this divine deposit, they will neither know, love and follow Jesus the Good Shepherd nor be able to receive the Sacraments fruitfully.”⁸

To meet the challenge of Modernism, and to restore correct knowledge and faithfulness of Church teaching, Pope Pius XI called for schools and colleges to prepare teachers of the faith in matters of doctrine, Bible history, and Church history. The Holy Father noted, “[A catechist] will never be able to teach Christian doctrine to children or to adults without first giving himself to very careful study and preparation.”⁹ Teacher formation is one of the most important ministries to ensure sound catechesis. Again, the Holy Father noted, “There is nothing more effective than catechetical instruction to spread the glory of God and to secure the salvation of souls.”¹⁰ The key is sound catechesis, which “when rightly done, never fails to profit those who listen to it.”¹¹

Following the horrors of World War II and the spread of Communism, Pope John XXIII took up the mission of catechesis with the Second Vatican Council. With the goal being the renewal of the universal Church, his vision may be summarized in three aspirations.

⁶ St. Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis: De Christiana doctrina tradenda*, #4. For the official Latin text, see *Acta S. Sedis*, Vol 37 (1904-1905), pp. 613-625.

⁷ *Ibid*, #13 “The Catechetical Lesson Plan.”

⁸ Introduction by Msgr. Eugene Kevane, Oddi, Silvio. *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today: Twentieth Century Catechetical Documents of the Holy See ...* Daughters of St. Paul, 1982. p. xl.

⁹ *Ibid*, #26.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, #17.

¹¹ *Ibid*, #14.

- First, this renewal needs a restored fervor of religious devotion.
- Second, an extensive and deep renewal of catechesis was in order to make true disciples and witnesses.
- Third, Catholics must bear witness to the call to holiness in order to evangelize the world.¹²

These three objectives are interconnected. Well-catechized Catholics will live the faith with devotion and fervor; thereby, they will bear witness in the world and lead others to Christ.

Sadly, the crisis continued. Instead of converting the world, Catholics were being converted *to* the world. Pope St. John Paul II recognized the difficulties that had emerged throughout the Church after Vatican Council II—confusion, defection, and disbelief. Catholics who grew up during the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s well know the distortions that occurred in “the spirit of Vatican II.” Embracing the fast-changing mores of society, many Catholics rejected the doctrines, moral teachings, and authority of the Church. Some religious education programs and materials failed to convey the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Catholic faith. Today, generations of Catholics suffer from the weak catechesis they had received in their childhood; therefore, they are not able to effectively hand on the faith to their children.

In 1985, Pope St. John Paul II convoked an extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops to mark the 20th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. The purpose of this synod was not only to celebrate the fruits of the council but also to clarify and better understand its teachings. Consequently, the synod proposed,

That a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed as a source text for the catechisms or compendia composed in the various countries. The presentation of doctrine should be biblical and liturgical, presenting sure teaching adapted to the actual life of Christians.

Therefore, St. John Paul II and the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith guided by Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) dedicated themselves to composing a new, universal catechism.

On October 11, 1992, Pope St. John Paul II promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This date was not chosen randomly but marked the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

The mission to renew the Church and the challenges for catechesis remain, especially given the increasingly secular and relativistic society of today. Pope Benedict XVI, in his Address to Catholic Educators (2008)¹³, stated,

The Church’s primary mission of evangelization... is consonant with a nation’s

¹² See John XXIII, “L’incontro coi parroci,” AAS (March 31, 1962), 167-175.

¹³ Apostolic Journey to the United States of America and Visit to the United Nations Organization and Headquarters, Meeting with Catholic Educators, Address of His Holiness, Benedict XVI, Thursday, 17 April 2008; http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080417_cath-univ-washington.html, as seen on May 6, 2019.

fundamental aspiration to develop a society truly worthy of the human person's dignity. ...The *diakonia* of truth takes on a heightened significance in societies where secularist ideology drives a wedge between truth and faith. This division has led to a tendency to equate truth with knowledge and to adopt a positivistic mentality which, in rejecting metaphysics, denies the foundations of faith and rejects the need for a moral vision. Truth means more than knowledge: knowing the truth leads to discover the good. Truth speaks to the individual in his or her entirety, inviting us to respond with our whole being. This optimistic vision is found in our Christian faith because such faith has been granted the vision of the *Logos*, God's creative Reason, which in the Incarnation, is revealed as Goodness itself. Far from being just a communication of factual data—“informative”—the loving truth of the Gospel is creative and life-changing—“performative” (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 2). With confidence, Christian educators can liberate the young from the limits of positivism and awaken receptivity to the truth, to God and His goodness. In this way, you will also help to form their conscience which, enriched by faith, opens a sure path to inner peace and to respect for others.

Therefore, the mission for all catechists remains the same: to be genuine disciples and witnesses of the Gospel, and as such, to go forth, make disciples, and teach everything the Lord has commanded. By the power of the Holy Spirit, poured forth at Pentecost, catechists can meet the challenge of today's world. Pope St. John Paul II encouraged all catechists with the following words:

You can be sure that if catechesis is done well in your local Church, everything else will be easier to do. And [... it will] win for you the joy and consolation of seeing your Churches flourish because catechesis is given in them as the Lord wishes (CT, 63).

2. EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS

I. Introduction

Evangelization is at the heart of the life of the Church. In Her identity as Mother and Teacher, the Church must never neglect Her sacred responsibility of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to all of humanity. Just as the Holy Spirit empowered the Apostles with the gifts they needed to bring the Gospel to all nations, the Holy Spirit continues to animate the Church's ministry of evangelization and empower the faithful to be genuine witnesses to those who do not believe.

The Church's mission of evangelization is permeated by catechesis. While catechesis and evangelization are not the same, "there is no separation or opposition between catechesis and evangelization...Instead, they have close links whereby they integrate and complement each other" (CT 18). **The mission of evangelization enlivens the Church's pastoral and missionary activity, while catechesis makes concrete Her mission of evangelization.** Catechesis constitutes the "Good News" that Christ commissioned His Apostles to spread throughout the whole world and announce to every person (cf. Mk. 16:15; NDC 22).

Evangelization must have catechetical aspects:

- **The initial proclamation of the Gospel that awakens faith,**
- **The examination of reasons for belief,**
- **The experience of Christian living,**
- **The celebration of the Sacraments,**
- **Integration into the ecclesial community, and**
- **Apostolic witness.**

Catechesis then nurtures the seed of faith sown by the Holy Spirit through the initial proclamation of the Gospel. "The 'moment' of catechesis is that which corresponds to the period in which conversion to Jesus Christ is formalized, and provides a basis for first adhering to Him" (GDC 62). It gives growth to the gift of faith given in Baptism and elaborates the meaning of the Sacraments. **Catechesis imparts the doctrine of the faith in an "organic and systematic way with a view to initiating the learners into the fullness of Christian life" (CCC 5).**

Catechesis then:

- **Develops a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ;**
- **Encourages more profound incorporation into the Church;**
- **Nourishes Christian living and encourages discipleship in Christ; and**
- **Instructs in Christian prayer.**

Therefore, catechesis speaks to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples of all people. Catechesis helps the evangelized believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in His Name. Catechesis then educates and instructs them in this life so they may build up the Body of Christ (cf. CCC 4; see also CT 1-2).

II. The Goal of Catechesis

Catechesis leads people to enter into the mystery of Christ, to encounter Him, and to discover themselves and the meaning of their lives in Him. Jesus Christ, Himself is always the first and last point of reference in catechesis because He is “the Way and the Truth and the Life” (NDC 55). **Catechesis aims at putting “people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity” (CT 5). The ministry of catechesis serves the salvation of souls!**

III. The Process of Catechesis

Individuals develop as human beings and faithful followers of Christ in different ways and according to their own pace. The Church’s catechesis—and even more so, the catechist—must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age and developmental level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way.

Evangelization and catechesis progress through four stages (GDC 47):

- 1) Christian witness and dialogue;**
- 2) Proclamation of the Gospel (to repent and believe);**
- 3) Catechumenate and Christian Initiation; and**
- 4) Continuous Education.**

A. Parents as Primary Educators

In this formative process, parents are given the profound privilege and serious duty of being the child’s first and principal teachers of the faith. The home is the domestic church. For the most part, the attitudes and values children acquire come from their parents. These are the seeds for the child’s religious experience and instruction, and thus the family is where faith is learned, lived, and nurtured. “Parents [teach their children by] sharing love for Christ and His Church and each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its [grace], and by fostering justice and love in all their relationships” (NDC 54). **To help parents in this important responsibility, the Church supports and assists these parents at the diocesan and parish levels.**

B. Parish Faith Formation Programs

Parish faith formation programs (Homeschool, Parish Religious Education, and Catholic School) are designed to teach children who are already baptized, providing continuous education (or stage 4 from GDC 47, above). Nevertheless, these programs support the parents, who are the primary educators of their children. **For parish faith formation programs to be effective, parents must accompany their children in their faith experience: parents must make the home a domestic church where Jesus is truly the Lord.** In so doing, from their family experience, children have a context for classroom instruction, and the truths of the faith which are taught in faith formation classes are reinforced.

Sadly, when evangelization has not occurred, or the faith has been taught only superficially, there is no solid foundation upon which to provide catechesis. **As such, a comprehensive parish vision for evangelization and catechesis must be implemented for both children and adults, so that the entire parish community may grow in faith and discipleship.**

IV. The Tasks of Catechesis

The catechetical methods come from the Divine Pedagogy. From the very beginning, God's plan was for man to be united with Him through the life of grace. After the Fall (cf. Gn. 3), God promised to send a Savior. God gradually revealed Himself and His plan to man and established covenants as recorded in the Old Testament. Fulfilling His promise, out of love for mankind, the Father sent His only begotten Son to redeem and save mankind "so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn. 3:14).

All of Jesus' words, deeds, actions, and silences are part of the Divine Pedagogy, which together gradually reveal and teach God's loving plan. After His Baptism, Jesus proclaimed His Kingdom, calling all to repentance, conversion, and belief (cf. Mk. 1:15). Jesus called men to follow Him as His disciples and formed them by making known to them "the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 13:11). He taught them how to pray (Lk. 11:2). He opened His "meek and humble heart" to them (Mt. 11:29). He sent them out as Apostles "ahead of Him in pairs to every town to proclaim the Good News" (Lk. 10:1).

Then, having ushered in the Kingdom, with the greatest act of love—His Passion, Death, and Resurrection—Jesus continued to form His Apostles and other disciples. He opened the hearts and minds to understand the Scriptures and His teaching. Jesus shared the Sacraments with them and ordained His Apostles to be the ministers of those same Sacraments. He showed them how to live; He prayed with them. At the Ascension, Jesus entrusted His mission to them.

Together, the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost, and with the great gifts of the Holy Spirit, built up the Church. It is through the Church which Jesus founded that the fullness of God's Revelation is faithfully transmitted to every age and people, opening the gates of Heaven to those who respond faithfully.

Therefore, the fundamental task of catechesis is to achieve this same objective: to introduce people to God, Whose loving plan is to unite man with Himself through Jesus, and the formation of the disciples of Jesus in His Church. Christ's method of formation is the paradigm for effective catechesis today. The faith must be known (Creed), celebrated (Sacraments), lived (Moral Life), and expressed (Prayer): these are the pillars of our faith. In all, catechesis imparts the teaching of Christ, the deposit of the faith, in an "organic and systematic way with a view to initiating the learners into the fullness of Christian life" (CCC 5).

The Six Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis

Catechesis comprises six fundamental tasks, each of which is related to an aspect of faith in Christ. All efforts in evangelization and catechesis must incorporate these tasks (NDC 20).

A. Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith.

The initial proclamation of the Gospel introduces the hearers to Christ for the first time and invites conversion to Him. The message of evangelization is succinct: Jesus is “the Son of God made man, Who died and rose from the dead. Salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy” (EN 27). “Jesus Christ loves you; He gave His life to save you; and now He is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, and to free you” (EG 164). By the action of the Holy Spirit, the person who hears this message has a desire to know about Christ, His life, and the content of His message.

Catechesis responds to this desire by giving believers knowledge of the content of God’s Self-revelation, which is found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, and by introducing them to the meaning of the Creed. St. Augustine said, “This then, is the Creed... The words you have heard, scattered all across the Sacred Scriptures, are here gathered up and reduced to a tight unity.”¹⁴ Creeds and doctrinal formulas that state the Church’s belief are expressions of the Church’s living tradition, which from the time of the Apostles has developed “in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit” (DV 8). Handed down from the Apostles and refined by Ecumenical Councils, the creeds articulate the faith of our Baptism. Moreover, they are more than a statement of about belief; they are a profession of our identity as believers in Christ.

B. Catechesis promotes a knowledge of the liturgy and the Sacraments.

“The Church...re-reads and re-lives the great events of Salvation History in the ‘today’ of Her liturgy. But this also demands that catechesis help the faithful to open themselves to this spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation as the Church’s liturgy reveals and enables us to live it” (CCC 1095). **Catechesis should promote “an active, conscious, and genuine participation in the liturgy of the Church, not merely by explaining the meaning of the ceremonies, but also by forming the minds of the faithful for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for a community spirit, and for understanding correctly the meaning of the creeds” (GDC).** Since Christ is present in the Sacraments, the believer comes to encounter Christ in the liturgical celebrations of the Church and is drawn into communion with Him.

¹⁴ Bradly, Fr. Robert. *The Roman Catechism in the Catechetical Tradition of the Church: The Structure of the Roman Catechism as Illustrative of the “Classical Catechesis”* (New York: University Press of America, 1990), p. 31.

C. Catechesis promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ.

Every person who encounters Christ is forever changed. Throughout the Scripture, are found examples of such confrontations. The woman who anointed Jesus' feet with her tears went away forgiven, while the Rich Young Man went away sad. Jesus' moral teaching is an integral part of His message: "repent and believe" (Mk. 1:15) and "come follow Me" (Mt. 19:21).

"Coming to see in the faith their new dignity, Christians are called to lead henceforth a life 'worthy of the Gospel of Christ'" (CCC 1692). **Catechesis must transmit both the content of Christ's moral teachings as well as its implications for Christian living. Moral catechesis aims to conform the believer to Christ—to bring about personal transformation and conversion. It should encourage the faithful to give witness both in their private lives and in the public arena by living Christ's teaching in everyday life.** Such testimony demonstrates "the social consequences of the demands made by the Gospel" (CT 29).

D. Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ.

Conversion to Christ and communion with Him lead the faithful to adopt His disposition of prayer and reflection. "Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man" (CCC 2564).

Jesus' entire Life, Death, and Resurrection were an offering to His Father, culminating in His Sacrifice on the Cross. This same Sacrifice is made present on the altar during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the perfect prayer and worship offered to the Father. Catechesis, therefore, should invite the believer to be united with Christ through the Church and to offer worship to the Father for the four ends of the Mass:

1. As an act of adoration to the Father, Who is the Supreme Good and from Whom all other goods receive their meaning;
2. In thanksgiving, as all goodness comes from God's generous hand, thereby moving man to praise with grateful hearts;
3. To atone for sins, for in turning to the Heavenly Father with humble and contrite hearts man finds forgiveness and healing; and
4. To petition the Father for spiritual and temporal needs, and to call upon the angels and Saints to pray with and for the members of the Church.

Secondary to the Mass is private prayer. **Prayer should be the ordinary environment for all catechesis, so that the knowledge and practice of the Christian life may be understood and celebrated in its proper context.** Catechesis not only involves the teaching of how to pray, but also the memorization of prayers as a foundation for spiritual growth. *Lectio Divina* should have a preeminent place in the classroom.

E. Catechesis prepares the Christian to participate actively in the life of the Church.

Evangelization and Catechesis are intended to lead to initiation into the Catholic Church, which Jesus founded. Jesus’s saving mission is perpetuated in the Church’s teaching and worship, and it is through the Church that is found the fullness of the means of salvation. The Catholic faith is corporate; through Baptism, man is incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ.

Jesus said to His disciples, “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34). This command provides the basis for the disciples’ life in community, in communion with one another and with Christ. **Catechesis provides an apprenticeship for living the life of grace, which is dispensed and nourished in the Church. Catechesis encourages the disciples of Jesus to make their daily lives a witness of the love of Christ and an invitation to others to know Christ through His Church.**

Students today must learn to be strong in their faith in a world that rejects it. They must not withdraw from the world, or when confronted by others. **Catechesis must have an ecumenical dimension as it prepares the faithful to live in contact with others, “affirming their Catholic identity while respecting the faith of others” (CT 32).** The laity, who live their faith in the world, are called by virtue of their Baptism to share in the missionary activity of the Church.

F. Catechesis prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.

“The ‘world’ thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation” (LG 16). **Catechesis seeks to help the disciples of Christ to be His witnesses in society, both in word and deed.** Catechesis nourishes the evangelical attitudes of Jesus Christ in the faithful: to be poor in spirit, compassionate, meek, and merciful; to be pure of heart; to hear the cry of injustice and correct wrongs; to make peace; and to accept rejection and persecution (cf. Mt. 5:3-11). Catechesis recognizes that other religious traditions reflect the “seeds of the Word” that can constitute a true “preparation for the Gospel” (LG 16). Through their vocations and faithful witness, Catholics attract the spiritually hungry to the Church to be fed with the Bread of Life.

V. Criteria for the Authentic Presentation of the Christian Message

To guide Her catechetical ministry, the Church provides the criteria for the authentic presentation of the Christian message (NDC 25, A-I [as below], pp. 75-87), which must be utilized in teaching the faith.

A. Catechesis must be centered on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Catechists must first present Christ, and then everything else in reference to Christ. Jesus is the definitive Revelation of God, the center of Salvation History, and the ultimate meaning and purpose of history. His Gospel message is at the core of what is believed. Catholics must “proclaim His Name, teaching, promises, and mystery.” **Through faith formation, students**

should develop the personal relationship that Christ has initiated with each of His disciples. Catechists should, therefore, “promote conversion to Christ and communion with Him through the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.”

B. Catechesis must teach the Trinitarian character of the Christian message.

The Trinity is the central mystery of the Catholic faith, which is professed in the Creed. “The Christian message is inherently Trinitarian because its source is the Incarnate Word of the Father, Jesus Christ, Who speaks to the world through His Holy Spirit.” The Gospel message must proceed “through Christ, to the Father, in the Holy Spirit and lead to a confession of faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” **The catechist must present God’s plan, which was fulfilled in Christ and continues in the Church today through the workings of the Holy Spirit.**

C. Catechesis must proclaim the Good News.

God offers man salvation, frees him from sin, brings man into communion with Himself and all humanity, and promises eternal salvation. This is the reign of God inaugurated by Christ, which is present in the Church and is a foretaste of Heaven. **Catechists must teach the ways of God to their students, forming them to receive and share God’s love, justice, and mercy.**

D. Catechesis must teach the ecclesial character of the Christian message.

Man is called to relationship with Christ through His Church. **Catechists must lead God’s children to actively participate in the life of the Church into which they are Baptized.** This means that faith is lived in community. It is the Church that has received the Gospel, “understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it” (NDC 25, D) There is a universal nature to the faith—it transcends space and time. The faith is preserved, faithfully passed on, and lived in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church founded by Christ, Himself.

E. Catechesis must teach the historical character of the Christian message.

“Jesus Christ is a historical figure Who preached the Good News of the coming of the Kingdom of God in time. The Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ are real historical events.” **Catechists must proclaim Christ to every age and present Salvation History as it has been revealed through the Old Testament, the New Testament and the life and history of the Church, which remembers the saving events of the past, and makes them present in Her liturgy.** Catechists also must help their students to understand the meaning of the present age in light of God’s Revelation and the history of the Church.

F. Catechesis must lead to discipleship.

Inculturation is the key to a pastoral presentation of the Good News, which is intended for all people of all times and cultures. **It is necessary to teach the authentic message (without**

addition, subtraction, or distortion), making it relevant to its audience. Catechesis presents the Word of God and nurtures faithful discipleship, so Christians may then transform the culture in Christ.

G. Catechesis must teach the hierarchical character of the Christian message.

Catechists must teach a living faith—an organic faith. The Catholic faith has a hierarchical character, in that some teachings are more central to the Christian Message while other teachings build upon those central teachings. For example, the most central teaching in Christianity is the mystery of the Trinity, and all truths are related to this central teaching. The next teaching in this hierarchy is the Divinity of the Person of Jesus Christ, followed by the Church He founded, through which His teachings are transmitted, and His grace is dispensed. The Church also responds in love to God through worship and the celebration of the Sacraments, living the Moral Life, and offering prayer. **The four pillars of the Church’s teachings-- Creed, Sacraments, Moral Life, and Prayer-- build upon this hierarchy rooted in Christ and ultimately the Trinity.**

H. Catechesis must instill the profound meaning of the human person.

In this day and age, it is crucial to teach that each person is created with an inherent dignity in the image of God. **Through abundant graces beginning at Baptism, man is conformed to His likeness. God loves each person, regardless of physical or intellectual ability. God has purposely willed each person, given him life, and designed a loving plan for him. Therefore, the ultimate meaning of man is found in relation to God.** Only God can satisfy the aspirations of the human heart.

Scripture helps man to interpret his experiences—his prayers, works, joys, and sufferings—within the context of Salvation History. The Church’s teachings are a guide for mankind. The liturgy and Sacraments dispense abundant graces, and correspond to man’s experience of life and lead him ever more deeply into union with God.

I. Catechesis must use a common language in transmitting the Christian Message

The faith should be understood, lived, proclaimed, and celebrated in a common language for all the faithful. **Catechists must teach with proper Biblical, liturgical, and catechetical terminology, and avoid language that is confusing or would inadvertently alter the substance of the faith. At the same time, catechists must utilize language that is age and developmentally appropriate, to ensure that students understand the truths of the faith.**

VI. Methodology

The methods employed in teaching the faith are to be at the service of the content. Regardless of how catechists teach, *what they teach* remains the same. There are many different teaching methods, learning styles, and educational ideologies. The Church, in her

wisdom, implores catechists to employ the best practices for teaching the truth. These methods generally fall into two categories: inductive methodology (reasoning from details to the “big picture”) and deductive methodology (reasoning from the “big picture” to the details); these tend to work well together. Of course, memorization remains an important tool for learning dogmatic formulas and prayers.

3. DIOCESAN FAITH FORMATION TEAM

I. Introduction

The principal competencies of the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation are the following (GDC 266):

- To assess the state of the Diocese with regard to education in the faith and to identify real needs to be addressed;
- To develop a plan of action which sets out clear objectives, proposes definitive suggestions, and produces concrete results;
- To promote the formation and certification of catechists;
- To indicate to parishes and to catechists, the necessary instruments for catechesis, e.g., catechisms, directories, programs for different ages, guides for catechists, material for those being catechized, audio-visual aids, etc.;
- To promote diocesan institutions of a specifically catechetical character, e.g., programs for those with special needs; and
- To collaborate with the diocesan Office of Divine Worship, especially for Sacrament preparation programs and the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) and children.

To accomplish these responsibilities, the diocesan Office of Faith Formation should "have a staff of persons who have special competence. The extent and the diversity of the problems which must be handled demand that the responsibilities be divided among a number of truly skilled people" (GDC 267).

A. Bishop

“As the chief catechist in the Diocese, the Bishop is responsible for the total catechetical mission of the local Church. Catechesis is one of the fundamental tasks of the Bishop’s ministry. First of all, the Bishop is a catechist himself; he is a ‘herald of truth’” (NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 218).

The Bishop of Arlington is the head of the local faith community and teacher of doctrine. With the help of the Office of Faith Formation, he directs and moderates all the catechetical activities of the diocese.

The Bishop has been entrusted with the sacred duty to teach, govern, and sanctify. Knowing that the objective of the Church is the salvation of souls, the Bishop must:

- Devote himself to the proclamation of the Gospel and the ministry of catechesis;
- Supervise the catechetical mission in his diocese;
- Ensure that the ministry of catechesis receives the support of competent personnel, effective means, and adequate financial resources;
- Certify that the texts and other instruments used in catechesis transmit the Catholic faith completely and authentically;
- Ensure that catechists are adequately prepared for their task, being well-instructed in the doctrine of the Church and possessing both a practical and theoretical knowledge of the latest psychology and educational methodology; and

- Adopt a catechetical plan that is integrated into the overall diocesan pastoral plan and coordinated with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

B. Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation

The Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation works directly with the Bishop of Arlington to implement the catechetical mission of the diocese. The Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation coordinates with the diocesan Offices of Divine Worship, Catholic Schools, Legal and Human Resources, Youth Ministry, Family Life, Vocations, Special Religious Education, Ministry for the Deaf, Hispanic Catechetical Ministry, and Canon Law to ensure that parishes and Directors of Religious Education are supported in their ministry. He is both the mediator with the Diocese and the advocate for her catechetical ministers.

The Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation, in cooperation with Pastors and Directors of Religious Education, ensures the implementation of all policies and guidelines for all catechetical programs in the diocese. He also oversees the accreditation process, whereby best practices and quality standards are assessed and implemented in each parish.

C. Administrative Assistant to the Episcopal Vicar for Faith Formation

The Administrative Assistant to the Episcopal Vicar for Faith Formation:

- Provides administrative and secretarial support for the Episcopal Vicar for Faith Formation;
- Facilitates communication between the Office of Faith Formation and the Directors of Religious Education throughout the diocese;
- Maintains employment records for Parish Faith Formation employees;
- Gathers diocesan statistics and records as needed; and
- Maintains the diocesan Faith Formation website.

D. Special Consultant for Catechetics (contracted position)

The Special Consultant for Catechetics works directly for the Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation, and:

- Provides expertise and counsel to the parish Directors of Religious Education and catechists;
- Oversees training programs for catechists and catechist certification;
- Coordinates workshops on pertinent topics;
- Reviews and submits revisions of the Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines;
- Reviews and submits revisions of the Standards of Learning for each year of faith formation, as well as Sacrament preparation;
- Visits parishes as part of the accreditation process; and
- Provides support, resources, and training to diocesan faith formation employees.

E. Coordinator for Special Needs Ministry

The Coordinator for Special Needs Ministry works directly for the Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation and:

- Teaches best practices to diocesan faith formation employees so they may serve people of all age-groups with disabilities and special needs in both integrated and Special Religious Development (SPRED) settings;
- Provides training for and oversees parish Special Religious Development programs;
- Serves as a consultant for Directors of Religious Education to ensure all children are given the opportunity to receive faith formation and to receive the Sacraments, according to their needs and abilities;
- Works with the Special Consultant for Catechesis to review and revise guidelines for catechesis of people with special needs;
- Provides educational and teaching resources for catechists; and
- Advocates for those with special needs, to ensure that they and their families are welcomed and included in parish faith formation programs (homeschool, parish, and school), and included in liturgy.

F. Director of Faith Formation and Evangelization Programs

The Director for Faith Formation and Evangelization Programs works directly for the Vicar of Faith formation and:

- Meets on a regular basis with parish staff responsible for adult faith formation and evangelization programs to ascertain the challenges, needs, opportunities, and risks in these areas;
- Coordinates efforts with other diocesan offices to develop the mission of evangelization,
- Develops, with the Office of Communications, the mission of evangelization among the adult population in the Diocese;
- Coordinates catechetical, evangelization, and adult faith formation programs for parishes and deaneries, and disseminates appropriate materials;
- Identifies and implements new media platforms to deliver curriculum and adult faith formation content to wider audiences;
- Maintains and develops the Office of Faith Formation website as a source of materials and resources for adult faith formation and evangelization programs;
- Keeps abreast of what other Dioceses are doing in these areas; and
- Performs annual evaluations of the current environment at the parish and diocesan levels, including gathering information on parish growth, Mass attendance, and faith formation programs.

G. Diocesan Deanery Representatives

Diocesan Deanery Representatives serve as mentors in their deaneries and as a liaison between the Office of Faith Formation and parishes within each deanery.

4. PARISH FAITH FORMATION TEAM

I. Introduction

The Great Commission extends to all baptized persons, commanding them to “Go forth and teach all nations.” From the first proclamation of the Gospel through a lifetime of discipleship, “[c]atechesis is the word used to describe the essential ministry of the Church through which the teachings of Christ have been passed on to believers throughout the ages” (NDC 1).

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 diocesan and national catechetical offices, deacons, consecrated religious, priests, and Bishops are all catechists with distinctive roles. From the earliest days of the Church, immediately following the Apostle’s acceptance of Christ’s missionary mandate, catechists have made and continue to make “an outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church by their great work. Esteemed members of the Church’s apostolate, they perform ‘a fundamental evangelical service’” (NDC 53, Ch. 8, p. 217-218).

A. Pastor

As a ministry of the Church “[t]here is a proper and serious duty, especially on the part of the Pastors of souls, to provide for the catechesis of the Christian people so that the faith of the faithful becomes living, explicit and productive through formation in doctrine and the experience of Christian living” (CIC, Can. 773).

Within the parish community, the Pastor oversees a comprehensive faith formation program in his parish, including liturgical and Sacrament formation, in accord with diocesan current Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines. The Pastor collaborates with other priests and deacons assigned to the parish, as well as with parents, school, and other catechetical personnel to fulfill the catechetical mission.

The parish must offer catechetical instruction and programs which (cf. CT 19):

- Support parents, who are the primary educators of the faith;
- Address the faith-needs of the members of the parish, from childhood through adulthood, with consideration of various life circumstances;
- Are age and developmentally appropriate, and welcoming those with diverse needs;
- Proclaim the Gospel, expound upon its initial proclamation, form the whole person and lead to an identification with Christ and true discipleship;
- Are systematic and complete in the teaching of the faith in accord with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church;
- Lead to membership in the Church and the reception of the Sacraments; and
- Are directed to the sanctification and salvation of souls.

The Pastor oversees the Faith Formation Team of his parish, some of whom will be employees and some volunteers. He also ensures the suitable formation and training of catechists in his parish, including teachers in Catholic school, volunteer catechists in the religious education program, those who assist in youth ministry, and those who assist in other catechetical programs.

B. Parents as Primary Educators

The Catholic Church recognizes parents as the primary and principal educators of their children. Parish Faith Formation programs assist parents in the Christian formation and the Sacrament preparation of their children (see NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 234).

When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to bring up their children in the practice of the faith and to see that the divine life that God gives them is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in their hearts. At the same time, the Church promises to help parents foster their children's faith and assists them specifically in their role as catechists of their children, whether they assume complete responsibility themselves or look to the parish school or religious education program for help and support. (NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 235).

Every effort must be given to assist parents in their choice of religious formation for their children. As such, parents must:

- Communicate Christian values and attitudes, as are expressed by the witness of their marital covenant, found foremost in their love of Christ and His Church;
- Lead their children to active participation in the Sacraments of the Church, above all in the Holy Eucharist;
- Cultivate Catholic culture and traditions, and foster piety and devotions within the “domestic church” of their family; and
- Provide an authentic witness of discipleship in the world and openly evangelize in charity.

C. Director of Religious Education

The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader. While the Pastor is responsible for the work of catechesis in the parish, he may delegate others to function on his behalf. He provides the parish with qualified personnel who can assist him in this catechetical work. **Depending on the size and scope of the parish faith formation program, parishes should allocate their resources so that they are able to acquire the services of a competent and qualified Director of Religious Education (or someone in the process of becoming qualified and competent) or to share those services with another parish.**

Only fully initiated, practicing Catholics who fully adhere to the Church's teaching in faith and morals and who are models of Christian virtue and courageous witnesses to the Catholic faith should be designated as parish catechetical leaders (NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 224)

While parishes may use various titles for this position, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) works closely with the Pastor and oversees the catechetical mission of the parish.

Directors of Religious Education must possess the necessary personal qualities, catechetical understanding and skills, organizational and administrative abilities, academic preparation, and professional experience to direct the entire faith formation program of the parish. They must be able to recruit volunteers and provide catechist training, select curriculum resources, provide program design for all age levels, and manage and supervise staff (both paid and volunteer).

The following are the required qualifications for a Director of Religious Education:

- **Must be approved by the Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation;**
- **Be a practicing Catholic in good standing;**
- **Have the skills necessary to effectively fulfill this position, including but not limited to catechetical expertise, leadership and team-building skills, and relational skills that bear witness to the love of Christ;**
- **A Master's degree in Religious Education, Theology, or related field is preferred; Master Catechist Certification is required.**
- **Be willing to continue professional development in areas that will benefit the faith formation program of the parish;**
- **Be willing to work with the Office of Faith Formation of the Diocese of Arlington, and to implement a unified accredited faith formation program in the local community;**
- **Must be an active member of the CLDA (Catechetical Leaders of the Diocese of Arlington);**
- **Be willing to serve and build up the faith formation program in the parish, including the school and homeschool communities, so to bring the Good News to all who live within the parish boundaries;**
- **Ensure the formation of catechists, who are called to share in this ministry;**
- **Coordinate various faith formation programs and ministries;**
- **Supervise catechists and other lay faith formation employees (e.g. Adult Faith Formation Minister, High School Faith Formation Minister, etc.); and**
- **Follow all guidelines and requirements established by the Diocese of Arlington, and provide an annual evaluation.**

D. Lay Faith Formation Ministers

Lay Faith Formation Ministers are those who coordinate and/or lead faith formation ministries under the direction of the Director of Religious Education (e.g., RCIA, Montessori, High School Religious Education, etc.)

Those who assist the Director of Religious Education (whether paid employees or volunteers) must be fully-initiated and practicing Catholics in good standing, who adhere to the Church's teaching in faith and morals and who are models of Christian virtue and courageous witnesses to the Catholic faith. They should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective witnesses of the faith and catechists, and be willing to continue

their own faith formation and ministry training. They should familiarize themselves with the catechetical mission of the parish.

Lay Faith Formation Ministers must be “practicing Catholics with a thorough knowledge of the Christian message and the ability to communicate it completely, faithfully, and enthusiastically; they should also meet diocesan standards for certification as a catechist” (NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 232).

Requirements for all Lay Faith Formation Ministers include:

- **A Master's degree in Religious Education, Theology, or related field is preferred; Specialized or Master Catechist Certification is required.**
- **Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church;**
- **Be 18 years or older (See the Code of Conduct.);**
- **Be in full compliance with the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYP) before beginning and while serving in ministry;**
- **Be committed to present and witness to the authentic teachings of the Church, and sign an Oath of Fidelity; and**
- **Be willing to continue their ministry training, and work towards certification.**

1. Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation Ministers

A comprehensive youth and young adult faith formation ministry program, whether it is based in a single parish or represents the cooperative efforts of several parishes, includes the dimension of structured or formal catechesis. **Youth and Young Adult Ministers, therefore, should have theological formation as well as competence and experience in catechesis.** They should be able to lead and guide young people to grow in the knowledge of the Catholic faith, in the practice of that faith in light of the principles of Christian morality and social teaching, in the celebration of the Sacraments, in the development of their spiritual lives. (NDC 54, Ch 8, p. 226)

The Youth/Young Adult Minister works with the Director of Religious Education to:

- **Provide systematic catechesis of the faith to youth and young adults;**
- **Incorporate the Church’s teaching of doctrine, Scripture, Christian anthropology, moral teaching, social teachings of the Church, liturgy, vocational discernment, spirituality, and apologetics;**
- **Train volunteers to help build and grow a vibrant youth and young adult community, and to lead this community to full and active participation in the life of the Church;**
- **Assist with Confirmation training, as well as a catechumenate program for youths including school-aged children (RCIA adapted for Teens);**
- **Be familiar with the culture and challenges of today’s youth and young adults, and be prepared to serve this community fully aware of the Church’s teaching and the civil laws;**
- **Be committed to the ongoing catechetical and spiritual formation of youths and young adults who reside within the parish boundaries, and when they return from school, work or non-permanent living situations; and**
- **Provide catechesis and opportunities to live the Church’s social teaching.**

2. Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation Ministers

Adults “have a right and a duty to bring to maturity the seed of faith sown in them by God” (NDC 48, A, p. 187). The parish has a responsibility to ensure that adults receive formation that is faithful to the Church’s teaching. **“The catechesis of adults... is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.”** (NDC 48, A, p. 187).

The Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation Minister works with the Director of Religious Education to (NDC 41 A, 1-3, pp 188-191):

- **Invite and enable adults to acquire an attitude of conversion to the Lord;**
- **Help adults make a conscious and firm decision to live the gift of faith through membership in the Catholic Church and to become Christian disciples and witnesses;**
- **Use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, to provide formation in the life in the Risen Christ through the Creed, the Sacraments, the Moral Life, and Prayer of the Church;**
- **Help develop an informed moral conscience, clarifying moral questions;**
- **Promote evangelization and efforts to bring the Good News into the world, specifically in the parish community;**
- **Provide opportunities for the systematic study of Scripture, Tradition, Doctrines, of the faith and the History of the Church;**
- **Provide liturgical catechesis: study the Mass, Sacraments, and prayers of the Church;**
- **Provide opportunities to study the Church’s moral teachings with a focus on the universal call to holiness (including the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, the Great Commandment, the Christian anthropology, grace, virtue, conscience formation, and modern moral questions);**
- **Provide opportunities to learn and to live the Church’s social teachings; and**
- **Provide opportunities to learn and pray according to the traditions, devotions, and spiritualities of the Church.**

3. Elderly, Homebound, and Special Needs Faith Formation Ministers

“The community of the baptized comprises many different groups of believers, each of whom has the right to a sound and adequate catechesis” (NDC 50, p. 209). **Catechesis of people with diverse needs takes into account the diversity of their personal, family, and social conditions. “The most effective catechesis [...] occurs within the context of a comprehensive program of Pastoral care specifically developed for and with them”** (NDC 48, B, p.194).

The Elderly, Homebound (including Hospice, Nursing Home, Prison, etc.), and Special Needs Faith Formation Ministers must:

- **Recognize that these populations need not only pastoral care but also sound catechesis according to their needs;**

- Provide a mix of activities that connect them with each other, as well as the larger faith community;
- Consider the spiritual needs of the individuals, especially considering their physical, emotional, mental, and social health;
- Integrate persons with disabilities, as much as possible, into the ordinary parish programs; this may require assistance (e.g., Drivers for after-dark programs for the elderly, A.D.A. compliant meeting spaces, volunteers for specific populations as needed such as a sign language interpreter, etc.);
- Provide faith formation for persons with more severe disabilities, which must be adapted in content and method to their particular situations;
- Train specialized catechists to serve in various ministries, as compassionate teachers who are well-formed in the Church's teachings; and
- Take great care to ensure that those with special needs are not marginalized in the parish community.

E. Catechists

Catechists are those who teach the faith in a classroom setting, whether in a school or parish faith formation program; they may be paid or volunteer.

Catechists must be “practicing Catholics with a thorough knowledge of the Christian message and the ability to communicate it completely, faithfully, and enthusiastically; they should also meet diocesan standards for certification as a catechist” (NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 232).

All Catechists must:

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church;
- Be 18 years or older (See the Code of Conduct.);
- Be in full compliance with the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYP) before beginning and while serving in ministry;
- Be committed to present and witness to the authentic teachings of the Church, and sign an Oath of Fidelity; and
- Be willing to continue their ministry training, and work towards certification.

II. Evaluation

Faith Formation employees are to be evaluated annually. This evaluation must be added to their personnel files.

Faith Formation volunteers are to be evaluated annually, though this may be done informally through classroom visits and constructive feedback for their ministry.

Volunteers are to be offered the opportunity to evaluate their ministry experience, the Director of Religious Education, and the program(s) in which they teach.

III. Catechist Training

All catechists must strive to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to communicate the faith effectively. They must have a solid understanding of Catholic doctrine and worship, Scripture and Tradition, and Church history. In addition, catechists must have the necessary communication skills and ability to use various methodologies; they must understand how people grow and mature, and how persons of different ages and circumstances learn.

Catechists must continue their own faith formation (e.g., Scripture, Catechism, Church history, etc.), as well as training in faith development, learning styles, and teaching methods. Special ministry training must also be pursued for catechizing those with specific needs (e.g., teaching children with special learning needs, etc.).

Local and diocesan courses, workshops, institutes, conferences, and online (internet-based) classes will be offered to assist catechists in attaining appropriate training.

A. Catechist Certification

Catechists should strive to attain diocesan catechist certification in a timely manner, in order to grow in their faith and best serve in their ministry.

Directors of Religious Education have a responsibility to make catechist certification training available through either online or onsite training opportunities. The Diocese will offer scholarship funds or subsidies for catechist certification training.

Catechist Certification may be attained at three levels:

Catechist Certification

Catechist Certification is strongly encouraged for every catechist in the Diocese of Arlington. It is designed to provide a sound foundation in the faith and the resources and training necessary to teach in the elementary and high school classroom.

Specialized Catechist Certification

Specialize Catechist Certification is designed for those who teach high school faith formation, adults, or areas of specialty.

Master Catechist Certification

The Master Catechist program is designed for those who teach youths or adults, or who are expected to provide support to others in the faith formation programs of a parish.

Application for Certification

Applicants for Catechist Certification (any level) must submit transcripts indicating successful course completion and a completed application form to the Special Consultant for Catechesis at

the Office of Faith Formation to attain certification. *For detailed information about certification requirements and for application forms, see the Parish Catechist Certification Guidelines.*

B. Director of Religious Education Training Opportunities

The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained Director of Religious Education. The DRE instills heart and wisdom into the structured parish catechetical program. The DRE works closely with the pastor and the Office of Faith Formation to build a program that aligns with Diocesan Policies and Guides; they also implement this program with pastoral care for both the catechists and students in the program. With an eye to the eternal, the DRE works to proclaim the Word of God through evangelization and catechesis. Discerning the formation needs of the parish and prayerfully realizing them, the DRE nurtures the faith of parishioners through word and witness.

DREs are to have a Master's degree in Religious Education, Theology, or related field (preferred); Master Catechist Certification is required.

The Office of Faith Formation provides opportunities and scholarship funding for DREs to attain the education required for their ministry. For detailed information, see *the Parish Catechist Certification Guidelines* or contact the Special Consultant for Catechetics.

5. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS

I. Faith Formation for Young People (Preadolescents to Young Adults)

“The most effective catechesis for young adults is integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral care that understands the concerns of young adults and candidly addresses the questions they ask and the problems they face” (NDC 48 C). Considering this aim, parish young adult ministries should offer a variety of opportunities for formation and growth in the faith that can be an attractive means for involving busy young adults: a series of evening or weekend sessions, special one-time presentations, days of recollection, retreats, discussion groups, Scripture study groups, mentoring relationships, hands-on Social Teachings of the Church programs, and mission education projects (cf. NDC 48 C).

All Young People and Adult Faith Formation Catechists must:

- **Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church;**
- **Be 18 years or older (See the Code of Conduct.);**
- **Be in full compliance with the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYP) before beginning and while serving in ministry;**
- **Be committed to present and witness the authentic teachings of the Church, and sign an Oath of Fidelity; and**
- **Be willing to continue their ministry training, and work towards certification.**

A. Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation Catechists

Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation Catechists (employees or volunteers) should be suitably trained to be able to provide sound catechesis. A commitment to ongoing training and faith-formation is necessary given the ever-changing needs of living the faith in today’s society. These catechists must also have training to address the psychosocial needs of young people, an understanding the world in which they live, and a passion to bring the Light of Christ to the hearts and minds of the Youths. Youth Ministry specific training is offered through the Office of Youth Ministry.

B. Guidelines for Youth and Young Adult Catechists

Youth and Young Adult Catechists within the diocese must:

- **Provide spiritual formation and religious education to youths and young adults;**
- **Teach a deeper understanding of, and lead to greater participation in, the liturgical life and mission of the Church, including evangelizing outreach, ongoing formation of the faith community, and pastoral care;**
- **Guide young people to consider and discern their vocations;**
- **Lead youths to commit themselves to live fully Christian lives; and**
- **Follow all diocesan guidelines specific to their ministries.**

C. Types of Youth and Young Adult Catechesis

Types of Catechesis for Youths and Young People include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ongoing catechesis, including Scripture Study, Catechism, Church history, Liturgical Catechesis, Moral Theology, Apologetics, Social Teachings of the Church, lives of the Saints and spiritual writings, etc.;
- Youth Ministry;
- Christian Chastity programs and vocational discernment;
- The Catechumenate for Teens (RCIA adapted for Teens);
- Programs for those returning to active Church practice;
- Retreats, and speaker series;
- Missionary activity;
- Training in prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, the Mass; and
- Catechesis for specific events (e.g., choosing a college, moving out, etc.).

II. Adult Faith Formation

Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it” (GCD, 20). Adult catechesis should be the “organizing principle, which gives coherence to the various catechetical programs offered by a particular Church (NDC 48 A; GDC, 275).

“Catechesis not only brings to maturity the faith of those being catechized but also brings the community itself to maturity” (CDG 221). Adult Faith Formation is necessary for a thriving and growing Church. Not only will the laity be better prepared to bear witness to the faith in the world in which they live, parents will also then be equipped with the necessary tools to serve as the primary educators of their children.

Minors are not generally permitted to participate in programs for adults unless their parents are also present. If the parish leaders think an exemption is justified in a particular instance, they should contact the Office of Child Protection and Safety for guidance.

A. Adult Faith Formation Catechists

Adult Faith Formation Catechists should be suitably trained to be able to provide sound catechesis. A commitment to ongoing training and faith formation is necessary given the ever-changing needs of living the faith in today’s society.

B. Guidelines for Adult Faith Formation Catechists

Adult Faith Formation Catechists must:

- **Listen to the thoughts, needs, and circumstances of adult learners and allow them to influence the educational design;**
- **Provide systematic pastoral care of, and education for, adults;**

- **Relate to and collaborate with other ministries;**
- **Provide education conducted within a community, preferably within a small group where people know and respect each other;**
- **Present a variety of learning experiences and approaches;**
- **Help adults to make a conscious and firm decision to live the gift and choice of faith through membership and active participation in the Church; and**
- **Help adults to become more willing and able to be a Christian disciple in the world.**

In order to succeed in her mission of evangelization (*GDC 258*), the parish must pay attention to the following:

- **Adult catechesis must be given priority;**
- **The proclamation of the Gospel to those alienated or who live in religious indifference must be planned; and**
- **Parochial catechesis should form mature Christians, leading parishioners to live lives of faithful discipleship.**

C. Types of Adult Catechesis

Types of Adult Catechesis include the following:

- Sacrament preparation and liturgical formation of Catholic Adults (Marriage Preparation, Baptism Classes, Adult Confirmation Classes, RCIA, etc.);
- Programs for those returning to active Church practice;
- Retreats, missions, and speaker series pertaining to moral formation, apologetics, the social teachings of the Church, and other pertinent topics;
- Spiritual and Scriptural instruction by specially trained catechists;
- Catechesis for specific events (e.g., entering the workforce, grief ministry, etc.);
- Situational catechesis (e.g., Moral Theology for Catholic medical practitioners, spirituality for the homebound, etc.);
- Catechesis for various ministries (e.g., Prison Ministry, Pro-Life Ministry, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Training) so those who serve will be trained to catechize the people they encounter in their specific situations (e.g., abortion counseling, apologetics for prison ministry, etc.);
- Family-based catechetical programs; and
- Online (internet-based) and on-site education programs (e.g., Formed, Institute of Catholic Culture, Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America, or Catholic Education Center, etc.).

III. Faith Formation for the Elderly and Homebound

A. Elderly and Homebound Faith Formation Catechists

More and more, Catholics are isolated from their parish community and support networks. **The Word of God must be brought to the most vulnerable and marginalized in the diocese. As such, teams of catechists (2 or more) should be trained and sent “to the peripheries,” bringing the witness and love of Christ to His beloved faithful.**

Types of Elderly and Homebound Faith Formation include the following:

- Off-site catechesis for parishioners at homes and institutions within the parish boundaries (e.g., visiting homeschool families, which may include special needs children, nursing home/hospital/hospices ministry, prison-ministry, home-bound visits);
- Catechesis through parish groups who minister to the parish community through visits, e.g., Legion of Mary and Knights of Columbus; and
- Online (internet-based) programs, including live-streaming of the Sunday Mass.

B. Guidelines for Catechesis for the Elderly and Homebound

Catechesis of people with diverse needs takes into account the diversity of their personal, family, and social conditions. “The most effective catechesis [...] occurs within the context of a comprehensive program of Pastoral care specifically developed for and with them” (NDC 48, B, p.194).

Those providing catechesis for the elderly and homebound must:

- **Consider their condition (health, disabilities, ability to drive/after dark);**
- **Consider their pastoral needs (e.g., family members/caretakers not living the faith, grieving/preparing for death, devotionals);**
- **Teach the faith, and extend the faith community to embrace those being catechized;**
- **Provide assistance with end of life directives and funeral planning if appropriate;**
- **Provide spiritual formation, especially strengthening the individual in faith, hope, and love; and**
- **Pray with those being catechized, and help them develop a life of prayer.**

C. Types of Catechesis for the Elderly and Homebound

Types of Elderly and Homebound Catechesis include the following:

- Sacrament preparation and liturgical formation of Catholic Adults (RCIA, preparation for Anointing of the Sick and Confession, etc.);
- Programs for those returning to the Church;
- Spiritual and Scriptural instruction by specially trained catechists;
- Catechesis for specific events (e.g., grief ministry, end of life directives, etc.);
- Situational catechesis (e.g., Moral Theology for Catholic medical decisions, spirituality for the homebound, especially in the virtues and preparation for a holy death, etc.);
- Catechesis for various ministries (e.g., Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Training) so those who serve will be trained to catechize the people they encounter in their specific situations (e.g., ministering to the terminally ill, etc.);

- Family-based catechetical programs; and
- Online (internet-based) programs (e.g., Formed, Institute of Catholic Culture, Catholic Apologetics Institute of North America, or Catholic Education Center, etc.).

Ideally, those who provide off-site catechesis for the elderly, homebound or imprisoned, will be deacons or catechists who will serve in teams of at least two. These catechists may also be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, to bring the Word of God and the Word Made Flesh to those most in need and marginalized. **These catechists should also inform the parish priests about the condition of those visited, and the need for providing the Sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick.**

IV. Multi-Cultural Catechesis

Arlington Diocese has many parishes that are multicultural/bilingual parishes. Knowledge, hospitality, and skills in intercultural relations are vital to foster unity and engage in the Church's evangelizing mission. "As part of evangelization, inculturation inserts the Gospel message into cultures...It is the process by which catechesis takes flesh in the various cultures" (NDC 21 B; cf. CT 53).

As much as possible, multicultural/bilingual communities should be served by the ministries of the parish with unified programs. Catechetical programs should maintain the integral content of the faith formation and avoid cultural elements that obscure or compromise the deposit of faith.

Religious education should be offered in the primary language of the students (whether adult or child). When the parents and children each have their own primary language (e.g., parents speak Spanish, while children speak English), bilingual resources should be made available. **It is crucial for parents to know and understand what their children are learning, so frequent parent communication must be facilitated.**

6. CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS

School-age children should receive formal and systematic catechesis in a parish-based catechetical program, a Catholic school, or a program of home-based catechesis in which the content of the faith and the experience of the Christian life is presented authentically and completely (NDC 48 E, 2).

Each year, every school-aged child registered in the parish must be invited to enroll in one of the three forms of parish faith formation:

- Homeschool (including Faith Formation);
- Parish Faith Formation classes; or
- Catholic School.

The entire religious education curriculum must impart the truth of the Catholic Faith. The catechetical plan for all grades includes the following:

- Sacred Scripture and Salvation History;
- Catechism (Creed, Sacraments, Moral Life, Prayer);
- Liturgical Catechesis, especially the Mass; and
- Church History, including the lives of the Saints—most notably the Blessed Virgin Mary.

By the end of a child's elementary school years (by the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation), all basic truths of the Catholic Church will have been taught and learned. Please refer to the Standards of Learning for content to be taught by grade.

I. Homeschool

The Church's Magisterium recognizes and affirms the natural right of all parents to see to the education of their children. For Christian parents, this includes providing a sound Christian example to the child. **Furthermore, all parents have the right to provide or obtain the formal instruction necessary for a child to become fully formed and educated, especially in a religious sense, throughout their youth and high school years.**

Parents, therefore, have the right to choose to homeschool their children in religious education, including Sacrament preparation, so long as they comply with the religious education requirements set by their Pastor. Close cooperation between Pastors and parents is necessary for successful of catechesis.

Since Canon Law imposes upon Pastors the serious obligation to ensure that those who receive the Sacraments have been suitably prepared, and because such preparation is normally carried out within the parish's catechetical programs, homeschooling parents are strongly encouraged to augment their own catechetical efforts by enrolling their children in their parish's catechetical program during the time of immediate preparation for the reception of a Sacrament.

Recognizing, however, that not all parents will avail themselves of established parish catechetical programs, homeschooled children are required to fulfill all requirements and attend rehearsals. Parents must also attend appropriate meetings for adults.

Parish staff should include homeschool families in any informational mailings from the parish dealing with the Sacraments and surrounding events, as well as pertinent information about gathering the necessary certificates or other documentation that may be required.

All materials that parents use for home-based catechesis should be sound in Catholic doctrine and in conformity with the published standards of the Diocese and the teachings of the Church. Parents should be acquainted with the diocesan Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines and Standards of Learning.

A. Homeschool Parents

Parents who exercise their right to educate their children in the faith take on the responsibility to do so fully and conscientiously. Parents should follow a systematic program of catechesis and ensure that their children are indeed formed in the faith. The parish may assist them with choosing (and furnish them with) such materials.

B. Guidelines for Homeschooling

The Pastor, either personally or through his delegate, must:

- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the catechesis provided at home and a child's readiness for the reception of a given Sacrament;**
- **Clearly state for all parish families the standard to determine the readiness of homeschooled children to receive a Sacrament;**
- **Ensure that the requirements for home-catechized children should be neither more nor less demanding than they are for other children; and**
- **Permit parents to oversee necessary service projects or other works required as part of a child's preparation for the reception of a Sacrament.**

C. Types of Catechesis for Homeschool families

Types of Catechesis for Homeschool families include the following:

- Religious education classes (on-site or online);
- Co-op and homeschool groups;
- Parent training in catechesis and religious formation;
- Sacrament preparation workshops and retreats;
- Field trips/pilgrimages;
- Liturgical year celebrations (ideally celebrated with other parish groups, such as with those in a nursing home, religious education Christmas programs, Lenten projects to support the marginalized, etc.); and
- Home study within the family, following a religious text, and supplemented with periodic visits by catechetical personnel.

II. Parish Religious Education Classes for Children

Catechetical programs for children who attend public schools should be offered for preschool children as well as for children in the primary, intermediate, and junior and senior high grades. These programs should be coordinated with one another and integrated into the total parish catechetical plan. (National Directory for Catechesis, page 261, para. 4a)

Catechetical programs for children seek to foster their growth in a wider faith community. **Faith Formation should always be suited to the age, circumstances, and learning capacities of children and accommodating those with special learning needs (physical or mental disabilities).** Parents, Pastors, and Directors of Religious Education should cooperate closely to ensure that the catechesis offered to children is truly an ecclesial catechesis that is consistent with the values and way of life proclaimed in the Gospel and handed on by the Catholic Church.

All Catechists for children must:

- **Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church;**
- **Be 18 years or older (See the Code of Conduct.);**
- **Be in full compliance with the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYP) before beginning and while serving in ministry;**
- **Be committed to present and witness to the authentic teachings of the Church, and sign an Oath of Fidelity; and**
- **Be willing to continue their ministry training, and work towards certification.**

A. Catechists for Children

Parents are the primary educators of their children, and parish catechists support parents in this duty. As such, parents must take their children to Mass, reinforce and give lived context of the faith taught in the faith formation program, and accompany their children in their faith journey.

Catechists assist parents in providing a systematic, age-appropriate presentation of the faith, which adheres to the curriculum of the parish faith formation program and the Standards of Learning for each grade, as set by the Office of Faith Formation.

B. Guidelines for Catechists of Children:

Catechists of Children work with the Director of Religious Education by teaching in the classroom. They must:

- **Be capable of serving according to the policies and guidelines for Catechists;**
- **Accompany children from first evangelization, through catechesis, to life-long discipleship;**
- **Nourish the gift of faith received in Baptism and provide Sacrament preparation and liturgical formation so that children may become active participants in the Church's community and Her worship;**
- **Emphasize that growth in faith includes knowledge of the truths of faith as taught by the four pillars of our faith: creed, Sacraments, moral life, and prayer; and**

- Foster a sense of community and service to God and neighbor, including those who are marginalized.
- Work with the Director of Religious Education to teach the entire content for their classes as part of a larger Religious Education program;
- Utilize the curriculum of the parish religious education program; and
- Follow and adhere to the current *Office of Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines* and *Religious Education Standards of Learning*.

C. *Types of Parish Religious Education for Children*

Types of Parish Religious Education for children include the following:

- Ongoing catechesis, including Sacred Scripture, Catechism (Creed, Sacraments, Moral Life, Prayer), Church history, Liturgical Catechesis, and lives of the Saints;
- Sacrament preparation (First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation);
- Chastity Formation (*Formation in Christian Chastity*);
- Safe environment training (*Circle of Grace*, etc.);
- Vocational awareness;
- The catechumenate for children between the ages of 7 and 17 who are not yet Baptized (RCIA adapted for children);
- Traditions for each liturgical season, e.g., Advent Wreath during Advent and Stations of the Cross during Lent;
- Popular devotions (e.g., Rosary);
- Rite of the Mass (both *Novus Ordo* and the Extraordinary Form, if offered at the parish);
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament;
- Catechesis through specific events (e.g., field trips, retreats);
- Montessori-based atriums;
- Inter-generational/family catechesis; and
- Other catechetical resources (e.g., bulletin inserts, children's books/videos, and online programs).

III. Catechesis of Children with Special Needs

(Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, or Behavioral)

All persons are loved by God. They have a right to come to know God through evangelization and catechesis and to develop a relationship with God in His Church. **One in every seven children has special needs; parishes must make every effort to welcome these children in their worship and the celebration of Sacraments, and to provide for their faith formation.**

When possible, persons with disabilities should be integrated into regular catechetical programs. Catechetical goals and objectives should not be segregated for specialized catechesis unless their disabilities make it impossible for them to participate in the basic catechetical programs” (NDC 49).

Every parish should seek out dedicated volunteers who are committed to serving special needs children and their families. **These volunteers should be provided training and support in developing their ministry.** It is important that parent(s)/guardian(s) understand that religious education and youth ministry programs rely on volunteers from the parish who may not have professional experience and therefore need assistance in understanding what is helpful for their child. Parent(s)/guardian(s) can be effective assistants in the classroom for their child especially in the early years.

Persons with disabilities, especially children, are particularly beloved of the Lord and are integral members of the Christian community. They include those with cognitive disabilities, those with developmental disabilities, those with learning disabilities, those with emotional needs, persons with physical disabilities, persons with hearing loss/deafness, persons with vision loss/blindness, and others (NDC 49).

When there are present disabled children who cannot be integrated into the ordinary catechetical program, a Special Religious Development (SPRED) program must be offered to them with reasonable access. Parishes may combine to offer these programs. The Office of Faith Formation can assist parishes in providing religious education and catechist formation for those who have special needs. Such assistance includes the SPRED program and the Ministry to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Contact information may be found on the diocesan website.

Parents maintain the right to homeschool *all* their children if *any* of them have special learning needs, including but not limited to physical, intellectual, emotional, or behavioral challenges. When parishes are unable to accommodate children's special learning needs in the integrated classrooms, parents may be required to homeschool; parishes will provide curriculum and ongoing support to these families.

I. Guidelines for Children with Special Needs

Catechists for persons with special needs must:

- **Allow for physical needs accommodations, e.g., wheelchair accessibility, seat visually-impaired or hard-of-hearing students near the front;**
- **Adapt content and method to the student's particular situations;**
- **Prepare each student as best as possible to receive the Sacraments;**
- **Work with parent(s)/guardian(s) to understand the special needs of their child and to provide reasonable accommodations; and**
- **Teach all students fairly and with respect. (Jokes, slurs, statements, stories, and activities that promote insensitivity are not to be tolerated by catechists, students, or parent(s)/guardian(s). Reports of such behavior are to be addressed immediately with the appropriate follow-up with parent(s)/guardian(s), catechists, and the Pastor.)**

II. Types of Faith Formation for Children with Special Needs

Types of faith formation for special needs individuals include the following:

- Integrated Religious Education Classes for children with special learning needs;
- SPRED (Special Religious Development) classes for children with special learning needs who cannot be integrated into the regular religious education classes;
- Homeschool;
- Off-site catechesis for parishioners at homes and institutions within the parish boundaries;
- Online (internet-based) faith formation opportunities; and
- Catholic Schools.

IV. The Catholic School

“The Catholic School forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. It is not ‘simply an institution which offers academic instruction of high quality, but, even more important, it is an effective vehicle for total Christian formation’ (NDC #54, Ch. 8, p. 230).

The Catholic school is to provide an education in which all subjects are informed and enlightened by the deposit of faith. Entrusted with the education of children of parishioners, every school must consult with the parishes whose parishioners attend the school to help implement the evangelization and catechetical mission of the parishes and diocese.

A. Catholic School Educators

Parents are the primary educators of their children, and parish schools must support parents in this duty. As such, parents must take their children to Mass, reinforce and provide a lived context of the faith taught in the faith formation program, and accompany their children in their faith journey.

Teachers are to provide a systematic, age-appropriate education informed by the faith, which adheres to the curriculum requirements as set by the Office of Catholic Schools. Teachers teach school children with the authority given them by the students’ parents, and with the love of Christ as His witness in the community formed by Catholic School.

B. Guidelines

Catholic School Employees must adhere to the policies and guidelines provided by the Office of Catholic Schools. Regarding faith formation, Catholic School Educators are to:

- **Establish a faith-filled learning environment where the Catholic faith and culture are lived and nurtured within the larger Church Community;**
- **Strive to adhere to the larger Faith Formation program of the parish community;**
- **Nourish the gift of faith received in Baptism and provide Sacrament preparation and liturgical formation so that children may become active participants in the Church’s community and Her worship; and**

- **Generously cooperate with all faith formation ministries and catechists, who share space and resources to build up the Church with a common mission and enthusiasm.**

C. Types of Catholic Schools

Catholic Schools may have different approaches to education, and the types of Catholic Schools are varied and ever-changing. These may include the following:

- The parochial school (Elementary Schools);
- Private schools with a Catholic identity (Elementary, Junior, and High Schools), approved by the Diocese of Arlington; and
- Diocesan regional schools (High Schools).

7. SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

I. Sacrament Registers

Sacramental records are to reflect what actually took place with whom, where, before whom, etc. They are not to reflect what someone might, in fact, wish had happened. The “notation” column normally is sufficient for special circumstances. For instance, the name of a godparent cannot be deleted subsequent to the Baptism because the godparent loses favor with the parents or the one baptized.

Parishes must have the following Sacrament Registers (which may be individual books or combined) and related books:

**Baptism Register
First Communion Register
Confirmation Register
Marriage Register
Book of Catechumens
Book of the Elect
Death Register**

All records are to be in black ink and printed legibly.

All Sacrament Registers are to be kept in the parish safe.

II. Infant Baptism

Catechesis for Infant Baptism (ages 0-6) is directed to adults. The preparation for Baptism is an especially important opportunity for the Church to encourage the parents and godparents of infants to reexamine the meaning of the Christian message in their own lives, as they will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith.

Baptism is to be made available to all who freely ask for it, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving it.

In the case of infants and those who cannot request it for themselves, Baptism may be deferred only when there is no reason for hoping that the person will be brought up in the Catholic faith.

Persons who lack the use of reason are to be baptized provided at least one parent or guardian consents to it.

Parents may choose sponsors for Baptism following the regulations set forth in Canon Law (CIC Can. 872-874).

i. Sponsors or Godparents

In the case of an infant, the sponsors with the parents present an infant for Baptism. A sponsor also helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with Baptism and to fulfill the obligations inherent in it in the community of the Church.

For an infant, it is preferred to have a Catholic godfather and a Catholic godmother; however, one may have a Catholic godparent and a Christian witness (so long as they are of the opposite sex). A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a Christian witness of the Baptism.

To be a sponsor (or godparent), a person must:

- **Be designated by the parents or guardians, or in their absence, by the Pastor;**
- **Understand the responsibilities of being a sponsor and the intention of fulfilling them;**
- **Have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the Diocesan Bishop has established another age, or the Pastor has granted an exception for a just cause;**
- **Be a Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and who leads a life of faith as a practicing Catholic;**
- **Be validly married, recognized by the Catholic Church, if applicable;**
- **Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; and**
- **Not be the father or mother of the one to be Baptized.**

Every sponsor and/or godparent must provide a sponsor certificate, signed by the home Pastor.

If the Sponsor/Godparent cannot be present for the rite, they may designate a proxy to stand in their place. The parish must be notified in writing or before two witnesses, and care must be made to differentiate between the Sponsor and the Proxy. The Proxy must also fulfill the above-noted requirements of a Sponsor/Godparent. A parent may act as a proxy for a sponsor or godparent at Baptism. In the extraordinary form of the celebration of the Sacraments, the proxy must be the same sex as the Godparent/Sponsor they represent. Otherwise, the Sponsor/Godparent may select any suitable Proxy (regardless of sex). The Proxy must provide a sponsor certificate, signed by the home pastor.

ii. Catechesis for Baptism

Progressing through the parish's faith formation program, the newly Baptized will learn more about the meaning, effects, and mission conferred by the Sacrament of Baptism. **For this reason, catechesis about the Sacrament of Baptism teaches that Baptism (cf. CCC 1257, 1213):**

- **Is the foundation of the Christian life because it is the journey into Christ's Death and Resurrection, which is the foundation of all hope;**
- **Make the Baptized person a new creation in Christ;**
- **Cleanses the Baptized person from Original Sin and from all personal sins (as well as the punishment due to these sins);**
- **Infuses sanctifying grace into the soul;**
- **Gives the Baptized a new birth, who becomes a child of God, a member of the Church, and a Temple of the Holy Spirit;**
- **Imprints on their souls an indelible character that consecrates them for Christian worship and is necessary for salvation in the case of all those who have heard the Gospel and have been able to ask for this Sacrament;**
- **Infuses the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity into the Baptized person's soul through the Holy Spirit;**
- **Imparts the initial reception of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, namely: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, piety, fortitude and fear of the Lord, for the sanctification of the recipient;**
- **Incorporates the Baptized into the life, practices, and mission of the Church;**
- **Commissions the person to share in the sanctifying, teaching, and shepherding mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King;**
- **Is the basis of the whole Christian life and the door which gives access to the other Sacraments.**

A Priest or a Deacon is the ordinary celebrant of the Sacrament of Baptism. However, in the *case of an emergency*, any person who intends to do what the Church intends can baptize another person by pouring water on the candidate's head three times while saying the form, "[Name], I baptize you in the Name of the Father (pour), and of the Son (pour), and of the Holy Spirit (pour). Amen."

iii. Recording Baptism

The Sacrament of Baptism is recorded in the parish Baptism Register as soon as possible after the celebration. Parents must provide a copy of a birth certificate to assist with the recording of the Sacrament of Baptism. An entry in the Baptism register should include the following information (CIC 83: c. 877):

Name of Baptized: Last, First Middle

Place and Date of Birth: Date, City, State, and Sex (e.g., 1 April 2020, Fairfax, VA, Sex)

Date of Baptism: Date

Parents: Father's Full Name, Mother's Full Maiden Name

Sponsor(s)/Witness Full Names (Indicate if one is a Christian Witness; if a proxy is present, after the Sponsor's name add, Proxy: First and Last Name)

Name of the Minister

Date of Confirmation: leave blank if not yet Confirmed

Notations: as needed (see below)

Be sure to add these people to the index, including the page number.

The Baptism Register serves as the “master record” for a person’s active membership and Sacrament history (CIC 83: c. 535, § 2).

A certificate of Baptism should be issued to the parents of the child, once the Sacrament is recorded. The sex of the child is not to be indicated on this Baptism Certificate. Parents should be informed that the parish where the child is baptized will be the parish of record.

Information for noting the later reception of the Sacraments in the Baptism register, include the following:

First Communion: Under the Notations column:
Eucharist: Date of First Communion, Church, Place (City, State)
(e.g., Eucharist: 1 May 2020, St. Timothy’s, Chantilly, VA)

Confirmation: Under column for Confirmation:
Date of Confirmation, Church, Place (City, State)
(e.g., 1 May 2020, St. Timothy’s, Chantilly, VA)

Vocational Records: Under the Notations column:
Notations should also be made for Marriage, Holy Orders, or Vows (and the dissolution thereof). For example: Married to: Name of Spouse, Date of Marriage, Church, Place (City, State). Or, Declaration of Nullity, Date, Diocese, Case Number.

When making notations of First Communion or Confirmation, it is good to also add to the Baptism Register the sex of the baptized, if it was not previously recorded.

Baptism records issued later in life, for Adult Confirmation, Marriage, Religious Vows, or Holy Orders are to be issued within six months of the Rite to be celebrated. These Baptism Certificates are to indicate the sex of the baptized as well as provide accurate notations of:

- **First Communion (if available)**
- **Confirmation;**
- **Marriage(s) or convalidations;**
- **the Profession of Vows;**
- **the reception of Holy Orders;**
- Notations of a Declaration of Nullity and restrictions on future marriages, of a laicization from the Diaconate or Priesthood, and of dispensation from vows are also be entered when formally requested by authorized officials.

iv. Special Circumstances

Emergency Baptisms

Children baptized in an emergency will have their Baptism recorded at the parish with jurisdiction, e.g., the parish within whose boundaries the hospital is located. If the Ritual

of Baptism is later supplied at the home parish, then the Baptism will be recorded there with the added notation regarding the circumstances.

Children born of an unwed mother

In the case of a **child born of an unwed mother**, the mother's name is recorded if there is public proof of her maternity or if she declares her maternity before the Pastor and two witnesses. Likewise, the name of the father is to be recorded if there is public proof of his paternity or if he declares his paternity before the Pastor and two witnesses. In other cases, the name of the baptized is recorded without any mention of the name of the father or the parents (canon 877, §2). **If these conditions are not met, then the child is to be recorded as being of "unknown mother" or "unknown father" (or in Latin, *mater ignota* or *pater ignotus*) (CIC 83: c. 877, §2). It is not permitted to make any notation using the word "illegitimate."**

Adopted Children

Adopted children are considered the children of the persons who have adopted them (Canon 110). **For children Baptized after their adoption has been finalized, the following information is entered in the Baptism Register:**

- The Christian names of the child as designated by the adoptive parents;
- The names of the adoptive parents;
- The sex, date and place of birth;
- The names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
- The place and date of the Baptism;
- The name of the minister performing the Baptism; and
- The fact of adoption **but not the names of the natural parents is written in the notations column.**

Baptism certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other Baptism certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptism certificate.

For children baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations shall be added to the Baptism Register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction:

- Parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
- The name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
- The child's former **surname** shall also be parenthesized, and the new surname added; and
- A notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.

Baptism certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of Baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the Sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptism certificate.

To facilitate future reference, a Baptism register entry for the adopted child can be made in the Baptism Register of the adoptive parent(s)' parish, citing the date and location of the original Baptism record, and listing only the name of the adoptive parent(s) and the date and place of birth.

Parish personnel having access to Sacrament registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted.

Name Changes

Concerning changing the name of a child, the name change is not to be inserted into the permanent record until the finalized civil action indicating such is submitted. Then, that information is entered in the notation column. See notation instructions for adopted children (above).

For instance, if a child is born out of wedlock, and the mother later (re)marries and the husband formally adopts the child, the name of the child on any later issued certificate would have the name of the adopting father, not the natural father (if it is in fact known). In this case, an appropriate notation for the Baptism Register could read: "adopted by (name of adoptive father) at (place/court) on (date)." All future certificates should list only this name as the father.

Change of Gender

In the instance of a legal change of gender, the sex noted in the Baptism Register is not to be changed.

In the instance of a **legal change of name (where no adoption has taken place)**, the name in the Baptism Register is not changed (as it reflects what occurred at the time of Baptism, and at that time, the individual's name was the birth name). A notation is to be made (in the notations column at far right) adding the legal name change.

Certificates are to reflect the name in the Baptism Register with a notation of the legal name change; the names of the parents, of course, remain the same.

Children in parish religious education programs will be addressed by the name on their Baptism certificate unless and not until their name is legally changed.

Children presented for Baptism by persons of the same sex

In the case of children who are raised in homes by two persons of the same sex, evidence must first be demonstrated that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith before the child may receive the Sacraments of the Church. The choice of the parents not to live according to Church teaching causes concern for the upbringing of the child in the Catholic faith. Pastoral discretion may advise postponing the reception of the Sacraments until the child is of age to choose the faith and ask for to receive the Sacraments.

A Woman Pregnant out of Wedlock

In the case of a woman who is pregnant out of wedlock and who wishes to receive the Sacraments of the Church, the individual may either have arrangements for a private celebration of the Sacraments. (For Confirmation, faculties may need to be obtained if this woman is baptized Catholic, or she may participate in the celebration of Adult Confirmation at the Cathedral.) If she is a minor, she may be homeschooled, as a matter of pastoral concern.

III. Confirmation

In the Diocese of Arlington, the Sacrament of Confirmation is customarily celebrated in the Fall or Spring of a child's eighth-grade year or the Spring of a child's ninth-grade year. **For the Sacrament to be conferred before this age, written permission is needed from the Diocesan Bishop, except when the person is in danger of death (cf. canon 891).**

Before Confirmation, each candidate must have been received Baptism (a copy of the Baptism certificate should be on file from when first registered in the parish faith formation program) and have received First Penance and First Eucharist.

i. Catechesis for Confirmation

Sacrament Preparation in the Diocese of Arlington must include two years. If the confirmand has been away from religious instruction for a lengthy period of time, three years of faith formation is recommended, or proper testing is to be done to ensure the confirmand has sufficient knowledge of the faith.

In addition, as part of their proximate preparation for Confirmation, every candidate must be given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance. A Confirmation retreat is required and is at the discretion of the Pastor of the parish.

Each candidate for Confirmation is accompanied by a sponsor, who must meet the same criteria as that of a sponsor for Baptism (cf. Canon 874, see Infant Baptism above). It is highly desirable that one's godparent at Baptism also serve as the sponsor for Confirmation (cf. Canon 893, §2). Nonetheless, the choice of a special sponsor for Confirmation is not excluded (cf. Rite of Confirmation, 5). The possibility of having two sponsors, one male and one female, is not excluded either. **However, parents may not be sponsors for their child at Confirmation.** As much as possible, the sponsor ought to be involved in the preparation process and accompany the candidate on the journey to a more mature faith. The sponsor should "see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this Sacrament" (cf. Canon 892).

If the sponsor cannot be present in person, a proxy may be appointed by the sponsor (with consultation of the candidate and/or parent). The parish should be notified in writing or before two witnesses. The appointment must be made in such a way that there is certainty

as to who is the sponsor and who is the proxy. A parent or a spouse may act as proxy for a sponsor at Confirmation.

Catechesis for the Sacrament of Confirmation:

- **Helps the candidate firmly believe in Christ, as Lord and Savior, and identify as a Christian and member of the Catholic Church;**
- **Teaches that the Sacrament of Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul;**
- **Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptized with the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit;**
- **Strengthens their bond with the Church, associates them more closely with the Church's mission, and helps them to bear witness to the Catholic Faith in words and deeds; and**
- **Includes instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols (e.g., the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the Sacramental formula).**

In Arlington Diocese, it is customary for candidates to take a Confirmation Name. This is to be the name of one Saint or Blessed (of the same or opposite sex) found in the Roman Martyrology. While many titles are given for Mary (e.g., Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, etc.), the Confirmation Name should be Mary.

ii. Special Circumstances

In the case of a woman who is pregnant out of wedlock and who wishes to receive the Sacraments of the Church, the individual may either have arrangements for a private celebration of the Sacraments. (For Confirmation, faculties may need to be obtained if this woman is baptized Catholic, or she may participate in the celebration of Adult Confirmation at the Cathedral.) If she is a minor, she may be homeschooled, as a matter of pastoral concern.

In the case of an individual who declares they do not wish to be confirmed, the individual is not to be confirmed against their will. One who is reluctant but acquiesces to receive the Sacrament meets the minimum for the Sacrament to be valid.

iii. Recording Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is recorded in the parish Confirmation Register and should be recorded as soon as possible after the celebration (CIC 83: c. 895). An entry in the Confirmation register includes the following information:

(At the top of the Register Page: Date and Minister)
 Name of the Confirmed: Last, First, Middle
 Confirmation Name
 Age: Age at time of Confirmation
 Place and Date of Baptism: Date, Church, City, State
 Residence: City, State
 Parents: Father's Full Name, Mother's Full Maiden Name

Sponsor(s) Name(s) (If a Proxy is present, include write after the Sponsor's name Proxy: First and Last Name).

Be sure to add these people to the index, including the page number.

If dispensation was granted for the celebration of Confirmation, indicate those for whom the dispensation was granted and include the wording in the dispensation in the Sacrament Record (e.g., Dispensation granted to Fr. John Smith by Bishop Joseph Divine on 1 April 2021).

Notation of the Confirmation is to be added to your parish Baptism Register if the child was baptized in your parish. There is a column for the date and Church of Confirmation. It should read: Date, Church, City, State (e.g., 30 March 2021, St. Timothy's, Chantilly, VA)

If the confirmand was not baptized in your parish, record of the Sacrament of Confirmation must be sent to the parish of Baptism, and notation made in their Baptism Register.

If the parish of Baptism is out of country, notification is still to be sent to the parish of Baptism. This may be done through the Papal Nuncio.

If the parish of Baptism has been suppressed and another parish of record has been specified, then that parish should be notified. If not, then the parish where the individual made First Communion or First Profession of Faith should be notified. If there are not know, then parish of Confirmation should become the record keeper with appropriate notations.

If the parish of Baptism has closed or merged, it is appropriate to send notification to the appropriate diocese (in which the parish of Baptism is located). They will either handle the notification, or give you instruction as to how to provide notification.

When notifications are received from other parishes, the Sacramental notations are to be added to your Baptism Register as soon as possible. The Confirmation celebrated at another parish is not recorded in your parish Confirmation Register, as the Confirmation did not occur in your parish.

Confirmation may be celebrated only once and is ordinarily proved by means of a Confirmation certificate, recently issued Baptism Certification (with notations on the back), or a letter from the Pastor of the Church where the Sacrament was celebrated.

In the absence of documentary evidence, the testimony of one reliable witness suffices (e.g., the sponsor). For a person who was at least seven years old and who had the use of reason when confirmed, the oath of the confirmed person suffices as proof in the absence of documentary evidence.

IV. Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life” (LG 11). Therefore, catechesis recognizes the Holy Eucharist as the heart of Christian life for the whole Church, for dioceses and parishes, and for each individual Christian.

Children’s preparation for their first reception of the Holy Eucharist begins in the home. The family has the most important role in communicating the Christian and human values that form the foundation for a child’s understanding of the Eucharist. Children who participate with their family in the Mass, experience the Eucharistic mystery in an initial way and gradually learn to join with the liturgical assembly in prayer.

Before receiving First Holy Communion, each child must have received Baptism and must have made First Penance. A copy of the Certificate of Baptism should be on file from the child’s first registration in the parish faith formation program.

i. Catechesis for Eucharist

For children to receive Holy Eucharist, they must have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation. Sacrament Preparation in the Diocese of Arlington must include two years, or proper testing is to be done to ensure the child has sufficient knowledge of the faith. Considering their age, they must know the Lord Jesus and His saving work. They must understand that they are receiving the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord in Holy Communion. They must approach the Sacrament with faith and devotion. A child ought to be trained to properly receive Holy Communion on the tongue and on the hand; both options must be presented to the child.

As part of the proximate preparation for First Holy Communion, each child must be given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance. A workshop or retreat is encouraged and is at the discretion of the Pastor of the parish.

The Holy Eucharist may be given to children in danger of death if they can distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive Communion reverently (canon 913).

Church Law presumes that a child reaches the use of reason at age seven. Hence children should be prepared for First Communion at this age so that they may receive the Sacrament “as soon as possible,” having first made Sacramental confession, or First Penance (Canon 914).

Parents and catechists, together with the Pastor, are responsible for determining when children have attained the age of reason and are ready to receive First Holy Communion (Canon 914). Because the reception of the Eucharist, especially for the first time, is integral to the child’s full incorporation into the ecclesial community, the Pastor has the responsibility of determining every child’s readiness. Parents also have the right and duty to be involved in preparing their children for First Communion. The catechesis offered should help parents grow in their own understanding and appreciation of the Holy Eucharist and enable them to catechize their children more effectively.

Catechesis in preparation for the first reception of the Eucharist:

- Teaches that the Holy Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's Sacrifice for the salvation of all and the commemoration of His Last Supper with His disciples;
- Teaches not only "the truths of faith regarding the Eucharist but also how from First Communion on...they can as full members of Christ's Body take part actively with the People of God in the Eucharist, sharing in the Lord's table and the community of their brothers and sisters" (Directory for Masses with Children, 12);
- Ensures that the baptized have been prepared, according to their capacity, for the Sacrament of Penance prior to the First Communion;
- Develops in children an understanding of the Father's love, of their participation in the Sacrifice of Christ, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit;
- Teaches that "the Holy Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Christ" and the "what appears to be bread and wine are actually His living Body" (NDC 122);
- Helps children to participate actively and consciously in the Mass; and
- Helps children to receive Christ's Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in an informed and reverent manner.

The Sacrament of Eucharist is recorded in the parish First Communion Register and should be recorded as soon as possible after the celebration.

ii. Recording Eucharist

An entry in the First Communion register includes the following information:

Name of the Recipient, Last, First, Middle
Place and Date of Birth: Date, City, State
Age: Age at time of First Communion
Place and Date of Baptism: Church, City, State
Residence: City, State
Parents: Father's Full Name. Mother's Full Maiden Name
Remarks: Leave blank if none.

Be sure to add these people to the index, including the page number.

A certificate of the reception of First Communion should be issued to the parents of the child.

If the child who received First Communion was baptized at your parish, then notation must also be made in your Baptism Register.

The notation in your Baptism Register should read: Eucharist: Date, Church, City, State (e.g., Eucharist: 1 May, 2021, St. Timothy's, Chantilly, VA).

If the child was Baptized at another parish, the Pastor may send notification of First Communion to the parish of Baptism. Please see Confirmation above for more information.

When notifications are received from other parishes, the Sacramental notations are to be added to your Baptism Register as soon as possible. The First Communion celebrated at

another parish is not recorded in your parish First Communion Register, as the celebration of First Communion did not occur in your parish.

V. Penance and Reconciliation

In the Latin Church, children must receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for the first time prior to their first reception of the Eucharist (GCD, Addendum, 5).

i. Catechesis for Penance and Reconciliation

Like preparation for Confirmation and First Communion, parents and catechists, together with the Pastor, are responsible for determining when children are ready to receive First Penance and Reconciliation. Readiness for the reception of this Sacrament includes knowledge of sin and its effects, and understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness, and conversion.

Catechesis for children prior to their first reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances. Since the family is intimately involved with the formation of a child's moral conscience and ordinarily integrates the child into the life of the Church, parents should be involved in the preparation of their children for this Sacrament. Parents can affirm and reinforce the value of the Sacrament of Penance and the goodness of its frequent reception. They orient the child toward God and encourage continual growth in the understanding of God's mercy and love.

Catechesis for the first reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation should help children to:

- **Acknowledge God's unconditional love for us;**
- **Recognize the presence of good and evil in the world and their personal capacity to do good or commit sin;**
- **Know the Law of God (e.g., Ten Commandments);**
- **Understand the meaning of sin, and the difference between venial and mortal sin;**
- **Recognize their need for forgiveness, not only from parents and others close to them, but from God;**
- **Turn to Christ and the Church for Sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation;**
- **Understand that "Sacramental Confession is a means offered children of the Church to obtain pardon for sin, and furthermore that it is even necessary per se if one has fallen into serious sin" (GCD, Addendum, 3);**
- **Explore the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers, and Scriptures of the Rite of Reconciliation; and**
- **Understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation, including memorizing the format so that one "knows by heart" how to make a good confession and express contrition.**

Since conversion is a lifelong process, catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is ongoing. **Children have a right to a fuller catechesis each year (NCD 126).**

ii. Recording First Penance

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is not recorded in a parish register.

To help nurture an appreciation for the Sacrament of Penance, Directors of Religious Education ought to provide several opportunities throughout the year for its reception, especially during Advent and Lent.

VI. Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities

See: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Washington, DC

From: <http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/policies/upload/Guidelines-for-the-Celebration-of-the-Sacraments-with-Persons-with-Disabilities-Revised-Edition.pdf>

1. *Baptism*

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, the faithful are incorporated into Christ and into His Church. They obtain forgiveness of all their sins and are formed into God's people. They become a new creation and are called, rightly, the children of God.

- Because it is the Sacrament of universal salvation, **Baptism is to be made available to all who freely ask for it are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving it. In the case of infants and those who cannot request it for themselves, Baptism may be deferred only when there is no reason for hoping that the person will be brought up in the Catholic faith. Disability, of itself, is never a reason for deferring Baptism. Persons who lack the use of reason are to be baptized provided at least one parent or guardian consents to it. Parents who receive a prenatal diagnosis of a life-threatening condition should receive the support they need to assure that their child will be baptized “without delay.”** Indeed, priests, deacons, and other pastoral ministers should provide spiritual and emotional support to families who have received any difficult prenatal diagnosis and offer on-going support before and after the birth of a child, with special concern in the event of the death of a child.
- **Either personally or through others, the Pastor is to see to it that the parents of an infant with a disability, those who take the place of the parents, and those who will fulfill the function of godparent are properly instructed as to the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism and the obligations attached to it.** If possible, either the Pastor or a member of the parish community should visit with the family, offering them the strength and support of the community, which rejoices at the gift of new life, and which promises to nurture the faith of its new member. It is recommended that preparation programs for Baptism gather several families together so that they may commonly be formed by Pastoral direction and prayer, and so that they may be strengthened by mutual support.

2. *Confirmation*

Parents, those who care for persons with disabilities, and shepherds of souls—especially Pastors—are to see to it that the faithful who have been baptized receive the formation needed for the Sacrament of Confirmation and approach it at the appropriate time. “The diocesan Bishop is obliged to take care that the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred on subjects who properly and reasonably seek it.”

- Confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful between the age of discretion (which is about the age of seven) and about sixteen years of age, within the limits determined by

the diocesan Bishop, or when there is a danger of death, or in the judgment of the minister, a grave cause urges otherwise.

- All baptized Catholics who possess the use of reason may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation if they are “suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew their Baptism promises.” **Persons, who because of intellectual or developmental disabilities, may never attain the use of reason can receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and should be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parents, to receive it. It is important that they receive the pastoral guidance needed, along with the welcome and embrace of the whole community of faith. To the degree possible, those with disabilities should be included along with others during the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament. At times, pastoral needs may necessitate an accommodated setting and a simpler manner.**

3. *Eucharist*

Parents or guardians, together with Pastors, are to see to it that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and are nourished by the Eucharist as early as possible. **The criterion for the reception of Holy Communion is the same for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities as for all persons, namely, that the person is able to “distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food,”** even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally.

- Catholics who require nourishment through feeding tubes are encouraged to receive Holy Communion, as are all the Catholic faithful. Christ is Sacramentally present under each of the species, and Holy Communion can be received under the species of bread or wine alone. The full presence of Christ and His sanctifying grace are found in even the smallest piece of the consecrated Sacred Host or in a mere drop of the consecrated Precious Blood. Therefore, **the norm of receiving through the mouth remains the same for those who otherwise use a feeding tube for sustenance, and Holy Communion is not to be administered through a feeding tube. For these communicants, it will commonly be possible to place one or a few drops of the Precious Blood on the tongue.**
- **Catholics with Celiac Sprue Disease or other conditions that make them gluten intolerant should be given the opportunity to receive a small fragment of a regular host, and made aware of the options to receive a low-gluten Host or to receive the Precious Blood from the chalice alone.** *Clergy and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion need to be aware of the possibility of cross-contamination and related issues in order to plan for the safe administration of the sacred species to Catholics with high gluten intolerance. For example, the chalice given to a person with high gluten intolerance should not contain a particle of the host, and low-gluten altar breads should never be intermingled with regular altar breads. As people may feel self-conscious at the prospect of needing special arrangements for the reception of Holy Communion, Pastoral sensitivity in this area is particularly important.*

- **When Baptized Catholics who have been regular communicants develop advanced Alzheimer's or other age-related dementias, there is to be a presumption in favor of the individual's ability to distinguish between Holy Communion and regular food.** Holy Communion should continue to be offered as long as possible, and ministers are called to carry out their ministry with a special patience.
- If swallowing becomes particularly difficult, decisions regarding the continued reception of Holy Communion may have to be faced. **This pastoral decision is to be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the individual, close relatives, physicians, and the Pastor.**

4. Penance and Reconciliation

Young children and persons with disabilities are often conscious of committing acts that are sinful to some degree and may express a sense of guilt and sorrow. **As long as the individual confesses sins as best as possible, and expresses some sense of contrition for having committed the sins, the person may receive Sacramental absolution.**

- Those with profound intellectual disabilities, who cannot experience even minimal contrition, may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability.
- **In the case of individuals who are nonverbal or have minimal verbal communication ability, sorrow for sin is to be accepted even if this repentance is expressed through some gesture rather than verbally.** Catholics with significant communication disorders may be permitted to make their confessions using the communication system with which they are most fluent.
- **Individuals preparing for the Sacrament of Penance are to be taught to be as independent as possible in the use of their communication system to allow for the norm of private reception of the Sacrament.**
- **Confessors are encouraged to work with families and individuals to familiarize themselves with various alternative communication options to ensure that all who desire to celebrate this Sacrament may do so,** provided that the seal of confession is properly safeguarded.
- In posing questions and in the assignment of penances, the confessor is to proceed with prudence and discretion, mindful that he is at once judge and healer, minister of divine justice within the context of Divine Mercy.
- **Catholics who are deaf should have the opportunity to confess to a priest able to communicate with them in sign language if sign language is their primary means of communication. They may also confess through an approved sign language interpreter of their choice. The interpreter has the obligation to observe the seal of the confessional.** When neither a priest with signing skills nor a sign language

interpreter is available, Catholics who are deaf should be permitted to make their confession in writing or through the use of a communication device that can be passed back and forth between the penitent and confessor. **The written or digital materials are to be returned to the penitent and properly destroyed or deleted.**

- **Pastoral consideration needs to be given to those for whom reception of the Sacrament within the confines of the confessional may be problematic. Accommodations can be made that provide privacy and ensure the seal of the confession.**

VII. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

An Overview

Outside of the danger of death, in order to be baptized or received into the Catholic Church, persons seven years of age and older with the use of reason must have manifested the intention to receive the Sacrament of Baptism (or if already validly baptized, to make a Profession of Faith), be adequately trained in the truths of the faith and in the duties of a Christian, and tested in the Christian life over the course of the catechumenate.

The process of initiation for those above the age of reason is conducted through the RCIA program, which offers options for catechumens (unbaptized persons), candidates (validly baptized persons), and combined groups. The program may be adapted for children or those with special circumstances and learning needs. The program itself consists of four stages (1-4) and their corresponding rites: The Precatechumenate, The Catechumenate, Purification and Enlightenment, and Mystagogy.

A. Precatechumenate

The Precatechumenate, the length of which will vary based on the individual but is in addition to the length of time for the Catechumenate, is a time to develop initial conversion through evangelization.

Early in this process, a personal interview with each catechumen and candidate ought to be conducted to determine sacramental status, any previous Church affiliation, and if there are any marriage issues that need to be resolved. It is necessary to gather both the birth certificate of the inquirer, as well as any marriage licenses/declarations of divorce.

If it is determined that a conditional baptism is needed for the inquirer, it should be celebrated as soon as the need is identified. Conditional Baptism should not wait until reception of the other Sacraments.

Any irregular marriage situations should be addressed promptly, with pastoral sensitivity. **Although persons may enter into the Catechumenate while an annulment or convalidation is pending, they may not celebrate the Rite of Election or receive the Sacraments of the Church until their marital status has been resolved.**

Adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should be welcomed into all stages and rites of the initiation process. The rites may be adapted according to need. In these cases, catechesis for persons with disabilities must be adapted in content and method to their particular situations. Like others, adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should normally receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist in a single celebration, preferably at the Easter Vigil.

During the Pre-Catechumenate, the inquirer should be assisted in identifying a qualified sponsor (see Infant Baptism above), who can accompany them in their faith journey.

The Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming publicly marks the completion of the Precatechumenate and entry into the Catechumenate. This Rite is normally celebrated in the parish and may be offered several times during year, as needed. **Catechumens who have entered the Catechumenate are recorded in the Book of Catechumens.** This book is to be kept with the Sacramental Registers.

i. Book of Catechumens

Information necessary for the Book of Catechumens is as follows:

- Catechumen's Name: Last, First, Middle
- Sponsor's Full Name
- Minister Receiving the Catechumen
- Date
- Place of Rite: Church, Address (City, State)

Be sure to add these people to the index, including the page number.

Those who die, but are recorded in the Book of Catechumens are to be granted Catholic funerals.

B. Catechumenate

Statute 6 of the National Statutes on the Catechumenate and the RCIA notes that **the catechumenate should extend for “at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation,” preferably from before Lent of one year until Easter of the following year; it may be longer if needed. This year begins at the acceptance into the order of catechumens (Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming) and includes the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment.** Statute 20 indicates that the diocesan Bishop may determine that an abbreviated catechumenate is warranted in an individual and exceptional case.

According to the General Directory for Catechesis, n. 67, initiatory catechesis is a “comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith [that] ...includes more than instruction: it is an apprenticeship of the entire Christian life, it is a ‘complete Christian initiation,’ which promotes an authentic following of Christ, focused on His Person; it implies education in knowledge of the faith and in the life of faith, in such manner that the entire person, at his deepest levels, feels enriched by the Word of God.”

The Rite of Election celebrates the Church's recognition of the readiness of the Catechumens to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. This ceremony is normally celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent for those who will enter the Church at Easter. In the Diocese of Arlington, the Rite of Election is a combined rite, including also the Call to Continuing Conversion for those Christians seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. The Bishop usually presides at

this rite, and all Catechumens are invited to participate with their sponsors. However, at the parish level, a Rite of Sending should be celebrated prior to the Rite of Election, to emphasize the support of the local community.

The Catechumens are to be enrolled in the Book of the Elect. This is often done during/after the Rite of Sending at the parish Church. This Book of the Elect is to accompany the Catechumens to the cathedral for the Rite of Election.

i. Book of the Elect

Information necessary for recording the catechumens in the Book of the Elect is as follows:

Catechumen's Name (Last, First Middle) and Signature

C. Purification and Enlightenment

The period of Purification and Enlightenment is a time of intense spiritual preparation that occurs during Lent. Here the focus is on the proximate preparation of the Elect for the Sacraments of Initiation, through prayer and penance. An integral aspect of this period is the celebration of the Scrutinies, which are required to be celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. **Permission from the Diocesan Bishop is required to dispense from any of these Scrutinies. The norm is for catechumens and candidates to be initiated at the Easter Vigil.**

Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, immediately after receiving Baptism or Making a Profession of Faith, an adult (including child of catechetical age, 7+ see Canon 852) is to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion (Canon 866).

All Sacraments as soon as possible after reception. All are to be recorded as noted above (see I. Baptism, II. Confirmation, and III. Eucharist) in their respective registers. In addition, the Sacraments of First Communion, Confirmation, and any Marriage/Annulments are to be recorded in the notations section of the Baptism Register (e.g. Married to Name on date, Church, City State). If in the future Marriage, Holy Orders or Religious Vows (or the release thereof) would also be noted in the Baptism Register notations.

i. Baptism Register/Profession of Faith

The following is needed to record a **Profession of Faith** in the Baptism Register:

Name of Baptized: Last, First Middle

Place and Date of Birth: Date, City, State, and Sex (e.g., 1 April 2020, Fairfax, VA, Male)

Date of Baptism: Date of Protestant Baptism and Church, Profession of Faith: Date (e.g., 1 January 1988, Manassas Baptist Church, Profession of Faith: 1 April 2020)

Parents: Father's Full Name, Mother's Full Maiden Name

Sponsor(s)/Witness Full Names: NOTE: Include the Protestant godparents and also add Catholic Sponsor: First and Last Name.
Name of the Minister (Priest who receives the profession of faith)
Date of Confirmation: Date, Church, City, State
Notations: Eucharist: Date, Church, City, State and any valid Marriage/marriage impediments

Be sure to add these people to the index, including the page number.

D. Mystagogy

The National Statutes on the Catechumenate calls for a post-Baptism Mystagogy to continue until the newly-Baptized celebrate the first anniversary of their initiation.

The neophytes (newly Baptized) must be catechized to receive the Sacrament of Penance, and given an opportunity to make their First Confession.

1. Reception of Individuals Baptized in Another Church or Ecclesial Community

Water Baptism by immersion or pouring, together with the Trinitarian formula, is of itself valid. Therefore, if the rituals, liturgical books, or established customs of a Protestant denomination or ecclesial community prescribe either of these ways of Baptism, the Sacrament is to be considered valid unless there are serious reasons for doubting its validity (Directory for Ecumenism, 95).

Individuals validly baptized and who want to become Catholic/Latin Rite make a Profession of Faith. If they are not already Confirmed, then the minister automatically has faculties to confirm the newly professed, and should confirm them immediately.

When received into the Catholic Church, one becomes a member of a particular Catholic Church *sui iuris*. The Church of Baptism of the person being received determines the correct Church being entered.

- **All Protestants automatically become Latin Catholics;**
- **Eastern non-Catholics automatically become members of the Eastern Catholic Church that most closely corresponds to the Eastern Non-Catholic Church into which they were baptized. (See page 21 for examples.)**
- **If a person of an Eastern Non-Catholic Church desires to enter the Latin-rite Church, a transfer of rite is necessary. In such cases, the Office of the Chancellor of**

the Diocese is to be contacted. Notation will be made in the Baptism Register. Eastern Rite and Orthodox Churches confirm infants with their baptisms.

The Profession of Faith noted above may be celebrated at any time during the liturgical year, preferably at a Sunday Mass. **An opportunity for each candidate to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation should be provided prior to the Profession of Faith being celebrated.**

All Sacraments are to be recorded as noted above (see I. Profession of Faith (p. 15) II. Confirmation, and III. Eucharist).

a. Individuals Baptized in an Eastern Non-Catholic Church

Eastern non-Catholics, that is, members of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and the Assyrian Church of the East need only make a Profession of Faith to be received into the Church (RCIA, n. 474). Such a Profession of Faith consists of the Nicene Creed, followed by the statement, *“I believe and profess all that the Holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.”*

Generally, Eastern Non-Catholic Christians validly receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation (Chrismation), and First Eucharist together at one time as an infant. Hence, they do not receive these Sacraments when they are received into the Catholic Church.

When received into the Catholic Church, one becomes a member of a particular Catholic Church *sui iuris*. The Church of Baptism of the person being received determines the correct Church being entered.

For example:

Albanian Orthodox → Albanian Catholic
 Armenian Orthodox → Armenian Catholic
 Assyrian Orthodox → Chaldean Catholic
 Belarussian Orthodox → Belarussian Catholic
 Coptic Orthodox → Coptic Catholic
 Ethiopian Orthodox → Ethiopian Catholic
 Greek Orthodox (Greek-speaking) → Greek-Hellenic Catholic
 Greek Orthodox (Arabic-speaking) → Greek-Melkite Catholic
 Hungarian Orthodox → Hungarian Catholic

b. Individuals Baptized in an Ecclesial Community (Protestants)

It is good to investigate Protestant Baptisms. Baptisms with the incorrect form, such as, “We baptize...” or baptism in the, “Name of Jesus”, or in the, “Name of the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier” are invalid. In addition, Baptisms with the incorrect matter, such as tracing the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the recipient, or baptisms that did not use water, are not valid.

If there is a doubt regarding the validity of a baptism, then a conditional Baptism must be performed (as soon as possible and before the reception of other Sacraments).

Invalid baptisms require a Sacramental Baptism to occur.

The following are some non-Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities which *have valid Baptism*:

- all Eastern non-Catholics (Orthodox)
- Adventists
- African Methodist Episcopal (AME)
- Amish
- Anglican
- Assembly of God
- Baptists
- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Church of the Brethren
- Church of God
- Congregational Church
- Disciples of Christ
- Episcopalians
- Evangelical Churches
- Evangelical United Brethren
- Liberal Catholic Church
- Lutherans
- Methodists
- Church of the Nazarene
- Old Catholics
- Old Roman Catholics
- Polish National Catholic Church
- Presbyterian Church
- Reformed Churches
- United Church of Christ.

Some Churches and ecclesial communities *without valid Baptism* are:

- Apostolic Church
- Bohemian Free Thinkers
- Christadelphians
- Christian Community (Rudolf Steiner)
- Christian Scientists
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
- Church of Divine Science
- Jehovah's Witnesses

- Masons
- Mormons (see Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints)
- New Church of Emmanuel Swedenborg (called the Church of the New Jerusalem in the U.S.)
- Pentecostal Churches
- Peoples Church of Chicago
- Quakers (Society of Friends)
- Salvation Army
- Unitarians.

If a child was Baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community (Protestant denomination) and seeks full communion with the Catholic Church, the following points should be kept in mind and followed in practice:

i. The fact and the validity of the non-Catholic Baptism must be established.

- A Baptism certificate issued from the ecclesial community ought to be provided; oftentimes, such a certificate will state, "...was Baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- When no certificate/record is available to prove the conferral of baptism, it suffices to have a declaration from one witness who is above suspicion or the oath of the baptized person, provided he or she received baptism as an adult (can. 876). Photographs or entries in Bibles also provide evidence.
- In all cases, it is recommended to verify that the correct matter (pouring or immersion in water), and form (N. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.") was used for the baptism. If the formula "We baptize you" was used, the Baptism is invalid and must be administered again.
- If no evidence or witness can be produced, the Pastor will determine if a conditional Baptism is necessary.
 - If a person needs a conditional baptism, he should receive it before making confession. This may occur in one of two ways:
 - i) One would approach to be conditionally baptized and then make Confession before Easter Vigil. This person would receive Confirmation and Eucharist at Easter Vigil with the candidates. (There is no need to apply for faculties in this case.)
 - ii) One would approach to be conditionally baptized at Easter Vigil and then receive Reconciliation shortly thereafter.

ii. The parish of reception records the Protestant Baptism in the Baptism Register and notes the date of reception and Profession of Faith into the Catholic Church (see Profession of Faith above). The parish of reception becomes the parish of record, where future reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Marriage, and the Profession of Vows will be recorded. The parents of minors should be notified of this.

- a. A Baptized infant (a person under seven years of age or a person lacking the use of reason) may be received into the Church at the request of a Catholic parent**

or legal guardian. Since there is no liturgical rite to mark this reception, it is accomplished by a declaration by the parent/guardian that he/she wants the child to be a Catholic.

- **The child will then receive their Sacraments with other children who were Baptized Catholic (e.g., Penance/Eucharist at age 7 and Confirmation with the children of the parish). The first reception of Holy Communion serves as the Profession of Faith. This Profession of Faith must be recorded in the Baptism Register of parish in which the child makes First Holy Communion.**
- b. **Since Baptized children who have reached the use of reason are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon 852:1), their formation may follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible (see RCIA, pt. II, chap. 5), with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual.** The norm is to receive the Sacrament of Penance before Easter, and then to make a Profession of Faith and receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. However, for pastoral reasons, such children may also enter an appropriate special Sacraments class or enter the regular religious education program at the appropriate grade level. In these cases, the Pastor may require the child to make a Profession of Faith before the first reception of their Sacraments, or the first reception will serve as the Profession of Faith. Of course, at Confirmation, the Baptism promises are renewed by the Candidate, thereby signifying again a Profession of Faith.

2. Catholics Needing to Complete Their Sacramental Initiation

Parishes should ensure adequate catechesis for those persons who have been baptized Catholic but who have not yet received the other Sacraments of Initiation (Confirmation and the Eucharist).

In the case of **Catholic children above the age of reason (7+)**, they should be catechized for the reception of First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation. Such children may enter an appropriate special Sacraments class or enter the regular religious education program at the appropriate grade level. **There is no requirement of a Profession of Faith since these individuals already are in full communion with the Catholic Church by virtue of their Catholic Baptism.**

If a child has been placed in the parish's regular Confirmation class, then that child's reception of First Communion (preceded by the child's reception of First Penance) should occur before the child is confirmed. In other words, the Confirmation Mass celebrated with the Bishop is not to be the child's First Communion.

If the Pastor desires to confirm someone who has previously been baptized Catholic, he must receive delegation from the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate (normally the Vicar

General). This delegation must be obtained for the validity of the conferral of Confirmation. Record of the delegation must be included in the Confirmation Register (see Confirmation above).

All Sacraments are to be recorded as noted above (see II. Confirmation, and III. Eucharist).

A baptized Catholic who is sixteen-years-old or older normally will receive Confirmation with adults at the Cathedral, or may receive with the regular Confirmation class when a Bishop is the celebrant. If the bishop is not the celebrant, the celebrant must obtain faculties to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation (except in cases of emergency).

VIII. Other

i. Marriage Register

What is needed for entering records in the Marriage Register:

Contracting Parties: Husband's Name: Last, First Middle and Wife's Maiden Name: Maiden, First Middle

Residence: Align the husband's residence next to his name, and the wife's residence next to hers.

Place and Date of Marriage: Date, Church, City, State

Place and Date of Baptism for each: Date, Church, City, State (each aligned with their names)

Parents: Father's Full Name and Mother's Maiden Name, aligned with husband and wife respectively.

Witnesses: Full Names (two are needed)

Priest

Remarks/Notations (e.g., Mixed Marriage notation, Disparity of Cult notation, declaration of nullity).

Note: Notation of the Marriage must be made in the Baptism record of each spouse. If they were not married in your parish, then notification must be sent to the parish of Baptism.

The Priest must comply with the local laws to report the celebration of marriage.

ii. Death Register

What is needed for entering records in the Death Register:

Name of Deceased: Last, First Middle

Residence: Street, City, State

Age

Parents, Wife or Husband: Note: Parents of a minor, Spouse if married

Date of Death

Sacraments: Here you would include if the received the Anointing of the Sick

Priest: (Who last celebrated the Anointing of the Sick)

Place and Date of Burial: (Note, if in the parish cemetery, it is customary to add the plot number)

Remarks

8. ADMINISTRATION OF PARISH FAITH FORMATION

I. Unified Program

All parish faith formation programs should implement local evangelization and catechetical programs for their particular parish aligned with the Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines of the Diocese of Arlington. A qualified Director of Religious Education should oversee the overall parish faith formation program.

II. Accreditation

The Director of Religious Education should evaluate the parish faith formation program annually. Every three years, each parish will participate in the Diocesan Accreditation program.

A. Overview of Accreditation

The Office of Faith Formation will evaluate for accreditation each parish faith formation program every three years. The purpose of this accreditation process is to evaluate the implementation of these policies, to make recommendations for improvement, and to receive suggestions from the Director of Religious Education. As such, the accreditation process encourages dialogue between the parish and Office of Faith Formation so that the overall diocesan program will be the best possible.

B. Process of Accreditation

The Office of Faith Formation will send to the Director of Religious Education an accreditation package and questionnaire for completion and return. These tools will focus on the implementation of the current Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines, as well as a self-assessment to determine areas for growth and support.

The Special Consultant for Catechetics then will arrange for a parish visit and request meetings with people who serve in the parish faith formation program in order to review and evaluate the program.

The Special Consultant for Catechetics will submit a final report to the Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation, the Pastor of the parish, and the Director of Religious Education, including recommendations for implementation.

Parishes are expected to attain and maintain accreditation on the following liturgical year cycle:

Cycle A: Deaneries 1 and 5

Cycle B: Deaneries 2 and 4

Cycle C: Deaneries 3, 6 and 7

III. Finances

Based upon programs and registrations, the Director of Religious Education must propose a budget to the Pastor and Parish Finance Council each year. This budget should account for both religious education programs, as well as staff and volunteer enrichment and development programs. Reviewed by the parish finance committee and approved by the Pastor, the budget becomes the basis for the actual implementation of the program.

Parents share in the cost of their children's parish catechetical program through payment of tuition and fees. Fees are determined by the Director of Religious Education. No child should ever be deprived of participating in the program because of financial hardship.

The parish also provides support funding to ensure the quality of catechesis programs for children, youth, and adults, including those with special needs.

The Faith Formation budget also includes the salaries of parish Faith Formation employees, who should be justly compensated according to their education, the expectations for the position, and their experience.

IV. Schedule

Each year, at least 30 hours of systematic, age-appropriate, faith formation instruction is to be offered and available to each child and youth. It is recommended to have one classroom session for each chapter of the student text. Classes typically begin in September and end in the late Spring in order to fulfill the requirement of at least 30 hours of catechesis.

In addition, an orientation day is recommended at the beginning of the year school. This orientation day would provide an ideal time to have safety-drills (possibly with parents present), to collect all necessary paperwork for the year, and to distribute calendars and other information.

At the beginning of each year, the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, catechists, and students ought to gather for a prayer service at which time the Catechist Oath of Fidelity is professed and signed by all catechists. This could be done on Catechetical Sunday, as part of orientation, or at another suitable time.

During class time, it is recommended that programs be offered for the parents, and parents should also be encouraged to participate as part of their own ongoing faith formation.

Parish may determine their own time schedule for faith formation programs providing they meet or exceed the minimum time specified by the Office of Faith Formation.

The Pastor and Director of Religious Education should meet annually to ensure the parish schedule for faith formation meets the needs of all parishioners.

V. Calendar

A Parish Faith Formation annual calendar must be submitted to the Office of Faith Formation no later than August 1 each year for approval. This calendar should include all

faith formation sessions for Preschool through High School, Sacrament classes/events, as well as Adult Faith Formation sessions/events.

VI. Curriculum for Children

The curriculum for the parish religious education programs follows and adheres to current diocesan Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines, and the current Standards of Learning (see the diocesan website).

For each grade of religious education (Kindergarten through High School), the curriculum includes specific goals according to the child's level of ability.

Standards of Learning are to determine successful grade-completion and the ability to advance in the faith formation program. These Standards of Learning are intended to ensure that all students in the Diocese receive a standardized catechesis.

A system should be in place to assess each student's progress throughout the year with exams mid-year and at the end of each year. The basis for this assessment should be included in the parental handbook provided to each parent, as noted earlier. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should be notified of all feedback.

VII. Policy for Chastity Formation and Safe Environment Training

The Diocese of Arlington is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and to assist each child as he grows in grace and virtue. **The Director of Religious Education must provide parents a schedule for classes, an opportunity to review the materials to be presented, and the option for parents to OPT-OUT from these classes.**

For diocesan elementary students, the safe environment training program is *Circle of Grace. Formation in Christian Chastity* may also be used. The DRE must adhere to the license and reporting requirements of each curriculum.

For diocesan high school students, youth ministry participants, or high-school religious education students, the training program options are: *Called to Protect, Tricked, or Circle of Grace*. Please see the diocesan website for details.

The decision regarding which program to use is chosen by the Pastor or Director of Religious Education.

VIII. Library and Media Resources

It is recommended that a parish make available to parish families library and media resources with catechetical materials suited to both children and adults. Information about other resources, such as FORMED, the Institute of Catholic Culture, and the Catholic Education Center, should also be made available.

IX. Administration of Children's Faith Formation Programs

Note: Samples for the following are provided in the DRE Portal. To request a username and password, please contact the Special Consultant for Catechetics.

A. Registration

All registrants in the faith formation program must be registered members of the parish, or provide a letter from their Pastor granting permission for the registration of minors.

Each year, children must register with a completed registration form signed by their parent/legal guardian (e-signature is acceptable). When first registering at a parish, a copy of the Baptism certificate is to be provided to be kept in the child's records. This copy will suffice as proof of Baptism for the reception of First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

When a child transfers to another parish, a copy of the child's record should be provided to the parents for the new parish. This record should include the faith formation grade level of the child, attendance records, and notation of Sacraments received.

B. Faith Formation Handbook

The Director of Religious Education prepares and distributes a handbook for catechists and parishioners, which contains the parish policies and procedures regarding catechesis. This handbook includes an overview of parish faith formation programs as well as the details of the catechetical sessions, rules of behavior, Sacrament policies, and other policies and procedures affecting catechists, children, and their parents.

Each handbook must contain a receipt-page for the parent's signature to be returned to the Director of Religious Education and placed in the student's file.

Every family registered in the faith formation program should receive a handbook (access may be granted electronically), which should include:

- An overview of the parish faith formation program(s), noting that all teaching will align with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- Parents' responsibilities;
- Students' responsibilities;
- Catechist's responsibilities;
- Code of Conduct (to be signed by parent and student and returned for student file);
- Entrance/Attendance requirements for various programs;
- Registration procedures;
- Overview of Student Records (see D, i below);
- Year's calendar;
- Class schedule;
- Materials Used/Scope/Sequence of each grade;
- Sacrament preparation requirements;

- **Methods used;**
- **Discipline policy;**
- **Academic Policies and Assessment guides;**
- **Safe Environment Training information and opt-out form (if signed, must be returned for student file);**
- **Drop-Off/Pick-Up procedures;**
- **Release Permission Form to be signed and returned for student record;**
- **Safety Procedures and escape routes/evacuation meeting place (see Chapters 9 and 10);**
- **Emergency contact information;**
- **Inclement weather policy;**
- **Photo-video policy to be returned signed for student record; and**
- **Any other relevant information.**

C. Attendance

Excellent attendance is expected of all children in the faith formation program; perfect attendance should be rewarded and recognized. **Catechists must accurately record attendance for each session.** Poor attendance is to be brought to the Director of Religious Education for immediate action.

Sacrament Preparation normally requires two years of faith formation (e.g., if First Communion is received in grade 2, the child must have attended grades 1 and 2). Ideally, Confirmation preparation will be three years, grades 6 - 8. Exceptions may be made by the Director of Religious Education on an individual basis.

To successfully progress through the faith formation program, students must have regularly attended classes (and must “make up” missed classes) and successfully learned grade-level educational requirements (see *Religious Education Standards of Learning*).

Children who were not registered in the previous year’s faith formation classes must enroll at the grade level that corresponds with their knowledge of the faith per the *Religious Education Standards of Learning*.

D. Record Keeping

Records may be kept either on paper or in digital format. All records are to be kept confidential and locked away from the general public (e.g., in an office/filing cabinet).

Effective immediately: Each year, a set of class rosters, including education years (e.g., 2019-2020), catechist/aide name(s), and all students registered in the class must be filed for permanent retention. These rosters may be kept on paper in a file, or in digital format. These records should be secured in a safe place and labeled for ease of access.

Student records (below) must be maintained until two years past their 18th birthday.

Records must be maintained for current catechists (below). It is recommended to keep these records for five years (as many volunteers leave and then return to ministry).

iii. Student Records

Parishes must keep accurate records for each student (until 2 years past their 18th birthday). These records must include the following:

- Signed Registration Form, which includes:
 - The birth name of child and age;
 - The home address of child;
 - Names of parents/guardians and their contact information (including addresses, telephone/cell, email addresses)
 - Request for any custody, medical or special learning needs;
 - Parent's signature (e-signature is acceptable).
- A copy of the child's Baptism certificate;
- Sacrament Registration Form for each Sacramental year, and record of reception of Sacraments; (this may be on the registration form as a means to verify children have not missed Sacraments)
- Report cards and/or indication of successful completion for each year; and
- Attendance record for each year (e.g. 2020-2021), including catechist(s) name(s).

Additional student records:

DREs should request copies of all potentially relevant agreements or orders regarding custody issues, specifically regarding the education and enrollment of children in parish faith formation programs. When there is a question or concern arising from these agreements or orders, then the DREs may contact the diocesan general counsel for guidance regarding how to interpret and/or apply them in conjunction with Church teachings, and how to respond accordingly.

In cases when classroom accommodations have been requested, or are needed for children with special learning needs, the DRE should request a summary of the IEP/ISP of the child. DREs may contact the Coordinator of Special Needs Ministry at the Diocese to discuss special learning needs and accommodations.

DREs should also gather information regarding medical conditions that impact classroom/learning activities (e.g., disabilities, food allergies, psycho-social needs, etc.)

The following must also be retained, but may be purged annually:

- Signed code of conduct for each year;
- Signed student release form, specifically noting who is NOT to pick up the child;
- Signed photo-video policy;
- Signed online education platform permission slip (if applicable);
- Permission slips for events/trips;
- Notes for irregular pick-up/drop-off;
- Opt-out forms for specific classes/events, (e.g., safe environment training);
- Service hours.

iii. Sacrament Records

See Chapter 7 for special circumstances.

The following Sacraments must be recorded in the parish Sacrament registers as soon as possible after their celebration:

- **Baptism or Profession of Faith, in the Baptism register;**
- **First Eucharist, in the Eucharist register, and notation in the parish Baptism register (the Pastor may send a notation to the parish of Baptism);**
- **Confirmation in the Confirmation register, and notation in the Baptism register (notation must be sent to the parish of Baptism);**
- **Catechumenate Records including:**
 - **Rite of Acceptance**
 - **Book of the Elect**

Please see chapter 7 on Sacrament for instructions on recording Sacraments.

iv. Catechist/Volunteer Records

Every Parish Catechist/Volunteer for the Faith Formation Programs must have accurate records, which include current:

- **Profile/contact information;**
- **Volunteer application form (if used);**
- **Proof of Virtus training/background check, if working with minors;**
- **Signed current Code of Conduct;**
- **Signed current Social Media Policy;**
- **Signed annual Oath of Fidelity;**
- **Signed “job description” outlining all responsibilities (if used);**
- **Signed annual acknowledgment of training in safety policies and procedures;**
- **Signed confidentiality agreement protecting the information of minors; and**
- **Record of Catechist training or certification.**

9. SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington is committed to providing a safe environment for children within all diocesan activities and ministries.

The safety policies must be approved by the Pastor, implemented by the Director of Religious Education, and always include consideration for participants with special needs.

The Director of Religious Education must review these policies with catechists annually.

Definitions

Adult Volunteer

- Adult volunteers are defined as those 18 years of age or older and who are no longer in high school.
- Adult volunteers may not volunteer in their parish's youth ministry program until they reach 21 years of age or have graduated from college if they were a participant in its youth activities as a minor.
 - Adult volunteers may volunteer in their parish Preschool through Grade 8 religious education program before the age of 21, even if they participated in their parish religious education program.
 - Students who are in high school and have not reached their 20th birthday are to be treated as minors when participating in parish or diocesan activities, including as volunteers for parish religious education programs; they may assist an Adult Volunteer.
- Adult volunteers are not counselors. Their response to situations and conversations by minors may have potential legal implications, and they should, therefore, know their boundaries. The role of an adult volunteer is limited to compassionate listening. Adults may not have private/confidential conversations with minors.
- For the purpose of this document, all instances denoting requirements and/or guidelines for "adult volunteer(s)" are also binding for all clergy and diocesan personnel.

Chaperone/Supervisor

- A Chaperone/Supervisor is defined as an adult volunteer that has been delegated by the appropriate staff person and has oversight or supervisory authority over youth during a diocesan, parish and/or school activity (either on or off campus) whether for occasional or regular activities. These individuals share in the responsibility and authority of the parish or diocesan staff person designated to have oversight of a particular youth event or activity and its leaders.
- All Chaperones/Supervisors must be at least 21 years of age.
- When determining the appropriate ratio of Chaperones/Supervisors to minors for activities, including faith formation classes, a husband and wife (or boyfriend and girlfriend) that have

direct supervision over the same group of individuals only count as one Chaperone/Supervisor. Adult family members (siblings/parent-child) count as two people.

Minor

For the purposes of this Code, “children,” “child,” “minor,” “youth,” or “young person” is defined to mean any person less than 18 years of age or habitually lacking the use of reason, or still in high school and having not reached his or her 20th birthday.

Those who have completed their senior year of high school and would like to participate in youth activities may do so providing they do not participate in college activities prior to the first day of the Virginia state college schedule.

It is generally not permitted for minors to participate in programs for adults unless their parents are also present, nor for adults to participate (as participants, not leaders) in programs for minors. If a parish seeks an exemption in a particular instance, the Office of Child Protection should be contacted for guidance.

A. General Safety

I. Safe Employees and Volunteers

Adults must be rated compliant by successfully completing the paperwork, background check, safe environment training (*currently known as Virtus*) through the Diocese of Arlington.

All employees and volunteers are responsible for the safety of child and youth participants and must follow the safety guidelines for children as established by the parish and/or diocese.

All Adult “ongoing volunteers” (e.g., classroom catechists, youth ministry volunteers) should receive annual training for facility safety guidelines, behavioral expectations, and program policies and procedures. Compliance and training must be recorded in their records as maintained by the parish office of faith formation/religious education.

With direct supervision from adults, those under the age of 20 who are still in high school are considered minor and may volunteer (as assistants to adults) to work with children in Preschool through Grade 8 religious education programs.

Minors do not need OCPYC compliance training, however they must receive facility safety training, written behavioral expectations, and adequate training to meet the needs of the children being served. Minors may not be left alone with children in a supervisory capacity, nor may they escort children out of the view of adults.

Adults with CPR and First Aid training must be identified and known to volunteers.

All Directors of Religious Education must maintain current CPR and First Aid training from the Red Cross; they are encouraged to have Medication Administration Training (MAT); the parish is to cover the cost of all safety training.

Emergency protocol and evacuation procedures must be established and reviewed annually with all employees and volunteers and practiced in all faith formation programs with minors. If assistance is needed in developing or reviewing these plans, please contact the Office of Risk Management at the Chancery.

A. Office of Child Protection and Safety

The Office of Child Protection and Safety for the Diocese of Arlington provides programs to ensure a safe environment for children within the community of the Church. These programs include a comprehensive training program for employees, volunteers, parents and children; application procedures for persons working with children, including background checks; the monitoring of child and youth activities to ensure that all contact with young people is appropriate; and outreach and support programs for victims of child abuse and their families.

Compliance with OPCYP

All employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Arlington with substantial contact with children who are not their own are required to be in full compliance with the Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse.

The Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse applies to all diocesan, parish, and Catholic School activities where youth are present. All adults performing work, ministry or volunteer service within the Church in Arlington are expected to follow these guidelines. Violations of these guidelines are a serious matter and will be investigated and resolved in accordance with diocesan policy.

All clearances must be updated according to the Diocesan policy. It is the responsibility of the Director of Religious Education to keep records for each employee (contractor or volunteer) in the parish religious education programs and to renew these background checks accordingly.

Anyone working with children may not begin their ministry until all clearances are obtained.

Information for the requirements of compliance is available on the diocesan website (<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/>).

A. Mandatory Reporting Laws

A mandatory reporter is any individual, including both paid (staff) and unpaid (volunteer), who has an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service, and accepts responsibility for a child. Additionally, anyone who is supervised or managed by a mandated reporter is also a mandated reporter. A child is defined as an individual under the age of eighteen.

To be clear, Directors of Religious Education, Lay Faith Formation Ministers (including Adult, Youth, etc.), Catechists and classroom aides (paid or volunteer), Coaches, etc. are mandatory reporters.

If any issues or allegations of a legal nature arise with respect to a student, teacher, or other individual associated with a catechetical program, the Director of Religious Education should advise the Pastor immediately, and one or both should contact the diocesan Office of General Counsel and Risk Management as soon as practically possible.

B. Limited Controlled Access to the Religious Education Program for Parents Identified as Sexual Offenders

Parishes are to follow the guidelines developed by the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People regarding the presence of parents/guardians identified as sexual offenders.

FAQ's for Parish Faith Formation Programs

All Adult employees and volunteers, including parent volunteers involved with parish faith formation programs (in any format) must become compliant with the child-protection policies which includes completing the OPCYP application, pass the background checks and take the adult safe environment training (Virtus) within 45 days of completing the application.

Parents or guardians who engage children other than their own in a structured parish programs (e.g., a cooperative education format or family class led by a catechist) must become compliant with Child-Protection Policies and take Virtus training.

When a child with special learning or classroom needs requires the presence of their parent or guardian, and this parent/guardian does not engage other children, this parent/guardian need not become compliant with the child protection policies and take Virtus training.

C. Code of Conduct

An important tool in creating safe environments for children is a uniform Code of Conduct. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to make clear to clergy, employees, and volunteers that certain behaviors are unacceptable and to ensure proper monitoring of all youth. **A signed, current Code of Conduct is to be kept on file for every employee and adult volunteer in the Diocese of Arlington. The Code of Conduct needs to be signed only once per employee or volunteer.**

These guidelines apply to all diocesan, parish and Catholic school activities in the Diocese of Arlington where youth are present. All adults performing work, ministry, or volunteer service within the Diocese in Arlington are expected to follow these guidelines. Violations of these guidelines are a serious matter and will be investigated and resolved in accordance with diocesan policy.

Those who work with children are serving as stewards of God's precious gift of young life. Keeping this principle in mind will reinforce the need to respect boundaries and to provide an example of a holy life.

The Code of Conduct for Personnel and Volunteers in the Diocese of Arlington is available on the Diocesan website.

D. Behavior of All Adults

Any involvement with minors is to be approached from the premise that minors are restricted individuals. They are NOT independent. Hence, all activities involving minors may only occur with the explicit knowledge and consent of a diocesan representative and the child(ren)'s parents and/or guardians. They are subject to specific civil laws in the Commonwealth of Virginia, which may prohibit certain activities.

- All adults are able to abide by the local chain of command and by all custody, safety and emergency protocol and safe-environment procedures established by the sponsoring location.
- The possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs and/or paraphernalia is strictly prohibited.
- A child must never be offered an alcoholic beverage, tobacco, vapes, marijuana, drugs or anything else that is prohibited by law.
- A child may not distribute, consume or partake of any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, vaping, marijuana, drugs or anything else that is prohibited by law (especially in the presence of an adult) on church/school property or at any affiliated event.
- Adult volunteers may not give significant gifts or grant special privileges or opportunities to a specific child. Even small gifts are not to be given to children without the permission or knowledge of a parent or guardian.
- Adults may not engage in inappropriate conversations or use inappropriate humor, vocabulary, recordings, films, printed/digital materials or games with minors, particularly if the content is of a sexual nature or is otherwise age and/or developmentally inappropriate. Showing sexually explicit or pornographic material of any nature to a child is illegal. Acquisition, possession and/or distribution of child pornography is illegal.

Physical contact with another person should be age-appropriate, show respect and kindness, be public and be non-sexual in nature. Wrestling, tickling and other acts of “horse-play” with a child must always be avoided. **Physical contact when alone with a child should be avoided.** Hugging can be an expression of love and respect. However, hugging should always be done in the presence of others and never while alone in a room or behind closed doors. If a child initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper. In all cases it must be respectful and non-sexual.

If an adult becomes aware of an inappropriate emotional or personal bond, or a physical attraction between that adult and a young person, the adult should maintain clear professional boundaries between himself/herself and the young person in addition to consulting with a supervisor.

Principles for Immediate Intervention:

- If any youth reports feeling uncomfortable with the actions or apparent intentions of an adult volunteer at an activity, this information should be reported to a supervisor immediately. The supervisor must take immediate and appropriate action to ensure the safety of the minor.

- Any adult volunteer who receives a report involving child abuse or neglect should work with their supervisor to ensure that it is promptly reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) or local law enforcement. Once a report has been made to CPS, the adult volunteer is then to report the incident to diocesan authorities in writing.
- The supervisor should ensure the adult volunteer has been adequately instructed regarding the expectations for the event. If the adult volunteer is unable or unwilling to meet these expectations, the adult volunteer should be removed.
- If any adult finds the behavior of any fellow adult or child to be concerning or suspicious, that adult should immediately report the information to a supervisor.
- Adult volunteers shall refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages or using marijuana for four hours in advance of a youth event.
- Adult volunteers shall refrain from using tobacco, vapes, marijuana or consuming alcohol in the presence of children at any in-person or virtual event or activity.
- Items designated as weapons or that have the appearance of weapons are strictly prohibited.
- Some recreational activities or events utilize tools that have the appearance of weapons or may be used as such. Within the context of a particular event, these tools are permitted so long as the youth are appropriately monitored. These tools may include paintball bundles, squirt guns, nerf guns, camping tools (e.g., pocketknife, axe, saw), etc.

II. Safe Students

A. *Safe Environment Training*

All children enrolled in parish religious education programs are to receive safe environment training using the approved diocesan curriculum materials:

Elementary Curriculum:

- **Circle of Grace**
- **Formation in Christian Chastity**

High School Curriculum

- **Tricked**
- **Circle of Grace**
- **Called to Protect**

With programs in which safe environment lessons need to be provided only once between grades 1-4, the instruction must be taught in grade 2 before first Penance.

Homeschool children who are enrolled with their parish faith formation program are to receive safe environment training from their parents, with diocesan approved curriculum materials provided by the parish/diocese, or else they must provide the necessary opt-out paperwork to the Director of Religious Education.

Safe Environment Training must be provided in all parish faith formation programs for minors during the first two months of classes. A make-up session must be provided for students who are absent for safe environment training.

All paperwork (either verifying training or the necessary opt-out forms for individual students) must be provided to the parish liaison for data entry no later than Thanksgiving each year.

B. Dress Code for Minors

Clothing must always be in keeping with modesty and Christian values:

- Underwear is meant to be kept under clothes and generally not to be seen.
- The three Bs must be remain covered at all times (breast, belly, bottom). Swimwear should be modest (e.g., a one-piece or tankini for girls, trunks or jammers for boys).
- Shorts and skirts must be no more than 3” above the knee.
- Tank tops (or tops without sleeves) and skin-tight clothing are not allowed.
- Clothing must be free from inappropriate language or designs, including that which is profane; images that depict, advertise or advocate illegal, violent or lewd conduct; or the unlawful possession of use of weapons, drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances; or is discriminatory or derogatory about the body, or promotes teachings contrary to the Catholic Church.
- Clothing and/or head coverings must be free from gang-related or associated symbols, or other words or drawings that could pose a reasonable threat to the health or safety of others is not allowed.
- Sleepwear is to be appropriate and limited to designated sleep times and areas (e.g., overnight retreats).

C. Policies for Schools and Ministries related to the Human Person and Gender Ideology

Students attending classes or other parish-related events (onsite or off) should wear attire appropriate to the occasion and consistent with their biological sex and with Christian modesty.

All young people and their family members will be addressed and referred to with pronouns and names or nicknames consistent with their God-given biological sex. If a young person or family member proposes the use of any different name or nickname (male, female, or neutral) in connection with the assertion of an identity at odds with biological sex, that request will be denied. Any effort to affirm something that is not true does harm to the individual.

When a young person experiences distress, confusion about sexuality, or is diagnosed with “gender dysphoria”, “body dysphoria” or similar issues, the individual and the individual’s family may wish to seek psychological counseling to address the causes of distress and to resolve other issues. In such cases, the Diocese of Arlington supports the family’s efforts to resolve the individual’s dresses and advises parents to seek counseling from professionals whose practice reflects a Christian view of the human person and adheres to Catholic teaching. Clinics or physicians that offer “gender-affirming care” do not align with Catholic teaching and have the potential to harm both the child and the parent-child relationship.

Catholic teaching emphasizes the personal unity of body and soul, and the importance of accepting one’s sexed body as a gift from our Creator. Consequently, the Catholic Church opposes all interventions intended to facilitate the individual’s rejection of his or her biological sex, or to facilitate the individuals’ assertion of an identity at odds with biological sex. The Diocese of Arlington cannot support to accommodate any aspect of what is commonly known as a “gender transition,” including social transition, medical transition (puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones),

and surgical transition. (Note: this does not apply to necessary medical care to addresses rare cases of true genetic or physical anomalies.)

For situations that are not specifically discussed in this document, the general policy of the Diocese of Arlington is to respect the immutable reality of each individuals' biological sex and treat each person in a manner consistent with that reality. Should questions arise, contact the Office of Faith Formation.

D. Policies on Discipline

Under no circumstance may an adult engage in the physical discipline of a minor. It is the policy of the Diocese that corporal punishment of a child is prohibited in all entities under the auspices of the Diocese. However, this prohibition of corporal punishment shall not be deemed to prohibit, and the definition of "child abuse" for purposes of this policy, shall not be deemed to include:

- The use of incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact or other actions designed to maintain order and control;
- The use of reasonable and necessary force to quell a disturbance or remove a student from the scene of a disturbance that threatens physical injury to persons or damage to property.
- The use of reasonable and necessary force to prevent a student from inflicting physical harm on himself;
- The use of reasonable and necessary force for self-defense or the defense of others; or
- The use of reasonable and necessary force to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects or controlled substances or paraphernalia that are upon the person of the student or within his control. In addition, the definition of "child abuse" shall not be deemed to include any physical or mental pain, injury or discomfort caused by the forgoing, or which may result from participation in practice or competition in an interscholastic or intramural sport, physical education or an extracurricular activity.

III. Safe use of Facilities

A. Guides for Rectories

- Only clergy, seminarians, members of religious institutes or directly related family members may be overnight guests in rectories or admitted to personal living spaces within rectories (e.g., priests' personal rooms or suites).
- When seminarians and/or members of religious institutes stay overnight at the rectory while visiting clergy, the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy is to be notified when it is an extended stay (i.e., more than one week).
- Exception: On rare occasions, permission may be granted to allow overnight accommodations to adult male friends, which may include their spouses. In these cases, formal written permission is to be sought, in advance, through the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy.

B. Guidelines for all Other Locations

- **Planned, ongoing meetings with a child may not take place without the knowledge of a parent or guardian and the parish/school administration.**

- **If one-on-one pastoral care of a minor should be necessary, the adult must not meet with the child in isolated environments.** The adult will schedule meetings at appropriate times and use public locations that create an environment of transparency and accountability. The adult will also limit both the length and the number of sessions and make appropriate referrals when necessary.
- Unrelated young persons are not to be in a parish, school, and/or diocesan adults' home without the presence of other non-related responsible adults.
- An employee/adult volunteer should avoid being alone with a child(ren) in a locker room, restroom, dressing facility or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
- Normally, youth should not have keys to diocesan, parish and/or school facilities. If they need keys because of employment, they should be carefully interviewed and monitored by an adult supervisor.
- **Facilities must be monitored during all organized activities.** During all activities at which minors are present, adults compliant with the diocesan child protection policies are to be available in the building(s) or location where the activities are taking place and in sufficient proximity to allow monitoring.
- **Locker rooms and multi-stall bathrooms will be for single-sex use only.** All young people and adults will use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond to their biological sex. **On a case-by-case basis, young people diagnosed with anxiety disorders or similarly debilitating health issues may be given approval to use a single-person, unisex facility.**
- For overnight events, participants will be grouped by biological sex in assigning any single-sex rooms, dormitory space, camping areas, etc. Family members may share a space with permission of a parent or guardian if the arrangement of the facility permits.
- When possible, separate athletic teams will be offered for each sex. Young people will participate on teams consistent with their biological sex and may not participate on teams offered for the other sex. When separate male and female teams are not offered (e.g., golf) then members of both sexes may participate together on a single team in the same events.
- Whenever a ministry of event is divided according to sex (e.g., retreats), young people will participate consistent with their biological sex.
- **Adult and/or minors should not be meeting on diocesan, parish or school property outside of regular hours of operation.**
- **Employees should not work on diocesan, parish, or school property outside regular hours of operation except on exception and with explicit permission of their employer.**

B. Program Safety

A. Important Telephone Numbers/Contact Information

During the parish faith formation sessions, the Director of Religious Education must have easy access to the contact information for Police, Fire, Ambulance, Poison Control, and Toxic Chemical Spill centers (or 911).

The Director of Religious Education must have access to a telephone at all times during faith formation and include these numbers in his/her contact list. If the Director of Religious Education does not have a cell phone, s/he will be provided one that will be owned by the parish. Its service plan is to be covered by the parish and used for ministry purposes only.

B. Secure Entry (Buildings)

Every Religious Education Program will have secured entry and exit. An adult monitor will be stationed there during faith formation times for children, e.g., 15 minutes before class until the last child is picked up. No child is to be left unattended, including in a classroom.

Parents who fail to pick up their children in a timely manner must be telephoned. If contact cannot be made, the emergency contact is to be called. No child is to be left alone with one adult.

C. Classroom Attendance

For every class, catechists must take attendance. Parents may either:

- **drop off and pick up in the classroom or carpool line, *or***
- **the parent is to notify the DRE of any expected absences, and when an unexpected absence occurs, the parent must be notified.**

Catechists must be notified in writing of all authorized persons who will pick up each child (and also who is not authorized to pick up the child) and/or permission for the minor to self-release.

Suggestions:

- **Verification of identification should be attained until the adult picking up the child is recognized by the catechist;**
- **A sign-in and sign-out page may be implemented.**

D. Traffic/Pedestrian/Bus Safety

Adult monitors shall be assigned to ensure the safety of children and youth at drop-off and dismissal.

E. Orientation/Drills

Religious Education classes must offer an orientation of emergency procedures for all students at the beginning of the year; see Chapter 10 for Emergency Policies and Plans.

This student orientation should include:

- **Evacuation of Building/Fire Drill (to an on-site location, e.g., parking lot), and**

- **Lock-down drill (in the building).**

Catechists should be trained in:

- **Evacuation of Building/Fire Drill (to an on-site location, e.g., parking lot), and**
- **Lock-down drill (in the building), and**
- **Lock-out evacuation drills (to an off-site location designated for emergency pick-up). Note: This information must also be included in the Religious Education Handbook.**

F. Inclement Weather Policy/Class Cancellations

Parish Religious Education Programs will follow the local school district for class and event cancellations. Decisions regarding weekend events may be made independently and the decision rests with the Pastor of the parish. **All class cancellations (for any reason) should be posted on parish/Religious Education voicemail and websites. Every effort should be made to efficiently communicate with those involved with the cancelled program (volunteers, families, etc.).**

Parish Religious Education Program schedules should accommodate two inclement weather dates.

G. Student Discipline

In all areas of learning, discipline must be considered in the development of children. Discipline must be based on the Gospel message of Jesus. Discipline encourages and nourishes growth in self-discipline, responsibility for Catholic moral values, and loving respect for the rights of all persons. To achieve these ends, parents, catechists, and students work together to create a Catholic learning environment.

Each Director of Religious Education shall formulate a set of rules and regulations regarding discipline during faith formation programs consistent with Diocesan policies, guidelines, and regulations. **These rules and regulations, after prior review and approval by the Pastor, shall be distributed annually in writing as part of the Student Code of Conduct. It may be included in the Parish Faith Formation Handbook. It must be signed by both the parent and the child, returned, and added to the student's file.**

The classroom catechist should view well-prepared and well-conducted classes as the first step toward good classroom discipline. The classroom catechist should first manage the discipline problems of his/her classroom and should enlist the help of the Director of Religious Education only in cases involving serious or repeated misbehavior.

Whatever disciplinary action is taken must be deserved and appropriate to the offense. **Disciplinary measures must not be excessive, arbitrary, inflict bodily harm, or intended to subject the student to ridicule or defamation. Corporal punishment is expressly forbidden, regardless of parental consent.**

The decision to place one's hands on a child for the purpose of restraint should only be made in situations where a child has become an imminent danger to himself or another person. See General Safety, II Safe Students (above).

Any means of restraint must not intentionally cause any harm, injury, or pain to the child.

Restraint should not include any device or instruments as the means to restrain. Physical restraint should never be the first alternative to correcting a child's behavior.

H. Student Privacy

The Director of Religious Education or designated officials have the right to protect the health, welfare, and safety of parishioners against drugs, weapons, unauthorized publications, and other contraband materials.

The search of a child's person and/or personal property (e.g., bags, etc.) while on parish property or at parish activities may be conducted by the clergy, Director of Religious Education, or other designated officials. The search must have reasonable cause and be related to the parish rights in these regards.

- Searches of **property** should be done in the presence of another adult witness (e.g., catechist or parent), whenever possible.
- Searches of **persons** must be done in the presence of another adult witness.

The failure of a child to voluntarily submit to a search shall be presumptive evidence of the existence of contraband and grounds for appropriate disciplinary action.

I. Retreats and Field Trips/Off-site Events and Activities

Administration:

Retreats and Field Trips/Off-Site Events may be planned to enhance the catechetical program and expand the religious experiences of the child. **When planning any parish event outside the diocese, the DRE is to work with the Office of Child Protection and Victim Assistance to complete all necessary paperwork and to comply with regulations of the outside diocese(s) to be visited.**

Parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form, must be obtained before taking children to an activity on or off the parish/school property or event location, even when student is delivered directly to the location. A copy is to be kept on file forever.

A copy of the parental permission and medical form for each young person is to be "in hand" by a Chaperone/Supervisor for all off-site events. An additional copy is to remain at the parish along with a list of all participants at the event.

Medical Treatment of Minors:

Employees/Adult Volunteers may not administer medication of any kind without specific, written parent/guardian permission.

A good faith effort should be made to provide the appropriate care or assistance to any ill or injured young person in a life-threatening situation (Va. Code # 8.01-225(A)(I)).

See Section B. Health and Medical Safety for Medical Treatment during Events and Activities (below) for details.

Transportation:

Whenever possible, bus transportation should be used. The carrier must be listed on the Diocesan Vendor Insurance List. (See diocesan website for current list.)

If automobiles or vehicles of Church personnel, youth, or parents are utilized to transport children on field trips, the drivers or the vehicle owners must be 25+ years of age, provide copies of a valid driver's license, current liability, medical, and uninsured motorist insurance coverage.

- **If there is only one adult volunteer driver to transport youth, at least two youth must always be present;**
- When possible, drivers should only drop off and pick up youth from a predetermined location that is not at the youth's house.

Event Supervision:

Each event must be adequately supervised.

Overnight events, such as retreats and lock-ins, may be scheduled only with the permission of both the Pastor and the Director of Religious Education (if involved). These events must have adequate supervision, and all supervisors (even volunteers) must comply with policies established by the Office of Child Protection. Parents have the right to opt-out of overnight events, and a suitable alternative for faith formation requirements must be provided.

Planning overnight events must take into consideration the following policies:

- **If any adult volunteer must enter a sleeping area with young people, a second adult volunteer must be present.**
- **Any interaction between an adult and a youth may not be held within the sleeping quarters;**
- **Adults should not be alone with a child in a sleeping facility, restroom, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate for a ministry relationship. If any adult volunteer must enter a sleeping area with young people, a second adult volunteer must be present;**
- **Under no circumstances shall an unrelated adult share a bed with a child. If an adult must stay in a hotel or other sleeping room with children, the adult must sleep in his or her own bed, using a rollaway, cot or other bedding materials if necessary;**
- **During overnight activities, Chaperones/Supervisors are responsible for establishing and enforcing a curfew. Youth should be afforded the opportunity for at least eight hours of sleep.**
- **Chaperones/Supervisors must go in and check rooms on a regular basis after curfew to ensure that young people are located within and remain in their rooms;**
- **A Chaperone must be available and on-watch in a designated location throughout**

the night. This adult is also responsible for monitoring sleeping arrangements in which adults are also present with minors throughout the night;

- **Paperwork/permission forms for overnight events must be saved forever.**

When sponsored programs occur off-campus, chaperones/supervisors will be provided information to review with all youth participants to help familiarize them with the program schedule and facility layout where event activities will take place.

All adults should ensure that young people understand important safety information.

A specific location must be designated where minors will be able to locate their chaperone or supervisor or where the group will meet at an agreed-upon time.

In planning for chaperones/supervisors of children at group activities, the following guides must be considered and implemented:

- Chaperones/Supervisors are responsible for reviewing the Diocese of Arlington Code of Conduct and all related guidelines with their supervisor (if you are in another diocese, their Code of Conduct and all related guidelines are to be reviewed);
- Two or more adult volunteers compliant with the Diocesan child protection policy must be present for events involving children whether in-person or virtual;
- In the event that a sufficient number of chaperones/supervisors are not available, the event must be cancelled;
- **The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children for a day trip:**

Preschool	Grades 1-4	
K-5	Grades	1:6
6-8		1:8
Grades 9-12		1:10;
- The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children for events lasting more than 12 hours is 1:7;
- **Student must comply with the dress code (see General Safety, II Student Safety – above)**
- **Young people will be assigned to a specific chaperone/supervisor who will monitor and supervise their behavior throughout the event or trip.**
- **Both adults and youth are expected to attend activities with the entire group or assigned small groups.**
- Adults participating in an event are expected to remain at the event until its conclusion.
- Where feasible, separate adult restrooms should be utilized.
- Unrelated adults should not be alone with a child in sleeping facility, restroom, dressing facility or other closed room or isolated area.

J. Guidelines for Nurseries during Mass or Religious Education

While a nursery room for parents/caregivers to attend Mass/teach religious education falls under the Virginia Department of Social Service religious exemption, using the Department of Social Service's ratio parameters is encouraged.

The state ratio is one adult volunteer to every four children (1:4), when there are any children less than 2 years of age and 1:10 for ages 2–4. In order to maintain the religious exemption, parents must not leave Church property without their children at any time.

There should be no less than 3 adult volunteers at one time in the nursery, in case one adult volunteer needs to leave for any reason.

Consider whether the nursery will be equipped to handle diapering and bathroom breaks for the children. If not, let the parents know that they will be contacted (even during Mass) to come and assist their child.

Sign In/Sign Out procedures must be communicated to all parents using the nursery and be used consistently:

- **A sign in and sign out page where the parent lists his/her name and a cell phone number, the child's name, date and time signed-in, and time signed-out, as well as any allergy conditions of the child if food is present;**
- **Name tags must be provided for the children to be completed by the parent upon arrival (ideally two for each child - one for their front, and one for their back); and**
- **A matching system of some sort should be considered for use, where the parent receives a numbered card that matches the number on the child's name tag. This will make sure the correct parent and child are matched at pick-up.**

Parish Nursery Programs should have procedures on:

- How to contact parents during the Mass if he/she needs to return to the nursery if their child becomes ill or very upset;
- Snacks be offered (and handling allergens);
- Nursery rules for the children to follow (e.g., soft voices, no hitting, no running, etc.);
- An emergency plan, including an emergency evacuation plan. Let parents know where the designated meeting place would be in case of evacuation, and post the plan in the nursery;
- Childproofing the nursery; and
- Room maintenance and sanitation of surfaces and toys.

K. SPRED (Special Religious Development) Safety Guides

Recognizing that SPRED is a ministry to the most vulnerable population, safety and protection are primary elements. Specific measures to meet the spiritual and safety needs of SPRED participants and volunteers must be enforced. The group leader and at least one additional volunteer must be aware of and must be able to follow all guidelines.

Safe Facilities for SPRED

The facilities used for SPRED must meet or exceed expected safety standards, designed to keep children and adults safe from physical injury, unauthorized entry or exit, or other harm.

Therefore:

- **Leaders must be proactive with accident prevention by conducting periodic facility safety inspections and identifying any hazards;**

- **Volunteers must immediately report a problem with facility or safety standards to the parish staff;**
- **A problematic situation must be handled proactively by the parish staff for the safety of all involved in the program;**
- **Doors must be opened/locked at specific times to facilitate entry/exit by authorized persons;**
- **Doors that lead to the exterior must be locked when not in use to prevent possible unauthorized entry/exit; and**
- **The group leader or designee must maintain keys to doors while children are present.**

Guidelines for SPRED Safety

To reduce the risk of danger or abuse, and promote health and safety, these basic guidelines must be followed:

- **All volunteers must complete written applications and receive training in safety guidelines, behavioral expectations, and program policies and procedures;**
- **Adults with CPR and First Aid training must be identified and known to volunteers;**
- **Emergency protocol and evacuation procedures must be established and reviewed *monthly*;**
- **Emergency phone numbers must be posted and clearly visible in all rooms used by volunteers. The phone numbers should include emergency 911, non-emergency police, parish office, and rectory;**
- **Behavior and safety expectations for children, youth, and adults, must be clearly defined;**
- **Reports of injury, incidents, or accidents must be documented and kept on file;**
- **Volunteers must wear identifying name badges while in the building;**
- **Volunteers may keep cell phones on their person, with contact phone numbers available in the event of an emergency;**
- **Conversations must be limited to essential information when children are present, in order to focus on the needs and behaviors of participants;**
- **Children must be escorted in the hallways using positive control during all transitions or movements (*visual or physical contact at all times*);**
- **Volunteers must have visual or physical awareness of children at all times;**
- **Any distress or concerns with specific children must be identified and addressed by the religious education team and parents as soon as possible;**
- **Parents must be informed as soon as possible of any behavioral incidents or problems acted out by their child; and**
- **Physical restraint for the safety and best interest of a child may be used when necessary and must be conducted in accordance with diocesan guidelines (*sensible restraint for the safety and best interest of the child*).**

C. Health and Medical Safety

All faith formation staff and volunteers must be aware of proper procedures in case of a medical emergency.

At least one person with current First Aid and CPR certification must be present during children's faith formation programs.

In the event of a serious injury or medical emergency: Call 911 and provide the address. Identify the location (specific floor, classroom, etc.). **This information should be visibly posted by all exits.**

Describe the medical emergency by stating what happened and the type of injury. Obtain or provide on-site first aid.

Alert other employees/catechists (when appropriate) that an emergency is occurring.

Designate an employee/catechist to meet the EMTs and show them where the injured person is located.

Notify parents or guardians immediately. Siblings may be gathered for early dismissal if convenient for the parent in these situations.

A. First Aid and Universal Precautions

First aid refers to the initial and reasonable care given in response to an illness, accident, or injury. Universal precautions refer to the avoidance of contact with another's bodily fluids.

B. Medical Treatment during Events and Activities

- **For events and activities (on or off site), one of the adults must have Medical Administration Training certification (see General Safety above) if there is a child who needs medicine administered.**
- **Adults may not administer medication of any kind without authorized, written parental permission.**
- **Parental permission must be obtained, including a signed medical treatment form, before taking children to any activities off of the parish/school property or event location, even when students are delivered directly to the location.**
- **A copy of the parental permission and medical form for each young person is to be "in-hand" by a chaperone/supervisor for all off-site events. An additional copy is to remain at the parish along with a list of all participants at the event.**
- **A good faith effort should be made to provide the appropriate care or assistance to any ill or injured young person in a life-threatening emergency situation (§8.01-225 (A)(1), Code of the Commonwealth of Virginia).**

C. Communicable Diseases or Viruses

Children excluded from regular school attendance should not participate in regular parish faith formation programs. Special accommodations must be sought.

D. Pandemic Response Plan or Other Health Crisis

Introduction:

A Pandemic Response Plan provides guidance to parents, students, employees and volunteers in the event normal faith formation activities are suspended due to a pandemic flu or other health-related crisis. A decision to implement this plan will be based on the best available information supplied by the appropriate federal, state, and local governmental agencies, and by the Diocese of Arlington in cooperation with the Office of Catholic Schools. This plan is intended to be fluid in nature and will be modified at the direction of the Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation, to respond to the circumstances dictated by a particular health crisis.

Guidance to Directors of Religious Education:

- Communicate with catechists the appropriate strategies to prevent or reduce the spread of a virus. Instruct catechists to review these strategies with students (for example, covering sneeze or cough, hand washing, and telling parents or teacher of flu related symptoms). Send home instructions taught in class.
- Ensure that maintenance staff, volunteers, and all employees are trained in infection control and disinfection procedures. Classrooms are to be cleaned after every session (tables, chairs, and surfaces used are to be wiped down with disinfectant).
- Identify students most vulnerable to a health crisis because of a compromised immune system or chronic illness. Encourage their families to homeschool during the pandemic.
- Maintaining in the classroom an adequate supply of materials (tissues, ant-bacterial wipes or hand sanitizer) to prevent the spread of a virus.
- Keep parents and catechists informed of relevant information supplied by Federal, state or local agencies and the Office of Faith Formation.
- Create a contingency plan for employee/volunteer absences. Identify substitute catechists and alternate procedures in support of essential operations.

In the event of event cancellation:

- The DRE or their delegate is to communicate with all involved with the event or program to provide information on the closure.
- Update the parish website to provide the most recent and relevant information.
- Establish a symptom-free protocol for the return of students.

In the event that Religious Education must be closed for an extended period of time:

- The Director of Religious Education is to develop and maintain a contingency education plan to provide a good learning opportunity during the closure, taking into account the effects the crisis is having on students' families;

- Catechists are to prepare resources that can be supplied to parents and students by the most appropriate form of communication. These materials should include grade-appropriate lesson plans and devotions;
- Maintain communication with catechists to ensure that a learning environment is provided that takes into account the nature and magnitude of the health crisis, offering support and assistance as needed;
- Catechists may utilize appropriate learning tools (for example, educational websites, such as Google Classrooms, Meet, etc., and educational television channels, EWTN); follow the policies and guidelines for online education platforms (see Ch 8, D, Ch 9, I, A ii, p. 14ff.)
- Encourage catechists to communicate on a weekly basis with the parents on homework assignments or other learning activities, copying in the Director of Religious Education in all correspondence.
- Ensure that the facilities are properly cleaned and disinfected prior to the resumption of any on site activities; and,
- Ensure parents know how they will receive communication for updates, and announcements of re-opening. Remind parents to continually monitor the parish website for updates, and to check email accounts.

E. Medical Conditions

Parents must inform the Director of Religious Education in writing if:

- **a medical condition prevents their child from participating in any activity,**
- **if their child has severe food allergies,**
- **If their child has medication needs, or**
- **if any classroom instruction modifications must be accommodated (IEP/ISP).**

The Director of Religious Education, in turn, must provide the classroom catechist with appropriate information. However, catechists are not to administer any over the counter medications or products. In cases when parents request confidentiality, a catechist/volunteer may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

F. In cases of accidents or injury

a. Student or Volunteer Accidents

The Director of Religious Education is notified immediately in case of an accident during a faith formation function.

- Administer first aid and/or call 911, as appropriate.
- Obtain contact information for the injured person.
- Parents are notified of the accident or injury as soon as possible.
- Obtain names, addresses and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
- Within three business days complete a Student Accident Report or Volunteer Accident Report and submit it to the Office of Risk Management via fax (703) 778-9118 or email to: riskmanagement@arlingtondiocese.org

- The Office of Risk Management will contact the parents of the injury student or the injured volunteer through email.

The Director of Religious Education must keep 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) if the child requires professional medical attention or if the severity of the incident warrants documentation. The written record is kept on file for the calendar year and may be placed in the student's file.

b. Employee Injury

Steps to take following an employee injury:

- Administer first aid or call 911 as appropriate.
- If the employee is unconscious or cannot safely be transported by themselves or a co-worker, contact 911.
- If the employee needs immediate medical attention (without involving an ambulance), select a medical care provider from the directory provided to each work location. Do not use personal physician. [NOTE: most urgent care facilities are included.]
- Immediately notify the injured employee's supervisor.
- Within 48 hours the supervisor must complete an Employers' First Report of Accident and submit it to the Office of Risk Management via fax (703) 778-9118 or email to: riskmanagement@arlingtondiocese.org
- Employees need to inform the treating location or physician that it is a work-related injury and that it MAY be covered under the diocese's Workers' Comp Program. [NOTE: some medical providers require the claim number before services are rendered.]

c. 3rd Party Injury

Steps to take following an injury by an individual visiting the property:

- Administer first aid and/or call 911, as appropriate.
- Obtain contact information for the injured person.
- Obtain names, addresses and telephone numbers of any witnesses.
- Take photos of the area where the injury occurred.
- Do not admit fault.
- Do not offer to pay for anything.
- Within 48 hours complete a General Liability Claim Form and submit it to the Office of Risk Management via fax (703) 778-9118 or email to: riskmanagement@arlingtondiocese.org
- A representative from the Office of Risk Management will contact the person reporting the claim, and may visit the location where the injury occurred.
- The injury may be reported to an outside adjuster for further investigation.

G. Substance Abuse

The parish recognizes all federal, state, and local laws regarding the use of drugs and alcohol.

Participants in faith formation programs (child or adult) may not possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or illicit substance on the parish grounds, activity bus, or at any parish related activity.

Any participant in a parish faith formation program who consumes, possesses, buys, or sells drugs, alcohol or any illicit substance, or is suspected of such activities on parish property or at a parish- sponsored function shall be referred immediately to the Director of Religious Education for action.

In such cases, a witness ought to be present during the confrontation.

Parents must be notified, and when appropriate, the proper law enforcement agency is contacted.

The parish may recommend opportunities for guidance and counseling if desired by the parents.

D. Safe Communications and Technology

Parish public relations deal with the communication of relevant materials to explain and interpret the policies and activities of the faith formation programs for such purposes as establishing and maintaining goodwill, inviting attention to the goals of faith formation, seeking parishioners' support, and gaining volunteers. Those to whom such communications need to be directed include the Pastor and clergy, the pastoral council, parents, and parishioners.

When feasible and with the approval of the Pastor, media releases may be made concerning the activities of the parish faith formation programs to the public at large.

The Safe Communications and Technology compliance policy must be signed at least once.

A. Safe Communications

All communications by parish employees or volunteers about a parish ministry (e.g., events, cancellations, student behavior, etc.) must copy-in the respective Ministry Director, even if the communications are directed to adults. These communications should reflect the policies, procedures, and intentions of the parish.

Permission of the parent must be obtained, in writing, in order for an adult to communicate with minors (up to and including age 17) via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, social networks, or other electronic means. The respective parish office (e.g., Youth Ministry, Religious Education) should be copied in on the communication, as well as the parent. Only ministry-related communications are appropriate.

i. Online Educational Platforms

Parish Faith Formation programs may find online education platforms and video conferencing capability to be a useful and effective means for communicating with families, accomplishing instruction, and maintaining/building community.

FERPA and COPPA Compliance

FERPA and COPPA Compliance certification are standards for online platforms for use by minors with strong end-to-end encryption in place for security. That said, security is only as strong as the end-user. **When selecting an online platform, every effort should be made to use a platform that is secure and to train all volunteers and staff to use the security features of the platform.**

a. Contained Educational Platforms

Two of our approved catechetical series have self-contained educational platforms: *Spirit of Truth* by Sophia Institute Press, and *My Catholic Faith Delivered*, by Ignatius Press (*Faith and Life Series*). Both of these platforms will have their own rules, regulations, and parent release forms for registration.

b. Video Conferencing

There are various video conferencing options now available, the two most common are through Google (Meets, Hangouts) and Zoom. These are not the only choices, but below we will outline some features of these two platforms.

Google for Education and Zoom for Education Features

- Both platforms (Google and Zoom) offer end-to-end encryption, with some exceptions:
 - Calls to actual phones may not be encrypted if the telephone provider can't provide that functionality
 - If a user is using a third-party add on, like special hardware in a conference room, the video might not be encrypted onto that hardware/application. This would be an unusual circumstance for WFH – Distance Learning
- Both platforms allow for:
 - Controls over who can record video
 - Chat or audio only meetings
 - Participants in the meeting have control over their audio and video settings so they can choose to self-mute or not show video

Additional information relative to the above-mentioned platforms as well as other platforms can be found below.

Google:

- Meet and Hangouts are covered under the same security policies as the rest of the GSuite, which is FERPA and COPPA compliant
- GSuite administrators can set some security settings as default, such as only allowing meetings with members with a school email address (this may be beneficial to keep participants inside the “school”, this may be problematic if you want to use this platform with parents)
- Google administrators can see chat and Hangout logs through the admin dashboard
- Please note that Google owns all information that is stored or recorded (we *highly* recommend that you do not use the Google platforms to store private information, including medical information or social security numbers)

Zoom:

- Zoom for Education has full FERPA and COPPA compliance; the basic (free) platform does not specifically say it is FERPA and COPPA compliant
- The platform allows for more security settings, including setting password for meeting, adding more encryption choices, etc.
- Meeting organizers can dismiss individual participants from the meetings (Google Meet does not have this control)
- Parishes may economize by using one professional zoom account, and then using the breakout rooms for individual classes

Summation

- Both platforms have a strong level of encryption
- Only Google for Education and Zoom for Education accounts have stated FERPA/COPPA compliance
- Most of the compliance issues have to do with
 - Making sure that participants know they are being recorded
 - Have the right and ability to opt-out
 - Both platforms have this ability

There are other applications for video conferencing that are available. When researching the best platform for your parish use, consider the standards applied above to Google and Zoom to ensure a secure platform for minors.

It is preferable that video conferencing accounts be owned/managed/controlled by the parish/school, not by volunteers.

Policies and Best Practices for Video Conferencing

There are best practices for using video conferencing (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, etc.), especially when hosting live sessions with minors:

- **Establish parish rules for Video Conferencing, considering:**
 - **Whether or not catechists will require use of camera and/or microphone**
 - **The ability to change the name of the user**

- **Appropriate space used by the users (e.g., in a common space that is not a bedroom, appropriate back-ground images, etc.)**
- **Receive parent permission for minors prior to scheduling any video conference; keep a copy on file for the full school year**
- **Include parents of minors in email communication** and invite parents to participate in the meeting itself, especially with younger children
- **The parish office of ministry (e.g., Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, etc.) is to be copied in on all email correspondence**
- **Include a second teacher/catechist, aide, or parent who is a non-related adult (18+ years old) on the conference (Note: non-related means the two adults are not related to each other, including by marriage; the adults may be related to the children in the class)**
 - **If two non-related adults are not available, the Director of Religious Education must have login access to be able to join and monitor the session**
- **Every session, at least as far as classroom meetings for minors, should have two non-related adults and be recorded; if only one adult is present then the session must be recorded.**
- **A copy of all video conference recordings must be kept forever (ad infinitum)**
- **When using video conferencing, all visible space is considered diocesan property; consider what is visible on screen (e.g., images, visible personal information that may be private or inappropriate)**
- **When instructing minors, use of alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances is forbidden**

Video Conference Settings

The following controls are available through the technology and are suggested to be used to create a more secure conference:

- Disable “Join Before Host,” so people cannot join and begin before you arrive
- Disable “File Transfer,” so there’s no malicious file sharing between computers
- Disable “Allow Removed Participants to Rejoin,” so removed/rejected attendees cannot come back in
- Do not post the Zoom conference link in any public profile, website, etc.
- Create a new link for every video conference, use a secure password
- Ideally, create the conference link the same week as the video conference, but far enough in advance for sufficient planning of the session

Recording Conferences and Security

- **Every session, at least as far as classroom meetings for minors, should have two non-related adults and be recorded; if only one adult is present then the session must be recorded.**
- These recordings need to be stored where the parish can control them; it is suggested that each year’s recordings be put on an external drive and stored safely (forever)
- Recordings are to be published in a way that keeps the content secure within the school/classroom
- **Recordings are not to be posted on *public* YouTube channels, etc.**

- Parents should be aware when recordings happen and what their rights are as far as letting their students opt-out of live recordings
- Students should be reminded that recordings/screen shots by the participants are expressly forbidden
- Monitoring and communicating with teachers about security issues will need to be ongoing
- **If there is a security breach, parents need to be notified as soon as all relevant information is gathered and available (e.g., what the students experienced and how the situation was handled)**

ii. Social Media

Social Media is defined as any form of electronic communication through which a user creates, utilizes, accesses, retrieves, and/or visits online communities or systems to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Social Media encompasses, but is not limited to, all of the following: email, texting, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networks, video messaging, conferencing applications, online message boards, gaming systems, landline and mobile telephones, online voice communications, etc.

In accordance with diocesan policy, as stated in 8.1 and 8.2 of the *Information Security Policy, version 16* (for the full policy, see *Diocesan website*):

8.1 All information and messages that are created, sent, received or stored using diocesan communication assets are the sole property of the Diocese, and no user has any ownership interest or expectation of privacy in such communications. The Diocese retains the right, in its sole discretion, to review all information or communications sent, received, stored, or posted using Diocesan communication assets. The Diocese also retains the right to track internet usage and file downloads, for compliance with diocesan policies, and for other business reasons.

IT staff will not review the content of an individual user's communications out of personal curiosity or at the request of individuals who have not gone through the proper approval process.

A Department Supervisor must file a request to the Director of Human Resources to have email messages or internet activity reviewed or monitored. The Director of Human Resources will authorize or deny monitoring. If authorized, the HR Director will contact the IT Director to initiate the review/monitoring. The results will be returned to the HR Director.

8. 2b. Clergy, employees and volunteers who use their own personal account(s) to communicate with minors or their parents/guardians for diocesan, parish and/or school activities subject themselves to the above diocesan policy.

Communication and Social Media Policy

- **The responsibility for parish faith formation public relations rests ultimately with the Pastor.**
- **Matters that concern public relations should first be brought to the attention of the**

Pastor. As circumstances suggest, other diocesan offices may be involved, principally the Office of Communications.

General Guidelines for Social Media

The parish retains the right to discipline students for their actions, regardless of when or where they occur, when those actions negatively impact the parish's image, reputation, and/or the safety and well-being of the Church community. This covers inappropriate behavior in cyberspace including but not limited to messages, chat room commentary, comments/pictures, postings on social networking sites, blogs, wikis, gaming chats, digital transmissions, and other technology-related social activity.

- All ministry social networks and communication should be open and transparent;
- All ministry social media sites are to be owned or hosted by the diocesan, parish and/or school sponsoring entity. All passwords should be known by the parish and/or school administration and should not be changed without their permission.
- All clergy and employees must always identify themselves with the appropriate title in their username and/or profile;
- Clergy/employee social media accounts are always to be presumed to be ministry accounts and thus to be open and transparent;
- Personal social media accounts may not be used for ministry communication with minors;
- Each ministry that communicates with minors should establish a dedicated account that is used exclusively for ministerial purposes and that may be accessed, monitored and used by more than one unrelated adult volunteer;
- **Use of social media communication for private one-on-one contact with minors is not permitted.** In the rare event that these activities occur, the communication must be kept on file and at the organization location in an easily accessible format;
- Applications (e.g., Flocknote, Constant Contact, Mailchimp, Survey Monkey, etc.) utilizing unilateral communication (texting and emailing) from an official account of the organization for announcements and promotions is permitted.
- One-on-one or group texting or instant/direct messaging without utilizing an official diocesan, parish, or school application is not permitted.
- Written permission from their parent(s) or the legal guardian is necessary prior to any electronic communication with a minor that cannot be openly seen by the parents and unrelated adults;
- All text-based communications sent to or received from young people must be copied to their parent(s) or the legal guardian or an additional adult volunteer. These communications must be kept on file and at the organization location in an easily accessible format;
- Communication with minors via electronic means is to be restricted to the hours that are appropriate for a phone call to the residence, except in the event of an emergency or to communicate time-sensitive information;
- **Use of cell phones is not permitted during youth events, except schools/parish programs may allow the use of cell phones for educational and emergency**

purposes only.

- The “tagging” of a minor in a picture or video is prohibited;
- If an electronic photograph or video is posted on any ministry site, all names related to minors must be removed; and

Further advancements in technology may require periodic updates and addendums to this section of the Code of Conduct. The universal principles provided for above are to be applied prudently and judiciously in the event an update has not occurred.

*iii. Parish/School Technology*Educational Purpose and Appropriate Use

Technology may be used to enhance student learning (e.g., computers, online textbook supplementation resources, etc.). Students must not access social networking sites or gaming sites, except for educational purposes and under teacher supervision.

a. Electronic and Mobile Devices, Cell/Smart Phones and Tablets

Users must adhere to the local parish religious education policy, as found in their handbook. If a particular mobile device is to be used for an educational purpose, the catechist will provide parameters for this use.

b. Responsibilities for the Use of Parish Facilities for the Internet and Email

When using networks or computing resources of other organizations, students must observe the rules of that organization regarding such use.

- a. Users should not reveal their personal addresses or phone number(s), and shall not reveal the personal address or phone number(s) of others without their authorization/permission;
- b. Users are reminded that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. Operators of the network/system have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities;
- c. Catechists and students shall immediately notify the Director of Religious Education if they suspect that a security problem with the system and/or the Internet exists; and
- d. Any attempt to log onto the Internet or the school’s network/system as a systems administrator, by someone other than the systems administrator, will result in loss of user privileges at the parish. Any user identified as a security risk by the parish administration/systems administrator due to a history of actual or suspected unauthorized access to other computer(s), network(s) or system(s) may be denied access to the parish’s computers, networks, and/or systems.

Examples of Unacceptable Use

Users are **not** permitted to:

- a. Use technology in sexting or cyber-bullying: to harass, threaten, deceive, intimidate, offend, embarrass, or annoy any individual;
- b. Post, publish, or display any defamatory, inaccurate, violent, abusive profane or sexually-oriented material. Users must not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, or threatening language. Users must not knowingly or recklessly post false information about persons, students, staff, or any other organization;
- c. Use a photograph, image, video, or likeness of any student or employee without expressed permission of the individual, individual's parent, and the Director of Religious Education;
- d. Attempt to circumvent system security;
- e. Deliberately visit a site known for unacceptable material or any material that is not in support of educational objectives;
- f. Violate license agreements, copy disks, CD-ROMs or other protected media;
- g. Use technology for any illegal activity. Use of the Internet for commercial gains or profits is not allowed from an educational site;
- h. Breach confidentiality obligations of parish or school employees;
- i. Harm the goodwill and reputation of the parish or school employees; and
- j. Transmit any material in violation of any local, state, or federal law, including copyrighted material, licensed material, and threatening or obscene material.

Reporting

Users must immediately report damage or change to the parish or school's hardware and/or software.

Administrative Rights

The Director of Religious Education has the right to monitor student use of all school equipment, including computers, computer accessed content, and social media. Social media refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications, and social interaction through the use of words, images, video, or audio tools. Examples include, but are not limited to, social websites, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image–video-sharing sites, live webcasting, and real-time communities. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy.

Policy Violations

Violation of the above policy will be dealt with by the Director of Religious Education. Violation of this policy may result in any or all of the following:

- a. Loss of use of the parish/school network, computers, and software including Internet access; and
- b. Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, dismissal and/or legal action by the parish/school, civil authorities, or other involved parties.

iv. Photography and Video Policy

Parental permission is necessary for the photographing or filming of Religious Education students. Without expressed written permission, photos and/or videos may not be taken of their child (individually or with others, including in a liturgical setting).

The Director of Religious Education is to obtain annual written permission for each student and keep it on file for the entire school year. Before taking pictures or videotaping students, the catechist must check that parental permission has been granted. The Director of Religious Education must include this form in the parish Faith Formation Handbook.

- Photographs/videos of single or specific children may not be taken without the knowledge and permission of a parent or guardian;
- Parental permission granted for the photographs or videos of minors must be done so in writing prior to the event and renewed each year utilizing the diocesan forms provided by the Office of Risk Management. This may be done prior to an individual event or annually with renewal each year for an ongoing program.
- Adults may never take photographs of children while they are unclothed or dressing.
- Showing/sharing pornography and/or explicit or harmful content to/with minors is forbidden.
- Parental permission must be granted for the publishing of a minor's name and done so in writing prior to publication and
- Copies of photographs must be readily available to parents and guardians immediately upon request. Photographs and videos (and any copies) must be deleted upon request of the parent/guardian.
- Photographs taken during Sacramental Celebrations may not be sold, but freely given.

v. Guidelines and Policies for Copyrighted Materials

Many materials on the internet are copyrighted; permission must be granted for use, and oftentimes fees must be paid. For example, photographs/videos from new stories, poems, blog entries, YouTube videos, etc. are often copyrighted. **These materials must not be re-posted to parish websites or social media accounts without permission. Refrain from posting all materials from unknown sources.**

Many religious images (e.g., paintings) are “public domain,” but the *copies* of the religious images are not. Photographs and electronic images of the art are owned and copyrighted.

If downloading materials, such as lesson plans or classroom materials (even for a fee), strictly follow the copyright and licensing regulations.

The following information is offered to assist religious educators in obeying copyright laws.

Fair Use

Fair Use is the right to use copyrighted materials in a reasonable manner without the consent of the author. This limitation permits teachers, librarians, researchers, scholars, and others to use

copyrighted works without paying the copyright owner. What constitutes fair use is expressed in the form of guidelines rather than explicit rules. When determining whether the use made of a work in a particular case is a fair use, the factors to be considered include:

- The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- The nature of the copyrighted work, with special consideration given to the distinction between creative work and informational work;
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- The effect of the use on the potential market or value of the copyrighted work.

Printed Matter (paper or electronic, e.g., Websites/social media)

A teacher may:

- **make a single copy for use in scholarly research, or in teaching, or in preparation for teaching a class of the following:**
 - **a chapter from a book;**
 - **an article from a periodical or newspaper;**
 - **a short story, short essay or short poem, whether or not from a collected work;**
 - **a chart, graph, diagram, drawing, cartoon, or picture from a book, periodical or newspaper;**
- **make multiple copies for classroom use only, and not to exceed one per student in the class, of the following:**
 - **a complete poem, if less than 250 words and printed on not more than two pages;**
 - **an excerpt of fewer than 250 words from a longer poem;**
 - **a complete article, story or essay, if it is less than 2,500 words;**
 - **an excerpt of fewer than 1,000 words or 10% of the work, whichever is less, from prose;**
 - **one chart, graph, diagram, cartoon, or picture per book or periodical.**
- **A teacher may not:**
 - **make multiple copies for classroom use if the document has already been copied for another class in the same institution;**
 - **make multiple copies of a short poem, article, story, or essay from the same author more than once in a class term, or from the same collective work or periodical more than three times in a class term;**
 - **make multiple copies of works more than nine times in the same class term;**
 - **make a copy of works to take the place of an anthology or substitute for the purchase of books, reprints, or periodicals;**
 - **make a copy of "consumable" materials such as workbooks.**

Electronic Media

Any duplication or copying of copyrighted material is illegal. This would apply even to the making of an archival copy or transferring from one format to another.

Use of legally acquired copyrighted material (through purchase or rental) in classrooms or similar places of instruction as part of face-to-face teaching is allowed. The use must be directly related to the instructional program (e.g., a purchased video on the Sacraments may be used to teach a class).

A public performance license is required for all use of copyrighted materials for non- instructional purposes such as rewards, extended day programs, during assemblies, or any showing via closed circuit. However, schools do not need a license to use copyrighted materials for "face-to-face" instruction, i.e., when a movie is related to the subject being taught.

Building library/copyrighted collections through contributions or purchase of illegally copied material is a violation of the copyright law, and therefore, illegal.

Electronic media made for educational purposes from TV programs may be kept for 45 days only. During the first ten days, a teacher may use the copy once in a day and one more, if needed, for review. For the remaining thirty-five days, teachers may use the copy for evaluation purposes only.

Computer Software

Copying computer programs is generally illegal unless permission to make copies is included in the purchase or rental agreement. The owner of the computer program has the right to copy if, and only if, (1) such a copy is "an essential step in the utilization of the program in conjunction with a machine," or (2) the copy is for archival purposes only, i.e., to serve as a back-up in case the original is lost or destroyed.

A license is generally needed to multiple load one disk into many machines.

It is generally a violation of the copyright law to download a program to a number of computers through a networking system unless you have a network license for that software.

10. EMERGENCY POLICIES AND PLANS

Definitions:

First Responders include: police, firefighters, ambulance/medical responders, etc.

A. General Emergency Procedures

The instructions in this guide provide a brief summary and overview of the action that should occur for a given emergency. In most cases, call 911 for assistance.

Contact 911 immediately if a serious emergency or threatening behavior by a student or an adult occurs on campus.

In the event of a serious situation or escalated event, the DRE should contact both their Pastor and the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation.

The Director of Religious Education has the responsibility to train all faith formation staff and volunteer personnel in emergency procedures. Documentation of training must be verified in writing and kept on file.

WHEN CALLING 911

Identify yourself and the specific location of the emergency. Give the street address.

Tell what has occurred. Be concise and factual.

Relate known or suspected injuries or fatalities.

Identify immediate help needed.

Alert other employees (when appropriate) that an emergency is occurring and designate a staff member to meet emergency personnel when they arrive to lead them to the location of the emergency.

Notify families without causing alarm.

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B. Evacuation Maps

- **An evacuation map must be posted in every meeting room and at every exit in all languages of the groups that use the space (e.g., English and Spanish).**
- **The evacuation map will indicate both primary and secondary evacuation routes.**
- **The evacuation route should be oriented so that the arrow is pointed in the direction of the evacuation path.**

Emergency phone numbers (or 911) and the building street address are to be posted by the main entry location and in every meeting room and in all languages of the groups that use the space.

C. Master and Class Lists of Students

In the case of an emergency and/or evacuation of the building:

- a. **The Director of Religious Education must have easy access to a master list of all classes with students' names, home and emergency phone numbers, and attendance lists.**
- b. **The catechist must have easy access to a class attendance list and a list of students' names with home and emergency phone numbers.**
- c. **The Director of Religious Education will collect attendance or sign-in sheet during the first minutes of class, so accurate student-count can be provided in case of an emergency.**

D. Emergency Plans of Action

Every building that is used for faith formation must have a detailed evacuation plan, which is to reviewed annually by the Director of Religious Education, School Principal and Pastor, including:

1. Bomb Threat (Evacuate);
2. Child Abuse (Report, Call 911);
3. Earthquake (Shelter in place);
4. Evacuation of Building and Fire Safety (Evacuate); (MUST BE PRACTICED WITH CHILDREN)
5. Gas Odor (Evacuate);
6. Hazardous Waste Release (Evacuate);
7. Hostage (Shelter out of sight/Evacuate to off-site location);
8. Lock Down (Shelter in place/Shelter out of sight); (MUST BE PRACTICED WITH CHILDREN)
9. Lock Out (Evacuate to off-site location);
10. Public Demonstration (Isolate);
11. Severe Weather (Shelter in place); (SHOULD BE PRACTICED WITH CHILDREN)
12. Suspicious Activity: Person (Isolate); Object (Evacuate);
13. Violence, Threat Of (Isolate);
14. Violence, Act of (Run-Hide-Fight). (MUST TRAIN VOLUNTEERS, including information as to where to go).

1. Bomb Threat

If a threat comes in by:

PHONE:

- Be calm. Be courteous. Listen. Do not interrupt. Record the caller's exact words.
- Try to get as much information as possible about the location and description of the bomb.
- Use the BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST to record all information.
- Stay on the line as long as the caller continues to provide information.
- Call 911 and relay the information gathered.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Call 911. Provide the dispatcher with the following information:

Location and nature of the threat.

Your name, location, and phone number.

The number of victims or possible number exposed.

Bomb Threat Checklist	
<i>Record:</i>	<i>Questions to Ask:</i>
The name of your department and phone number.	When is the bomb going to explode?
The phone number that they are calling from.	Where is the bomb right now?
The date received.	What kind of bomb is it?
The time the call began and ended.	What will cause it to explode? What does it look like?
	Why did you place it?
	Where are you calling from? What is your name?
	What is your address?

Increase your ability to listen by increasing your phone volume and closing your eyes.

Try to note specifics about the caller and sounds on the phone call.

- Male/female
- Adult/juvenile
- Deep/high pitch voice
- Nasal/disguised voice
- Accent/foreign words
- Normal/familiar (like who?)
- Well-spoken/taped
- Angry/irrational/excited/loud
- Laughter/crying
- Repeated phrases
- Slurred speech/incoherent
- Raspy/cracking voice
- Foul language
- Unusual breathing
- Clearing throat
- Speech impediment
- The message read by threat-maker
- Street noises
- Trains/planes
- House noises
- Animal noises
- Machines pounding/banging noises
- Office noises/ringing phones
- Car motor/door/GPS voice
- Door open/close
- Lawnmower
- Baby crying/children/adult talking
- Emergency sirens/alarm sounds
- Static sound/quiet

EMAIL OR TEXT:

- When a bomb threat is received by e-mail or text on a cell phone, the person accessing the threat should:
- Save the message on the system. DO NOT delete the item.
- Print copies of the email message to be turned over to the police, or forward the text when instructed.

If you find an item you suspect is a bomb:

DO NOT TOUCH OR DISTURB THE ITEM.

Do NOT use cell phones or two-way radios because radio waves can detonate the device accidentally.

Follow instructions from your supervisor or emergency personnel.

2. Child Abuse

A child is defined as an individual under the age of 18. Child abuse is an act or failure to act which is committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly. Child abuse includes bodily injury, serious mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, serious physical neglect, fabricating, and feigning, or inducing medical symptoms or disease.

Mandatory Reporting Laws

A mandatory reporter is any individual including both paid (staff) and unpaid (volunteer), who are an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service and accept responsibility for a child.

Additionally, anyone who is supervised or managed by a mandated reporter is also a mandated reporter. **All parish employees and program volunteers are mandatory reporters.**

Any person who comes into contact with children in the course of their employment or volunteer service must report suspected child abuse. The catechist must immediately notify the Director of Religious Education and the Pastor.

In the case of disclosure or suspicion of abuse, the catechist must report directly and immediately to the Local Child Protective Services.

For the most current information available in the Diocese, please visit the website:

<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/>

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

If you witness child abuse, call 911.

3. Earthquake

Where possible, maintain supplies to sustain staff and volunteers for TWO days in the event of an earthquake. Stock non-perishable food products and keep a two-day supply of purified water. Store blankets, flashlights, batteries, towelettes, and first-aid kits.

If faith formation classes meet in Catholic grade school, these provisions ought to be on hand. The Director of Religious Education needs to coordinate this matter with the Principal.

During an earthquake: DROP-COVER-HOLD ON

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

If indoors, seek refuge under a desk, table, or another object that offers shelter from flying glass or debris, hold on, and cover your head.

Stay away from windows, shelves, or unsecured heavy equipment. Stay inside until the quake is over.

If outdoors, move quickly away from buildings, utility wires, and other structures.

If in an automobile, stop at the safest place available, preferably away from buildings and other structures, and stay in the vehicle.

After the initial shock:

- Be prepared for aftershocks which can cause further structural damage;
- Check for injured persons and/or whether anyone has been trapped by debris and call 911 if necessary;
- Do not attempt to move an injured person unless they are in danger; await emergency services;
- Exit the building by following the emergency evacuation map. If the structure of the building appears compromised (i.e., cracks in stairs, floors, walls, ceilings or experience odors of gas), direct all persons to a safe exit and remain in a group away from buildings, trees, etc.;
- If the building alarm is operational and can be safely accessed, sound the alarm signaling the need for evacuation. Do not use the elevators;
- Do not use matches, candles, or other open flames since gas leaks could be present;
- Do not turn on electrical switches or appliances until the area is inspected since gas leaks could be present;
- Avoid any hazardous spills;
- Once evacuated, take attendance; and
- Maintain communication with the Director of Religious Education and stay where you are until you are told it is safe to return to the building. If the building is not safe to enter, remain in a safe area outside until children are picked up by their parents.

4. Evacuation of Buildings (and Fire Safety) – Remain On-Site

Evacuation of Building Due to an Emergency

It is a proven emergency statistic that emergency evacuation plans save lives. **Catechists must become familiar with and practice classroom evacuation route(s).** These plans should include an outside location/destination for the supervised parent/guardian pick up.

No doors/exits may be chained during class sessions.

Evacuation routes must be posted in every meeting room (in all languages meetings/classes may use, e.g., English and Spanish).

An evacuation drill must be practiced with the students once annually for each session of religious education. The Director of Religious Education may arrange fire drills with the local fire department. Often, local fire companies will lend assistance with this safety exercise.

Know the location of fire emergency resources:

- **Fire alarm pulls;**
- **Fire extinguishers;**
- **Evacuation routes and alternate evacuation routes; and**
- **Fire exits.**

Catechists and children must be familiar with fire alarms, evacuation plans, and the assembly site outside the building.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

If a fire occurs or if you detect smoke or a burning odor:

Pull the closest fire alarm to initiate building evacuation.

Evacuate through the closest stairwell. Do not go back to the office/classrooms for personal items. Do not use the elevators.

After *all* persons have been cleared from the area, Fire Wardens will close all doors to the immediate area of the fire to help isolate the smoke and flames.

In the case of an evacuation of the building for an emergency or fire drills:

- **The Director of Religious Education, or whoever collects attendance records, carries out a master list of all classes with students' names, home and emergency phone numbers;**
- **The catechist carries a class list with students' names, home and emergency phone numbers, as well as the session attendance report if separate from a class list;**
- **The catechist is responsible for ensuring all the students in class have evacuated the building. Those who need assistance evacuating should wait by a designated door/stairwell for fire department assistance;**
- **Once outside, the catechist is to take attendance;**
- **No one may re-enter the building until an all-clear signal has been given; and**
- **If parents are to be notified to pick up children, the parish should implement an emergency contact procedure for contacting parents. In addition, catechists may assist with calling the parents of the oldest child in the family.**

Recommendations for Drills:

- The following recommendations may be helpful in executing these drills:
- Advise students ahead of time in a calm, clear way;
- Listen for the alarm/announcement;
- Brings attendance record;
- Maintain order, move quickly, and quietly;
- Close any doors and windows, if possible;
- Follow the escape route as indicated on the evacuation map;
- Move to the outside designated meeting location, take attendance, and give a report to the Director of Religious Education;
- Wait for a clear signal before re-entry; and
- Praise participants and make any corrections.

All parishes must have a designated meeting place off parish grounds. This location must be within walking distance and not within sight-lines of the parish. This location should be able to accommodate large groups and parking for families as they pick up children. Every year, an evacuation drill to this location must be practiced.

5. Gas Oder

If someone smells the odor of natural gas in the building, follow these procedures:

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Notify the building maintenance personnel. Indicate the floor and area where the odor is strongest.

If you are in the building after business hours, or unable to speak to someone, call 911 to reach the fire department. The fire department has gas-detection instruments to determine the severity of the leak. They will contact the local gas company.

If odors are detected outside the building:

- Notify the building maintenance personnel. Indicate the area where the odor is strongest. It is not necessary to evacuate the building; and
- Call the Fire Department's non-emergency number to report the smell of natural gas odor.

6. Hazardous Waste Release

Definition

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, hazardous waste is defined as waste that is dangerous or potentially harmful to one's health or the environment and can be liquids, solids, gases, or sludges. The Director of Religious Education must know how to handle a Hazardous Waste emergency and be able to give effective direction in case of such an emergency.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Call 911. Provide the dispatcher with the following information:

Location and nature of the hazard.

Offer the name of the chemical(s) if known.

Your name, location, and phone number if different than the one you are calling from.

Once 911 has been notified:

- **Confine the spill as best as possible, and evacuate nonessential persons from the spill area;**
- **Close the office doors and place a towel, books, or paper at the bottom of the door if possible;**
- **Alert occupants in adjacent areas when it is possible that the hazard may spread;**
- **No one should re-enter the spill area or begin clean-up; and**
- **Be prepared to meet the responding emergency personnel at the main entrance to the building and provide them with the appropriate information.**
- **Small spills of a known hazard (less than a quart of liquid or 2 pounds of solid) may be readily contained and may not require the evacuation of the building or notification of the Fire Department.**

Returning to Normal Operations:

- A biohazard company will assess the hazard, clean-up, and remove the waste. Department managers will be given instructions for temporary work locations (if necessary).
- Communications will continue through phone and email on the procedures to resume normal use of the building.

7. Lock Down (Shelter out of Sight), and Lock Out (Evacuate to Off-Site Location)

Religious Education programs should conduct at least one Lock Down drill during a calendar year, so everyone is familiar with the process.

Catechists should be trained in the Lock Out procedures.

Lock Down situations may occur as a result of the following:

- Prisoner/felon/convict escapes from transported or governing authority;
- Civil disturbances, nearby police operations;
- A direct threat by an intruder (armed or unarmed);
- Hazardous material exposures in the community (dirty bomb);
- Natural disaster; and
- Reported emergency by Federal, state, or local authority.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Call 911. Report the situation and include the location and the people involved. **DO NOT HANG UP THE PHONE.**

Activate Emergency Lock Down (announcement, phone system, etc.) Establish an assembly area for incoming emergency service personnel.

Lock Down and Lock Out Plans and Procedures

“Lock Down” and “Lock Out” procedures are used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building (e.g., student threat or intruder) or external threats that may enter the building. The procedures are activated by an announcement:

- A “**Lock Down with warning**” occurs when there is a threat or danger outside the building (e.g., a fugitive on the run and in the area; a medical emergency outside the building).
- A “**Lock Down with Intruder**” occurs when there is a threat or intruder inside the building; **shelter out of sight.**
- “**Lock Out**” procedures are used when the danger is in the building, and conditions are safer outside the building.

The Religious Education Program should consult with local or state law enforcement for the development of “Lock Down” and “Lock Out” plans and procedures for their location. If the parish has a school, include the school principal in this planning. It is the responsibility of the Director of Religious Education to in-service catechetical staff regarding these plans and procedures. The Director of Religious Education should schedule at least one practice drill annually per session.

In the case of “Lock Down” (Shelter out of Sight):

- Close and inside doors and cover inside windows;
- Unlock and open any external windows (which may be used for escape routes);
- Turn off lights and silence cell phone(s);
- If possible move a piece of furniture over door to prevent it from opening, and
- Take shelter out of sight and remain silent until “all clear” is given.

In the case of “Lock Out”:

- Evacuate the building using the evacuation plan;
- Select evacuation route which has objects to hide behind as group leaves building (e.g., walls, trees, cars, etc.)
- If it is not safe to remain on the parish grounds (e.g., an active shooter), quietly and orderly relocate all people present to an off-site gathering location. Ensure those with special needs are assisted;
- Take attendance;
- Wait for “All clear” from police or Pastor before releasing students; and
- Notify parents of the safety of their children and the need to pick them up at the off-site location.

8. Hostage

Assess the situation:

If safe to do so, alert others of the situation and direct them to leave the area quietly.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Call 911. Report the situation and include the location and the people involved. Activate Emergency Lock Down (see page 39).

Establish an assembly area for incoming emergency service personnel.

Direct a responsible person to go to that area to brief authorities as they arrive.

When the police arrive, be prepared to provide:

- The number of hostage takers;
- A description of the hostage-takers;
- The type of weapons the hostage-takers have;
- The number and names of the hostages;
- The demands and instructions hostage-takers have given; and
- A description of the area under siege. If possible, provide a floor plan.

When the police arrive, cooperate, and help them. They are in charge.

Employees need to remain calm and offer assistance where needed to help the police end the situation.

9. Public Demonstration

Assess the Situation:

- Do not respond to demonstrators;
- Contact the Pastor;
- Isolate children, employees, volunteers, and guests from the disruption; and
- Notify the Diocesan Office of Communication, who will handle the media and related incoming telephonecalls.

If this is deemed a safety emergency, call 911.

10. Severe Weather (Shelter-in-Place)

Weather conditions can change rapidly, causing strong winds, flying objects, and/or power outages. In most cases an emergency alert will be sent via email and when available by phone, indicating a severe weather condition is about to occur.

Hurricanes or microbursts

Hurricanes or microbursts, which are a localized column of sinking air, can cause major damage with winds greater than 50 miles an hour. There are two designations that can be reported:

HURRICANE WATCH indicates weather conditions are right for a hurricane.

HURRICANE WARNING indicates that a hurricane has been sighted in the immediate area.

During a **HURRICANE WATCH** close the blinds, stay away from the windows, and remain in the building. Listen for an official announcement via radio or local alert system on your cell phone, and stay where you are until you are told to evacuate or the warning is removed.

When a **HURRICANE WARNING** is announced, staff should begin the procedures listed under *Shelter in Place* and wait for further instructions.

Tornado

The weather service will issue an alert for the following:

TORNADO WATCH indicates threatening weather conditions could develop. Local emergency agencies will generate an alert to warn that severe thunderstorms are in the area and may generate funnel clouds.

TORNADO WARNING will be issued when the radar system indicates the formation of a tornado or a funnel cloud has been spotted in the area. Local authorities will sound the tornado sirens and issue emergency warnings through radio, TV, and programmed emails or cell phone alerts.

During a TORNADO WARNING alert take the following actions:

- Turn on the weather radio or watch the local emergency channel on the TV.
- Stay inside and away from the windows;
- Move to interior rooms in the lowest level (preferably without any windows) and stay out of rooms with large windows or exterior doors;
- Have everyone get under a desk, table, or chair. If not available, position everyone with their heads close to the knees and cover their necks with their hands;
- Remain in the designated area until an announcement is made that it is safe to leave; and
- Seek medical assistance for anyone who was injured or is trapped by falling objects.

11.Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place is a precaution aimed to keep everyone safe while remaining in the building. Some emergencies call for all to take shelter immediately.

Examples include the following:

- a hurricane;
- a tornado; or
- hazardous waste release in the general area.

Where possible, maintain supplies to sustain staff and volunteers for TWO days in the event of an earthquake. Stock non-perishable food products and keep a two-day supply of purified water; store blankets, flashlights, batteries, towelettes, and first-aid kits. A portable radio for updated information is recommended.

If faith formation classes meet in Catholic grade school, these provisions ought to be on hand. The Director of Religious Education needs to coordinate this matter with the Principal.

In the case of Shelter-in-Place, the Director of Religious Education is to change the recording of their voicemail to indicate that the building is in shut-down, that students (are safe and) will shelter-in-place until authorities indicate it is safe to leave the building.

When Sheltering in Place:

- Provide for the safety of staff, volunteers, and visitors by asking them to stay - not leave;
- Ideally, gather all people together (e.g., in the Church, cafeteria, or gymnasium). Shut and lock doors;
- Close and lock all windows, exterior doors and any other openings to the outside;
- Close window shades, blinds or curtains and stay away from windows;
- Gather essential disaster supplies, such as nonperishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and plastic garbage bags;
- Catechists should use cell phones to call families of students or other parties to let them know you have been asked to remain in the building until further notice, and that their children are safe; and
- Listen for an official announcement from emergency personnel stating it is safe to leave.

12.Suspicious Activity

Suspicious Stranger

While it is common to not know everyone in the building, if an unfamiliar person who appears to be threatening or is displaying suspicious behavior in the building or on the grounds, staff should approach the person with the assumption that there is a legitimate reason that the person is in the building, but should ask a probing question nicely such as, *"Hello, I work here, may I help you?"*

When a suspicious stranger is present:

- Have the stranger wait in a reception area away from students;
- Do not take the person to any person they have requested to see without contacting that person first; and
- If you cannot help the person or they don't seem to have a reason to be in the building, please them escort out.

Suspicious Object

An unattended item or package is not necessarily a suspicious package. **Some of the characteristics of a suspicious package could be unusual shape, half-hidden wires or aluminum foil, ticking sound, and excessive binding material such as masking tape, string, etc.**

When an unidentified object or package is found, follow these steps:

Remain calm.

- **DO NOT TOUCH** the package, or move, alter, or attempt to open the package.
- Attempt to identify the owner of the package or bag by asking those nearby.
- Leave the area and call 911. Describe the location of the object and reason why it is suspicious, as well as other useful information about the object.
- Encourage others to leave the area.
- **Turn off cell phones.**

13. Violence, Threat of

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE:
Call 911, DO NOT HANG UP.**

Aggressive person:

Should a situation arise in which any person exhibits aggressive or threatening behavior toward any person(s) in your building, you should call 911.

- Remain calm, but be firm.
- Maintain a safe distance and protect yourself at all times.
- Use caution in approaching the individual. If possible, do not approach alone.
- Do not, through body language or verbal communication, indicate any threat to the individual.
- If there are visible weapons or you see any suspicious bulges in clothing, belts, etc. put a physical barrier between the person and you and wait for the police to arrive.
Keep others away from the person.

A weapon in the building:

If you become aware of a gun or other weapon in the building, contact 911 immediately without alerting the suspect(s) if at all possible. Notify the Director of Religious Education if at all possible.

The Director of Religious Education is to announce a Lock Down with Intruder alert through email and when available through the office phones.

Call 911 immediately, and if the suspect is not present report:

- **Your name and location in the building;**
- **The name and description of the suspect;**
- **Any information regarding the weapon's location and type;**
- **If necessary, seek assistance from another person in reporting the incident; and**
- **Stay on the phone to help police proceed to the area under suspicion.**

14. Violence, Act of

EMERGENCY RESPONSE
Call 911. DO NOT HANG UP.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

RUN – If possible, evacuate the building.

Implement LOCK OUT procedures (to a secure location off-site).

- Leave personal items behind and get out of the area quickly.
- If possible, open outside windows for possible escape and to assist police with sight-lines.
- Encourage others to leave, but do not attempt to move someone who is wounded.

HIDE – If the shooter is near or you cannot get out of the area

Implement LOCK DOWN (with intruder) procedures.

- Hide in a room where you can block the door, limit the shooter's line of sight, turn out the lights, and remain quiet until help arrives.
- Silence your cell phone.

FIGHT – As a last resort.

If the shooter enters the room act with physical aggression.

Use any possible weapon found in the room and fight as this is a matter of self-defense.

Shooting or stabbing:

If it is safe for you, offer medical assistance until help arrives.

- Be prepared to describe the situation.
- Indicate whether the perpetrator has been identified, is still present, and/or has left the area.
- Location of the weapon. Indicate if the weapon has been secured.
- Describe medical injuries.
- Request witnesses to stay in a safe area for the Police to talk to when they arrive.
- Gather information about what happened.
- Secure the crime scene by keeping people out.

When the area is clear, and the emergency is over:

- Announce "All Clear."
- Designate a place for emergency personnel to interview witnesses and others involved.
- In the case of a real emergency, contact parents to pick up their children.
- Let the police handle any questions regarding criminal investigation.