

Office of Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines



Updated: 20 August 2025

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 incorporated in all parishes throughout the Diocese.

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)

Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis* (DC)

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, *The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA)

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)

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Introduction: Faith Formation

In the Diocese of Arlington, the vision and mission to proclaim the Good News and form disciples of Christ is carried out in parishes. Today, more than ever, a comprehensive faith formation program is needed for every age and stage of the Christian life.

Jesus founded the Catholic Church for the salvation of souls. Faith formation is an integral part of this mission and must:

- Share God's loving plan with all people regardless of age, status, or ability.
- Nurture relationship with Christ through His Church, especially through the Sacraments.
- Foster conversion at every stage of the spiritual life.
- Lead to maturation of the faith, witnessed in life-long discipleship.

Only God can satisfy the aspirations of the human heart. With effective faith formation and God's abundant grace, the Christian life is both possible and fruitful unto everlasting life.

Faith formation (including evangelization, catechesis, and discipleship) is an ecclesial process is outlined in the Directory for Catechesis (#31); the Church:

1. By her charity, "transforms the whole temporal order, incorporation cultures and offering the contribution of the Gospel so that they may be renewed from within".
2. "Draws near all humanity with attitudes of solidarity, fellowship, and dialogue, thus bearing witness to the Christian's newness of life." This witness promotes the meaning of life and shares the joy of hope. (In previous documents (DC, GDC) these first two steps were combined as: Christian witness and dialogue. It is the stage of Pre-Evangelization, of faith lived in the world, preparing others to receive the Good News.)
3. "Explicitly declares the Gospel through the first proclamation, issuing the call to conversion" (This stage is Evangelization - and is often a "New Evangelization" when the culture has lost its Christian identity.)
4. "Initiates into Christian faith and life, through catechumenal process (catechesis, sacraments, witness of charity, fraternal experience)." This catechesis is to be age and developmentally appropriate, systematic and organic.
5. "Through ongoing education in the faith, the celebration of the Sacraments and the exercise of charity nourishes the gift of communion among the people and supports the mission, sending all the disciples of Christ to proclaim the Gospel in the world, with works and words." (In past documents, this is referred to as Mystagogy.) This model of faith formation is based on the catechumenate of old.

Faith formation 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, and 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 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 faith formation is to achieve this same objective: to bear witness to the Christian life, to introduce people to God’s saving plan to unite man with Himself through Jesus, and the formation of the disciples of Jesus in His Church.

The Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis (DC, 79-89):

Faith formation begins in the home, the domestic church, where parents are the primary educators. Parishes support families by providing catechesis (faith formation) that:

A. Leads to Knowledge of the Faith (as summarized by the Creed)

Catechesis satisfies the desire of the human heart by sharing the content of God’s Self-revelation found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, and by introducing each person to the meaning of the Creed.

B. Initiates into the Celebration of the Mystery (as celebrated by the Sacraments)

“The Church [...] re-reads and re-lives the great events of Salvation History in the ‘today’ of Her liturgy. Catechesis should provide an understanding of the Church’s liturgy, as well as ways in which-to participate actively and worthily in its celebration.

C. Forms for Life in Christ (as lived in the Moral Life)

Every person who encounters Christ is forever changed. 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.

D. Teaches Prayer (as deepened in relationship with God – the Spiritual Life)

Conversion to Christ and communion with Him lead the faithful to adopt His disposition of prayer and reflection. Catechesis not only involves the teaching of how to pray, but also the memorization of prayers as a foundation for spiritual growth.

E. Introduces to Community Life (as lived in the Church and the World)

Catechesis provides an apprenticeship for living the life of grace, which is 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.

1. THE FAITH FORMATION TEAM

A. Pastor

In the parish, the Pastor oversees a comprehensive faith formation program, including evangelization, catechesis, liturgical, and ecclesial formation. This program must be aligned with the current Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines.

The Pastor oversees the Faith Formation Team of his parish, some of whom will be employees and some volunteers. The pastor also ensures the suitable formation and training of catechists in his parish.

B. Director of Religious Education (DRE)

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. The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained Director of Religious Education (DRE).

Parishes should allocate their resources so that they are able to acquire and justly pay for the services of a competent and qualified DRE (or someone in the process of becoming qualified) to oversee the Faith Formation of the parish.

The Director of Religious Education works with the pastor to plan a comprehensive parish program of faith formation. With other parish employees (e.g., Child Protection Liaison, Ministry Coordinators (Children, Youth, Adults), School Principal, Liturgist, etc.) and volunteers, the DRE will coordinate and implement this program.

The DRE may oversee coordinators (paid or volunteer) to assist with program implementation and also parish volunteers who directly minister in the various faith formation programs.

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

- **Must be approved by the Episcopal Vicar of Faith Formation (the parish has the responsibility of notifying the Office of Faith Formation of any employment changes);**
- **Be a practicing Catholic in good standing and compliant with Diocesan Employment requirements (see Diocesan Employee Policy Manual);**
- **Possess the credentials necessary for this position (a Master's degree in Religious Education, Theology or related field, or possess and maintain Master Catechist Certification);**
- **Be willing to continue professional development in areas that will benefit the faith formation program of the parish, including diocesan training events;**
- **Implement various faith formation programs and collaborate with ministry coordinators within the parish, cooperating with neighboring parishes, and in union with the Diocese of Arlington; and**
- **Have the skills necessary to effectively fulfill this position, including, but not limited to, catechetical expertise, leadership/team-building skills, ability to use parish technology, administrative and managerial skills.**

Director of Religious Education Training Opportunities

The Office of Faith Formation provides:

1. Annual DRE Orientation Training
2. Regular DRE meetings
3. Opportunities for scholarship funding for DREs to attain the education required for their ministry. For detailed information, see the **Catechist Certification Guidelines**.

C. Catechists

All catechists must have a solid understanding of Catholic doctrine and worship, Scripture, Tradition, and Church history. Local and diocesan courses, workshops, institutes, conferences, and online (internet-based) classes will be offered to assist catechists in attaining appropriate training.

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, abilities, and circumstances learn.

Every Catechist must:

- **Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church;**
- **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 annual Oath of Fidelity; and**
- **Be willing to continue their ministry training, and work towards Catechist Certification.**

Required Catechist/Religious Education Volunteer Training

All faith formation “ongoing volunteers” (e.g., classroom catechists and aides, hall monitors, etc.) must receive annual training for facility safety guidelines (see Ch. 2).

Catechists are also to be given training in local program policies and procedures.

At the beginning of the instructional year, the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, and catechists are to gather for parish-specific ministry training and prayer. **Catechists must profess and sign an annual Catechist Oath of Fidelity.** This may be done on Catechetical Sunday or at another suitable time.

Catechist Formation and Continuing Education Opportunities (see Catechist Certification Guidelines)

Catechist Training is to be a priority of the Director of Religious Education. Catechists should strive to attain diocesan catechist certification in a timely manner in order to grow in their faith and best serve in their ministries. **Directors of Religious Education have a responsibility to make catechist certification training available through either online or onsite training opportunities.** To support the DRE, the Office of Faith Formation will offer regional trainings for catechists.

D. Other Religious Education Program Volunteers

Every program relies on volunteers, who may serve as prayer support, classroom aides, hall monitors, administrative coordinators, hospitality/events support, communicators, recruiters, etc. It is at the discretion of the Director of Religious Education to recruit, train, and direct these volunteers.

DREs should also consider how existing/new ministries can collaborate to provide a cohesive program. Examples include:

- Parish and School employees should communicate regularly to share resources and ensure a common program is implemented.
- Clergy should support and visit programs on a regular basis.
- The Music/Liturgy Director and cantors can help plan children's Christmas shows, liturgical celebrations, OCIA rites, and teaching hymns to children, etc.
- Directors of Youth Ministry/Youth Ministry Volunteers can assist with Confirmation and Confirmands can be encouraged to join Youth Ministry. Youths and Confirmandi can support parishioners away at college or while serving in the military.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be prepared to catechize the sick, disabled, and elderly, and encouraged to communicate sacramental needs to clergy.
- The Front Office staff are face of the parish and can provide new parishioners with a welcome package containing information about parish programs, ministries, and charities. Registration information should be shared with the Director of Religious Education who should invite them to participate in programs.
- Various populations can work together whenever possible. Examples include:
 - Children/Youth can sing at the parish nursing homes.
 - Youth Ministry can help with Confirmation and retreats.
 - Newlyweds can assist with OCIA as sponsors and parish ambassadors.
 - Choir/Ushers/Readers can welcome youths/disabled to participate in the liturgy.
 - Married couples may volunteer to mentor engaged couples/newlyweds/young parents and teach Baptism classes. Newlyweds should be registered at the parish and invited to socials and adult faith formation opportunities.
 - Seniors can assist with Marriage preparation, Sacrament celebrations (e.g., reception after Confirmation), as well as meals ministries for new parents and funerals, etc.

E. The Office of Faith Formation

The Office of Faith Formation offers support to clergy and/or Directors of Religious Education to evaluate programs, implement of diocesan policies and guidelines, and make parish-specific suggestions for ministry growth and development.

Every Director of Religious Education is to have access to the DRE Portal on the diocesan website. A direct link is found at: <https://classroom.catholiceducationcenter.com>. Login credentials may be attained from the Special Consultant for Catechetics. The DRE Portal is a comprehensive resource for DREs to assist them in ministry.

Office of Faith Formation Directory

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Diocesan Parish Visits

Parish visits will be conducted on a rotational basis (usually once every three years) and upon request.

Liturgical Year A: Deaneries 3, 5 and 6

Liturgical Year B: Deaneries 1 and 4

Liturgical Year C: Deaneries 2 and 7

Parish visits will assist the diocese in evaluating the Faith Formation of the diocese and serve as opportunities for communication and consultation.

Directors of Religious Education Meetings, Trainings, and Communications

The Office of Faith Formation serves to support DREs in their ministry. As such, numerous opportunities are provided for the education and training, social and spiritual support of DREs.

- Every year, the Diocese will host the following events:
 - DRE Kick-Off,
 - DRE Orientation,
 - Diocesan Catechetical Conference,
 - Advent Luncheon, and
 - DRE Retreat.
- On site and Zoom meetings are scheduled as needed, to discuss important diocesan initiatives and to answer questions.
- Information and resources for ministry are provided weekly to DREs through an email that is sent out on Fridays (to be added to the email list, contact the Office of Faith Formation).
- Policies and Guidelines are maintained and updated throughout the year and the most current version is available on the Diocesan Website and in the DRE Portal. Login credentials may be attained from the Special Consultant for Catechetics.
- The Office of Faith Formation team is readily available to assist DREs in their ministry.

Deanery Coordinators

Deanery Coordinators are selected from among the Directors of Religious Education, one from each deanery. These volunteers:

- 1) Serve as liaisons with the Diocese to share important information with deanery DREs and also the Office of Faith Formation through the Consultant for Catechetics.
- 2) Suggest topics for the DRE Kick-Off, Diocesan Catechetical Conference, DRE trainings, Catechist trainings.
- 3) Assist with diocesan DRE Group meetings.
- 4) Mentor new DREs.
- 5) Coordinate/Offer Deanery trainings annually to include:
 - a. Catechist Circle of Grace Instructor Training
 - b. CPR/First Aid

2. PARISH PROGRAM SAFETY POLICIES

Quick Reference

Parish program 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.

Safe Children and Adults

All employees and volunteers who work with minors 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.

Adults working with minors must be rated compliant by the Office of Child Protection (OPCYP compliance) by successfully completing the paperwork, background check, and adult safe environment training (*currently known as Virtus*) through the Diocese of Arlington before working with minors.

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.

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

Emergency Protocols and Procedures

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. Child Protection and Safety (Office of Child Protection)

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.

Quick Reference

WHO MUST BE COMPLIANT?

All employees; all volunteers who naturally work with youth regardless of frequency or duration e.g., catechists, religious education volunteers, youth ministry volunteers, coaches, etc.; and all volunteers in which there is potential for contact with youth outside the sight and/or hearing of other responsible adults.

Two or more Child Protection Compliant adult volunteers are to be present for events involving children, whether in-person or virtual. If only one Child Protection Compliant adult is available, an aide should assist and sightlines and access to the class must be possible (e.g., for a monitor/DRE to check-in with the class).

Mandatory Reporting Laws

All faith formation volunteers and employees 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.

WHAT A VOLUNTEER MUST DO TO BECOME COMPLIANT

In order to volunteer with Religious Education, adults (age 18+) must:

- **Complete the Online Background Check application, AND**
- **Sign the Compliance Documents using DocuSign (must complete the application first), AND**
- **Undergo an electronic background check by the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI). (Volunteers do not need to be fingerprinted – only employees do), AND**
- **Attend a live, in-person adult safe environment training (Virtus) within 45 days of completing the application.**

All volunteers MUST be cleared by the Diocesan background check BEFORE they may volunteer with children (even the first time). The NCSI Background check result is completed and returned in about 2-7 business days, so finding volunteers early is imperative. Please work alongside the OPCYP Liaison at the Church or School for guidance and information. **The OPCYP Liaison manages all employees and volunteers at their location.**

The OPCYP Liaison will verify your volunteer's compliance status. Provide your liaison with the Religious Education volunteer list to ensure the volunteers appear compliant in the OPCYP Management Portal.

Liaisons are also to verify compliance for external speakers.

It is helpful for every DRE to have a Fresh Desk Account. See **OPCYP Support Fresh Desk Quick Start Guide** in DRE Portal.

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

From the Code of Conduct:

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, be aware of limitations and appropriate 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 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 spouse (or boyfriend and girlfriend) that have direct supervision over the same group of individuals count as one Chaperone/Supervisor. Adult family members (siblings/parent-child) count as two people.

Minor

For the purposes of this Code, the terms “children,” “child,” “minor,” “youth,” or “young person” indicate any person younger than 18 years of age or 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 who 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 engage as participants in programs for minors. If a parish seeks an exemption in a particular instance, the Office of Child Protection should be contacted for guidance.

Safe Adults

Behavior of All Adults

Adult interaction with minors is restricted without the explicit knowledge and consent of a Diocesan Representative and the child(ren)’s parents and/or guardians. **Adult volunteers 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 “horseplay” 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 given clear instructions 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 as long as the youth are appropriately monitored. These tools may include paintball guns, squirt guns, nerf guns, camping tools (e.g., pocketknife, axe, saw, etc.).

Safe Students

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).

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 stresses 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 individual’s assertion of an identity at odds with biological sex. The Diocese of Arlington cannot support or 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 address 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 individual’s biological sex and treat each person in a manner consistent with that reality. Should questions arise, contact the Office of Faith Formation.

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.
- 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.

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.

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 be made only in situations where a child has become an imminent danger to himself or another person.

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.**

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 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.

Photography and Video Policy for Minors

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

From the Code of Conduct:

- 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 diocesan approved forms/waivers. 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.
- 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.

Safe use of Facilities

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 must be requested in advance, through the Office of the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy.

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 adult's 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.** Adults compliant with the diocesan child protection policies are to be available in the building or location during all activities at which minors are present and must be in sufficient proximity to facilitate 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 or event is separated based on 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 without explicit permission of their employer.**

Outside groups that use parish space, or space rented by the parish, must sign the Diocesan Facility Use Agreement. In addition, and all adults working with minors must comply with the policies of the Office of Child Protection.

Safe Environment Training

The Office of Child Protection provides Safe Environment Training curriculum to be taught in every grade (for grades 1-12). See Chapter 4, II for details.

Circle of Grace is a licensed program. All teachers/catechists (including homeschool parents) must be trained (only once) in accordance with its pedagogy. Training materials are found in the DRE Portal, along with the login credentials for the most current curriculum and teacher/parent resources.

Every DRE must offer a Train-the-Trainer every year, so that every catechist that teaches Circle of Grace is properly trained. In addition, regional opportunities for Train-the-Trainer sessions will occur every Fall. This training is not to replace parish training, but is to serve as a “make-up session” for those who cannot attend their parish session.

Trainers are to be audited to ensure conformity. **The Office of Child Protection will maintain a list of trained trainers. Train-the-Trainer instructors must provide First/Last Names of Catechists,**

along with their email addresses, date of training and instructor name. Please use the designated form/database found in the DRE Portal and email it to the Office of Child Protection annually.

For parish implementation of the Safe Environment Training program, see Ch 4. Children's Faith Formation, section II.

Safe Environment Training for minors must be completed by the last Friday in December.

Safe Environment Training Reports are to be submitted to the Office of Child Protection by the last Friday in January. Ideally, these reports are submitted by the parish liaison, however, in some parishes it is the responsibility of the DRE to submit this report.

Any Legal Matters

If any issues or allegations of a legal nature with respect to a student, teacher, or other individual associated with a catechetical program occurs, report the incident immediately to the pastor and contact the diocesan Office of General Counsel as soon as practically possible.

B. Children’s Religious Education Program General Safety Policies (Office of Risk Management)

General Safety Policies

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). Please add emergency numbers to your contact list in your telephone.

Identifiable Faith Formation Team

During Religious Education of minors, all employees and volunteers need to be identifiable, e.g., through a visual cue such as a lanyard, name tag, or staff shirt.

Secure Entry and Common Spaces (Buildings)

Keys, FOBS, and access cards are to be issued by the parish and a log kept for all keyholders. An annual inventory is to be done to ensure secure access.

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

Primary entrances, hallways, restrooms, and meeting room entrances will be monitored by an adult (in line of sight or by electronic means) during Children’s Faith Formation. Surveillance cameras are to be located at all primary entrances, large spaces, in hallways to classrooms, and cover the primary drop off/pick up areas. Recordings are to be saved for a minimum of 60 days.

Other activities (e.g., CYO Sports, Scouts, etc.) may take place in the building during religious education so long as participants of the separate activities do not mix. The religious education and youth ministry staff and volunteers are to provide an organized and intentional separation from these other activities.

Classroom Safety

All Classrooms and meeting rooms must be able to be secured from the inside in case of an emergency. All rooms are to be secured when not in use.

Staff and/or volunteers need to escort students to and from their classroom for any evacuation drill or to a special location during the Religious Education classes (e.g., going to the church).

Use of the restroom should be monitored during Religious Education, to ensure children return to class safely and in a reasonable amount of time.

Some means of effective communication is to be made available during sessions in case of emergency (e.g., a 2-way radios).

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 cases where only one compliant adult is present, another compliant adult must be able to monitor the room. For maximum security, the preferred best practice is to close and secure the classroom door if two adults are in the room during class time.

Drop-Off/Pick-Up (sign-in and sign-out) and Self-Release

Parent/Guardian drop-off/pick up is to be authorized according to the registration waivers. Identification of parent/guardian is to be verified either by proof of identity or through known relationship (e.g., the volunteer recognizes the parent/guardian).

Parents/guardians must sign-in and sign-out their children for nursery/child care programs.

For Religious Education classes/regular meetings parents/guardians are to drop-off/pick-up their child/ren to supervised settings and attendance must be taken. A sign-in and sign-out page is recommended.

If a child is picked-up outside of regular times, they must be signed-out by the parent/guardian.

Children who are to self-release need signed permission from a parent (each year).

- **Children ages 8- may not self-release (they must be accompanied by an adult or a sibling age 13+, see below).**
- **Children ages 9+ may self-release and walk directly home.**
- **A child 13+ may accompany a younger sibling home with written parental permission.**

Those 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.**

Catechists must be notified in writing if anyone other than the parents/guardians are picking up the child, or if a particular person may not ever pick up a child.

Attendance

For every class/session for children, catechists must take attendance.

Parents are to notify the DRE of any expected absences.

When unexpected or prolonged absences occur, the parent must be contacted.

Inclement Weather Policy

Children's 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.

Class Cancellations

All class cancellations (for any reason) should be posted on parish/Religious Education websites and every effort should be made to efficiently communicate with those involved with the cancelled program (volunteers, families, etc.).

For long-term cancellations, see suggestions under: [Health Related Crisis Response Plan](#).

C. Safe Communications and Technology (Office of Communications and Office of Child Protection)

Quick Reference

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

Communications with Minors

Each year, 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 included on the communication, as well as the parent. Only ministry-related communications are appropriate. Written permission must be maintained on file for 21 years.

Online Educational Platforms

Parish Faith Formation programs may find online education platforms and video conferencing capability to be useful and effective means for communicating with families, adult faith formation, and professional development.

For children, on-site faith formation is the norm and the context for communicating and sharing the faith is in relationship with one-another. **Online educational platforms for children (whether a contained platform or video conferencing) are meant to be used only in extraordinary circumstances and/or when absolutely necessary.** Even in family faith formation models, or homeschool curriculum, the faith should be taught by parents (and not be passively taught through a screen).

FERPA and COPPA Compliance certifications are standards for online platforms for use by minors with strong end-to-end encryption in place for security. Security, however, 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.**

Contained Educational Platforms:

Three self-contained educational platforms with approved curriculum include:

- *Spirit of Truth* by Sophia Institute Press
- *My Catholic Faith Delivered*, by Ignatius Press (*Faith and Life Series*)
- CatechismClass.com

These platforms have their own rules, regulations, and parent release forms for registration.

Video Conferencing

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

Best practices should be followed when using video conferencing (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Teams, etc.), especially when hosting live sessions with minors. These may include:

- Establish parish rules for Video Conferencing, considering:
 - Whether or not catechists will require use of camera and/or microphone.
 - Whether or not the user can change their name.
 - What is considered an appropriate location (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 included 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).
- **Every session designated as a classroom meeting for minors should have two non-related adults and be recorded; if only one adult is present then the session must be recorded, and the DRE must have login access (to join and monitor the session).**
 - 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 (ad infinitum).
 - 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 with regards to allowing their students to opt-out of live recordings.
 - **A copy of all video conference recordings must be kept forever (ad infinitum)**
 - Students should be reminded that recordings/screen shots by the participants are expressly forbidden.
 - Monitoring and communicating with teachers about security issues must 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).**
- 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.**

Social Media (from the Diocesan Code of Conduct)

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 12,

“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 site, chat room and newsgroup visits, as well as file downloads, for compliance with diocesan policies and for other business reasons. The Diocese has the right to conduct such review without prior notice to the employee. The user consents to allow IS and CDA Management access to, and review of, all materials created, stored, sent, or received, by the user through any CDA network or Internet connection. Employees may not intercept or disclose, or assist in intercepting or disclosing, electronic communications.”

and,

“8.2 CDA retains the right to monitor the content of electronic communications. The content of electronic communications and the usage of electronic communications systems will be monitored to support operational, maintenance, auditing, security, investigative activities and for other business reasons. IS 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 report of misconduct is to be sent 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 Director of Human Resources will contact the IT Director to initiate the review/monitoring. The results will be returned to the Director of Human Resources.” (Ref: Communication and **Social Media Policy** in the **Diocesan Code of Conduct**.)

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; 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.

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.

Parish/School Technology

Educational Purpose and Appropriate Use

Technology may be used to enhance student learning (e.g., computers, online textbook supplementation resources, interactive white boards, 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

Minors may not possess cell/smart phones during Children’s Religious Education classes. 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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:

- Use technology in sexting or cyber-bullying: to harass, threaten, deceive, intimidate, offend, embarrass, or annoy any individual.
- 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.
- 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.

- Attempt to circumvent system security.
- Deliberately visit a site known for unacceptable material or any material that is not in support of educational objectives.
- Violate license agreements, copy disks, CD-ROMs, or other protected media.
- Use technology for any illegal activity. Use of the Internet for commercial gains or profits is not allowed from an educational site.
- Breach confidentiality obligations of parish or school employees.
- Harm the goodwill and reputation of the parish or school employees.
- 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 Religious Education 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:

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

Guidelines and Policies for Copyrighted Materials (Office of Catholic Schools)

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 the fair use of a work consider:

- 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, e.g., 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, e.g., to serve as a back-up in case the original is lost or destroyed.

A license is generally needed to load data 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.

D. Health and Medical Safety (Office of Risk Management)

Quick Reference

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

Local Trainers include:

Andrea Shermer, Owner
COREducation Training, Inc.
info@coreducationtraining.com

Allison Kellner, Director
Safety Education Specialists
www.ses911.com
571-422-2989

Adults with CPR and First Aid training must be identified and known to volunteers. At least one person with current First Aid and CPR certification must be present during children's faith formation programs.

During any youth event or program, if a child is present who needs medication administered, it is required to have one person with Medication Administration Training (MAT) present. If this is not possible, the parent must attend and administer the medication to their child. Catechists are not to administer any over the counter medications or products.

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. (See sample list of supplies at the end of this Health and Medical Safety section.)

Communicable Diseases or Viruses

Children excluded from regular school attendance should not participate in regular parish faith formation programs. Special accommodations must be available, especially for long-term illnesses.

Medical Conditions

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

- a medical condition prevents their child from participating in any activity
- their child has severe food allergies
- their child has medication needs
- any classroom instruction modifications should be provided

The Director of Religious Education, in turn, must provide the classroom catechist with appropriate information. In cases when parents request confidentiality, a catechist/volunteer may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Self-Administered Medications

Minors who carry and self-administer medications (e.g., epi-pens, diabetic needles/pumps) must have written permission from the parent each year. A copy is to be kept on file with the Director of Religious Education, and a copy provided to the minor's catechist.

Catechists and Chaperones of children with epi-pens must be taught how to administer the medication. MAT training is preferred.

Students should keep self-administered medication with and on their person, as they are trained to use the medication and are their first line of defense. The medication should come and go with the child. This can be verified by the catechist and tracked on the attendance record. If the medication is administered, the parent/guardian is to be contacted immediately.

Health-Related Crisis Response Plan

A Health-Related Response Plan provides guidance to parents, students, employees, and volunteers in the event that normal faith formation activities are suspended due to a 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 informing 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.
- Identify students most vulnerable to a health crisis due to a compromised immune system or chronic illness. Encourage their families to homeschool during the pandemic.
- Classrooms are to be cleaned after every session (tables, chairs, and surfaces used are to be wiped down with disinfectant).
- Maintain an adequate supply of cleaning and disinfecting materials such as tissues, anti-bacterial wipes, and 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.

Event cancellation procedures:

- The DRE, or their delegate, is to communicate appropriate information regarding the closure with all involved with the event or program in a timely manner.
- 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, considering the effects the crisis is having on students' families.
- Catechists are to prepare resources that can be supplied to parents and students through the most appropriate form of communication. These materials should include grade-appropriate lesson plans and devotions.
- The DRE must maintain communication with catechists to ensure that a learning environment is provided which considers the nature and magnitude of the health crisis; support and assistance should be offered, as needed.
- Catechists may utilize appropriate learning tools (e.g., e-learning websites, online conferencing apps, etc.).
- Catechists must follow the policies and guidelines for safe communications and technology (Office of Communications).
- The DRE should encourage catechists to communicate on a weekly basis with the parents about homework assignments or other learning activities, including the Director of Religious Education in all correspondence.
- The DRE should ensure that the facilities are properly cleaned and disinfected prior to the resumption of any on site activities.
- The DRE should ensure parents know how they will receive communication for updates and announcements about re-opening. Remind parents to continually monitor the parish website for updates, and to check email accounts.

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 who 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 should 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.

Accidents or Injuries (Office of Risk Management)

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 injured 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. Keep this record for 21 years.

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 a 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.]

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.

Sample First Aid Supplies

Office First Aid Supplies (Store in a crate)

- First Aid/CPR book or chart
- Blank Incident Reports
- Copies of Hand washing instructions
- Box of disposable, latex-free gloves (medium/large)
- Spray bottle for chlorine spray to sanitize area (mix 1 part chlorine bleach to 10 parts water when needed; do not keep as mixture breaks down)
- Bottle of chlorine bleach
- Large zip top bags (for soiled clothes)
- Small garbage bags
- Sandwich bags
- Red bags for hazardous waste (check with school principal or nurse)
- Ammonia inhalant capsules
- 4x4 gauze bandages
- Box of band-aids
- Alcohol swabs or antiseptic towelettes
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Adhesive tape
- Scissors
- Hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Tweezers
- Neosporin

Individual Classroom First Aid Packet (store in large zip top bag, 1 for each catechist)

- 2 large zip top bags
- 2 pairs gloves
- 2 snack size zip top bags (especially for Tooth Fairy)
- 2 gauze pads (3" or 4")
- Assorted band-aids
- Tissues
- Purell
- 1 copy hand washing instructions and laundry instructions
- 1 copy Blank Incident Report

E. Emergency Policies and Plans (Office of Risk Management)

Quick Reference

Annual staff and volunteers are to receive Facilities Safety Training, including:

- 1. Evacuation**
- 2. Lock Down**
- 3. Lock Out (off-site; no need to go to the off-site location)**

Annual Student emergency drills include:

- 1. Evacuation/Fire Drill (please coordinate with your local fire station, if necessary)**
- 2. Lock Down**

The Risk Management Emergency Drill Report is due the LAST FRIDAY of January.

CALLING 911

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

Describe the emergency by stating what happened and the type of injury. Be concise and factual. Relate known or suspected injuries. Identify immediate help needed.

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 without causing alarm. Siblings may be gathered for early dismissal if convenient for the parent in these situations.

Contact 911 immediately if a serious emergency or threatening behavior by a student or an adult occurs on campus. The instructions in this guide provide a brief summary and overview of the action that should occur for a given emergency.

In the event of a serious situation or escalated event, the Director of Religious Education should contact their Pastor.

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

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.

Class Lists and Attendance of Students

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

- **The Director of Religious Education must have easy access to all class lists. These lists should have students’ names and emergency telephone numbers.**
- **The Director of Religious Education will collect attendance or sign-in sheet during the first minutes of class, to provide accurate student-count in the event of an emergency.**

Emergency Plans of Action for Religious Education

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. For a template, visit the Office of Risk Management website. For a sample, see the DRE Portal.

All Emergency Plans fit into the following categories:

Evacuation (On Site) To be drilled annually.	Lock Down (On Site) To be drilled annually	Lock Out (Off Site) (Catechists Prepared)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Bomb Threat · Fire Drill · Gas Odor · Hazardous Waste (non-contained) · Suspicious Object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Earthquake · Hazardous Waste (contained) · Severe Weather · Suspicious Persons · Violence, Threat of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Active Shooter/ Violence, Act of · Evacuation with request of EMS to move off site
<p>Active Shooter Training is to be provided to the Catechists. It follows the rule of Run/Hide/Fight.</p>		

Evacuation

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, Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Korean, etc.).

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.

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**
- **Fire exits**

Catechists and children must be familiar with fire alarms, evacuation plans, and how and where to assemble site outside the building.

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

FIRE/EVACUATION:

- Pull the closest fire alarm to initiate building evacuation.
- Evacuate through the closest stairwell, providing assistance to those in need.
- Take attendance and report all accounted for or missing students to the DRE/Fire Warden.
- Do not go back to the office/classrooms for personal items. Do not use the elevators.
- You may return to the building after the “all clear” is given.

- The catechist carries a class list with students’ names 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.
- 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.

Lock Down (with warning/with intruder), and Lock Out (Evacuate to Off-Site Location)

Religious Education programs should conduct at least one Lock Down drill during a calendar year, in order to familiarize everyone with the process.

Catechists should be trained in the Lock Out procedures

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

- Civil disturbances, nearby police operations
- A direct threat by an intruder (armed or unarmed)
- Hazardous material exposures
- Natural disaster
- Reported emergency by federal, state, or local authority.

LOCK DOWN / LOCK OUT:

- Call 911 (stay on the line until first responders arrive).
- Report the situation and include the location and situation.
- Activate Emergency Lock Down/Lock Out (announcement, phone system, etc.).
- Implement procedures (below).
- Establish an assembly area for incoming emergency service personnel.

“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.

All parishes must have a designated meeting place off parish grounds. This location must be within walking distance and not within sightlines of the parish. This location should be able to accommodate large groups and parking for families as they pick up children. **If you need assistance designating an off-site location, please contact the Office of Risk Management.**

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

- Close and secure inside doors and cover inside windows.
- Turn off lights and silence cell phone(s).
- If possible, move furniture in front of the door to prevent it from opening.
- Take shelter out of sight and remain silent until “all clear” is given.
- Notify parents of the safety of their children and the need to pick them up at the on-site location.

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.
- Notify parents of the safety of their children and the need to pick them up at the off-site location.

Recommendations for Drills

- Advise students ahead of time in a calm, clear way.
- Listen for the alarm/announcement.
- Bring attendance records.
- 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.
- Praise participants and make any corrections.

Each year, the DRE must provide verification of training for Religious Education volunteers, and completion of the emergency drills with the students to the Office of Risk Management. This report is due by the last Friday in January.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF PARISH FAITH FORMATION

Note: Samples for the following are provided in the DRE Portal. To request a username and password, please contact the Special Consultant for Catechetics (consultantforcatechetics@gmail.com or telephone: 703-785-2319).

Unified Program

The Director of Religious Education is to coordinate a comprehensive parish Faith Formation program, which aligns with these Policies and Guidelines.

Finances

The Director of Religious Education must propose a budget to the Pastor and Parish Finance Council each year. The Faith Formation budget is to include the salaries of parish Faith Formation employees, who should be justly compensated according to their education, the expectations for the position, and their experience. It is also to include all expenses for program needs and growth. 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 faith formation program because of financial hardship.**

Calendar

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

Space Reservations

When planning your programs, it is important to reserve space. There is normally a hierarchy of:

- 1st – Liturgy
- 2nd – School
- 3rd – Religious Education
- 4th – Regular Programs
- 5th – Events

Handbook

It is suggested that the Director of Religious Education prepare a handbook, providing an overview of all Faith Formation Programs. This handbook may be provided to registered families of the parish as a resource. The handbook may include:

- An overview of the parish faith formation program(s)
- Responsibilities of parents/students/catechists
- Registration procedures (and student records)
- Materials Used/Scope/Sequence of each grade (these are often found on the publisher's website)
- Sacrament preparation requirements
- Discipline policy
- Dress Code
- Safe Environment Training information
- Drop-Off/Pick-Up procedures
- Emergency Procedures and escape routes/evacuation meeting place
- Inclement weather policy

Record Keeping of Students

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 a lockable office/filing cabinet, or on a secured device).

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.

The following Religious Education records must be retained, and kept in perpetuity:

- **Attendance rosters for every class with minors, including the grade, year, names of the catechists/volunteers and all students in the class. These must be labelled properly and kept in a secure location.**
- **Carpooling and Sleeping Arrangement information for field trips.**
- **Medical forms and permission slips for events during which an incident occurs.**
- **A copy of the annual parish Safe Environment Training reports (submitted to the Office of Child Protection by the end of January each year).**
- **A copy of the annual parish Emergency Drill reports (submitted to the Office of Risk Management by the end of January each year).**
- **Reports of injury.**

Student Records (Minors)

All students must have a registration form and the required waivers signed by at least one parent/guardian in order to participate in parish programs (see below).

When a child is first registered in the parish religious education program, parents must provide:

- **A copy of the child's birth certificate**
- **A copy of the child's Baptism certificate and notation of other Sacraments received**

These are to be kept on file until the child's reception of Confirmation is recorded in the Sacramental Registers. At that time, they may be returned to the parent, or destroyed.

Parishes must keep accurate records for each student. These records must include the following:

- **Annual Registration Form***, which includes:
 - **The birth date, sex, and name of the child**
 - **The home address of the child**
 - **Names of parents/guardians and their contact information (including addresses, telephone/cell phone numbers, email addresses)**
 - **Request for any relevant custody, medical or special learning needs****
 - **Required Waivers/Permissions:**
 - § **Photo/video use**
 - § **Medical release**
 - § **Drop-Off/Pick-Up, Self-Release, Emergency Contact**
 - § **Permission to Receive Sacraments**
 - **One parent's signature (e-signature is acceptable)**
- **Any notes/forms regarding irregular pick-up/drop-off.**
- **Medical Forms and Permission Slips without incidence.**

***Keep for 21 years from time of receipt:**

- **Any program registration forms received**
- **Waivers**
- **Permission slips**

As a rule, keep anything that requires a parent's signature for 21 years.

****Of note:**

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

Sacrament Records include:

- **Information gathered for the Sacramental Registers**
- **Supplemental Sacrament Preparation materials (e.g., service hours, Saint reports, Sponsor certificates, etc.).**

Sacrament Records may be purged/returned once the Sacraments are recorded in the Sacramental Registers.

It is recommended to keep OCIA records for five years.

Birth Certificates and Baptism Certification (which are source-documents for the Sacrament Registers) should be retained until the minor receives Confirmation, or until age 16 (at which time a recently issued Baptism Certificate would be needed). These documents may be returned to the families, or destroyed.

Transfer of Records/Students

When a child transfers to another parish, a copy of the child's record should be provided by their parish DRE 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.

Document Retention of Volunteers

Catechist/Volunteer Records

Every Parish Catechist/Volunteer for the Faith Formation Programs must have accurate records:

- **Profile/contact information**
- **Signed annual Oath of Fidelity**
- **Signed annual acknowledgment of training in safety policies and procedures**
- **Signed confidentiality agreement protecting the information of minors (if used)**
- **Record of Catechist training or certification**
- **Verification of Child Compliance (if necessary)**
- **Verification of completion of training to teach Circle of Grace (this must be reported to the Office of Child Protection with name, email, date of training and instructor)**
- **A copy of the catechist/volunteer's attendance for every class with minors (including year, grade, names of students, catechists, aids) should be added to their file. This copy is for quick and easy referencing, and is in addition to the records kept perpetually.**

It is suggested to keep a copy of these records up to 5 years after leaving ministry. After 5 years, a returning catechist will need to restart Child Protection Compliance.

Kept on file with the Child Protection Compliance Manager/Liaison:

- **Verification of Compliance with Child Protection Policies, if working with minors:**
 - **Background check approval**
 - **VIRTUS compliance**
- **Signed current Code of Conduct (once – signed electronically)**
- **Signed current Social Media Policy (once – signed electronically)**

Diocesan Reports

The Diocese of Arlington requires the Pastor/Director of Religious Education submit the following Child Protection and Risk Management Reports annually:

- **Safe Environment Training Report must be submitted to the Office of Child Protection by the last Friday in January (training to be completed by the last Friday in December).** Upon completion of the training, the DRE must complete the Reporting Form Survey, indicating that the training has occurred, and who has opted-out of this training.
 - **A copy of all opt-out forms, training-day(s) attendance, and this compliance report should be kept on file (together) at the parish in perpetuity.**
- **Emergency Drill Report must be submitted to the Office of Risk Management by the last Friday in January.** This report verifies catechists have been trained in evacuation, lock down, and lock out (including active-shooter training) and that all students have been trained in evacuation (fire drill) and lock down (shelter in place). **Keep a copy on file in perpetuity.**

Sample CCD REGISTRATION

Please print neatly and complete one form per child. Return forms to:
Office of Religious Education, ADDRESS HERE. Thank you.

Last Name: _____ Child's First Name: _____ Sex: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Father's Last Name: _____ Father's First Name: _____

Father's Religion: _____ Father's Marital Status: _____

Mother's Last Name: _____ Mother's First Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____ Mother's Religion: _____

Mother's Marital Status: _____ Father and Mother married to each other? _____

Father's Cell Phone: _____ Mother's Cell Phone: _____

Child resides with: _____

Emergency Contact Number during CCD: WHO? _____ # _____

Child's School: _____ Grade: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Class Session (rank in order of preference with 1 being the most preferred, and 3 being least preferred):

ADD SESSION TIMES HERE

Baptism Year: _____ Church: _____

Please attach copy of certificate if first time registering this child.

Penance Year: _____ Church: _____

Eucharist Year: _____ Church: _____

Confirmation Year: _____ Church: _____

(If your child has not been baptized Catholic, you will be contacted by the Office of Religious Education.)

Allergies/Medical Notes: _____

Special Notes for Teachers: _____

Siblings (to coordinate class times): _____

I understand that if my child has made first communion, they have a duty to attend Sunday Mass.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Paid (M.O.P.): _____ Tuition: MONEY INFORMATION HERE

Classes fill on a first-come-first-served basis. Your child will be registered upon payment of tuition.

Note: Tuition covers the cost of texts, supplies and teacher's materials. Scholarships are available.

Samples of Necessary Registration Waivers for Religious Education Programs

(approved by the Diocese of Arlington)

We have used the title Director of Religious Education throughout these samples. If this title is different in your parish, please replace this title with the one that is used.

Waivers must be signed by a parent/guardian.

Waivers may be e-signed, ideally with two-step verification.

Photo, Press, Audio, and Electronic Media Release for Minors

The Diocese of Arlington and any of its schools/parishes and/or the Arlington Catholic Herald ("Diocese") may produce or participate in video and/or audio recording, website or still photographic productions that may involve the use of students' names, likenesses, or voices. Such productions may be used for news stories, illustration, educational, and/or official marketing purposes and may be copied or copyrighted with the Diocese retaining any and all rights to such productions.

Please choose one of the options below after carefully considering your decision regarding the use of your child's name, likeness, and/or voice. This agreement is binding for the period in which the student is enrolled. No adaptations, changes or alterations may be made for the current academic year.

- Image and Audio: I DO authorize the Diocese to use and publish my child's photograph, video and/or audio recording for educational, news stories, illustration and/or marketing purposes.
Identity: I DO authorize the Diocese to use my child's name identifying them in photographs, videos and/or audio recordings for educational, news stories, illustration and/or marketing purposes.
I DO NOT AUTHORIZE the Diocese to use and publish my child's name, photograph, video and/or audio recording for educational, news stories, illustration and/or marketing purposes.

Pick-Up Authorization

Persons other than parents/guardians who are authorized to pick up the student on a regular basis from religious education: (May include relatives, neighbors, carpool drivers, etc.):

Name Relationship

Name Relationship

Persons NOT authorized to pick up the student from religious education:

Name Relationship

(Note: Please notify the Director of Religious Education if you anticipate any issue with unauthorized persons attempting to pick up your child. Do not list a parent or other legal guardian as "NOT authorized" unless a court order or other binding legal document so provides. In that event, please provide a copy of the legal document)

Emergency Contacts

Give the name, address, and phone number of two adults who could pick up the student from school in a timely manner in the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached:

1) (Name) (Address, City, State, Zip) (Phone) (Relationship)

2) (Name) (Address, City, State, Zip) (Phone) (Relationship)

Self-Release Authorization

- Children ages 8- may not self-release.
- Children ages 9+ may self-release and walk DIRECTLY with written parent permission.
- Children ages 13+ may accompany a younger sibling directly home with written parent permission.

I _____ (Parent's Name) grant permission for my child(ren) to self-release from Faith Formation Classes:

NAME	GRADE	AGE

Medical Information and Waiver

<input type="radio"/> Student's Doctor _____ Phone # _____
<input type="radio"/> Significant Medical History _____ <i>(e.g., diabetes, heart disease, contact lenses, hearing aid, etc.)</i>
<input type="radio"/> Allergies _____ Action to Take _____
<input type="radio"/> Student's Medications _____ Date of Last Tetanus Shot _____
<input type="radio"/> Insurance Company _____ Policy # _____

- I agree to notify the parish office/Director of Religious Education within 24 hours if my child or any member of their immediate household has developed a communicable disease.
- I agree to notify the parish office/Director of Religious Education immediately if the disease is life threatening.
- I agree to pick up my sick or injured child in a timely manner when contacted.
 - If I cannot be reached, the above emergency contacts can be called to pick up my child (and any siblings).
- If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted in a medical emergency, the program director has my permission to call an ambulance and accompany my child to the emergency room of the nearest hospital/urgent care. Additionally, I hereby authorize its medical staff to provide treatment when a physician deems necessary for the well-being of my child.

NOTE: If a child has an epi-pen/inhaler, a parent must wet-sign a letter granting permission for the child to carry/self-administer the epi-pen/inhaler. The epi-pen/inhaler must be in the original container and/or box (with prescription information, including child's name, name of prescriber, and expiration date.)

- Yes, my child has an epi-pen/inhaler, and I will attach a letter of authorization to carry/self-administer this life-saving medication.

Permission to receive Sacraments

- Yes, my child has my permission to receive Sacraments for the first time this year.
- Yes, my child has my permission to receive Confession/Communion during liturgical celebrations this year.

Sample: Personal Profile Sheet of Religious Education Volunteer

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (day) _____ (c) _____

E-mail address: _____

How much faith instruction have you received? _____

1. Have you taught Religious Education before? Expand.
2. What would you like to see in our Religious Education Program?
3. What is your previous experience in working with children?
4. What age groups do you prefer to work with?
5. What are some of your skills/talents/hobbies?
6. Why do you want to work in Religious Education?
7. Would you like to continue your own Faith Formation through more education for yourself?
8. How did you hear of a need for volunteers in our Religious Education Program?
9. Are there any issues in the Catholic Church that you do not know enough about, or about which you would like to better understand the Church's teaching/position?
10. Do you agree to teach the fullness of truth in the Catholic Faith according to the Magisterium, Scriptures and Catechism of the Catholic Church?



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

Catechist Oath of Fidelity

I, N., with firm faith hereby profess:

I believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried,
And rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who, with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified,
Who has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Therefore, I believe and profess all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God. I promise to teach sincerely and fully, through both my words and actions, this same faith to those entrusted to my care. Amen.

Catechist Signature

Date: _____

Pastor/Director of Religious Education Signature

Date: _____

Sample Acknowledgement of Training by Volunteers

TO BE SIGNED BY CATECHIST

- Yes! My DRE has provided me with the resources necessary to teach this year.
- Yes! I have my class roster and am aware of any special needs my students have.
- Yes! I have signed my annual Oath of Fidelity and am ready to teach!
- Yes! I have completed all necessary steps to become fully compliant with the Office of Child Protect (Note: I realize I cannot be active in ministry until approved by the Office of Child Protection).
- Yes! I have signed up for/attended VIRTUS training (only once).
- Yes! I have received/signed a code of conduct?
- Yes! I am aware/have signed of the social media policy (only once).
- Yes! I have received training in General Safety Policies (e.g., first aid, student safety, safe-routines, secure entry, classroom attendance, inclement weather, discipline, safe communications, distance education, electronic and printed media, etc.)
- Yes! I have been trained in evacuation of the building (e.g., Fire Drill – note: this training must be reviewed and practiced once a year with your class).
- Yes! I have been trained in Lock-down drill (remain in the building – run, hide, fight)
- Yes! I have been trained in Lock-Out evacuation (to an off-site location). I know where I’m going!
- Yes! I have been trained in Emergency Safety, including how to keep students safe and accounted for, when and how to call 911, and I am clear on what to do if danger occurs during religious education.
- Yes! I have been trained to teach Circle of Grace.
- Yes! I am ready for ministry!**

(Signature): _____

(Printed name): _____

(Date): _____

- Yes! This volunteer is ready for ministry.**

Signature of DRE: _____

- Yes! This volunteer has received 3 hours of ministry-specific training and qualifies for Initial Catechetical Ministry Certification.

NOTE: If “Yes!” is checked for every item above, a catechist will qualify for Initial Catechist Certification (see Catechist Certification Guidelines).



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

Sample Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, understand that as a catechist/teacher/aide for _____ Catholic Church/School, may become aware of confidential/privileged/private information about the children in my class (who are minors) and their families. This information may include:

- Medical records/information;
- Student Educational records (including, but not limited to, IEPs, ISPs, discipline records, etc.);
- Privileged family information (e.g. adoption, divorce/custody information, etc.);
- Other information parents/guardians do not wish to be shared (e.g. private family information*).

**Note: this does NOT include concerns for a child's safety, which must be reported by catechists/teachers/aides, who are mandatory reporters.*

Conscious of the trust placed in my hands, I agree to do all in my power to carry out my responsibilities with charity and integrity and will maintain confidentiality as to those matters designated as confidential/privileged/private, including all materials provided to me or matters discussed at meetings (or in class).

Signature

Date

4. Faith Formation Programs

A. Children's Religious Education

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 are 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:

- **Catholic School**
- **Homeschool**
- **Parish Religious Education Classes (including Family Faith Formation and Atriums)**

Catechetical programs for children who attend public schools should be offered for:

- **Preschool-kindergarten children**
- **Elementary and middle school children (Grades 1-8 are required)**
- **High School Youths**

Religious Education should always be suited to the age, circumstances, and learning capacities of children and accommodate for those with special learning needs (physical or mental disabilities).

Every effort must be made to welcome children who wish to attend on site classes into the parish programs.

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.

Cell Phone and Smart Watch Policy

Youth and adults should not have or be using their cell phones/smart watches during catechetical and/or youth ministry events. To assist in this policy, please:

- Remind parents that there is no need for cell/smart phones during religious education/youth events.
- Provide a box for the youth to turn-in (and from which to retrieve) their cell phones before (and after) the class/event. Please remember these are valuable objects and should be supervised by an adult. Best practice: have the youth put their name on masking tape and attach it to their phone prior to placing it in the cell phone box.
- Please remind parents that during faith formation events, they too, are not to be using their Cell Phones/Smart Watches as they are to be engaged in the provided programming.

I. The Catholic School

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.

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.

II. Homeschool

The Church's Magisterium recognizes and affirms the natural right of all parents to see to the education of their children. **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 catechesis.

Canon Law imposes upon Pastors the serious obligation to ensure that those who receive the Sacraments have been suitably prepared. 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 for Sacrament preparation. Parents must also attend appropriate meetings for adults.

Parish staff must 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 used 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.

To assist DREs in evaluation the faith formation of homeschool students, the following homeschool religious education materials are approved by the Diocese.

- Baltimore Catechism
- Seton Home School
- Catechism Class (online)
- My Catholic Faith Delivered
- Mother of Divine Grace School
- Catholic Education Center (downloadable and print)
- Tan Publications (homeschool curriculum)

Other materials not on this list must be evaluated by the DRE, or the student must meet the Standards of Learning set forth by the Office of Faith Formation.

NOTE: Any homeschooling groups that meet at the parish are to sign a facilities agreement. Section 1.3 states of that agreement states that they must comply with the regulations of the Office of Child Protection, specifically, adults must be Virtus compliant, students must receive Safe Environment Training (Circle of Grace) and therefore the teachers must be trained to provide the instruction of Circle of Grace per the licensing agreement. These groups are to have their own Child Protection Liaison, and will submit their own Safe Environment Training report to the Office of Child Protection.

III. Children’s Religious Education (CCD)

Quick Reference

Every class must have at least one child-protection compliant adult catechist; ideally 2+ will be present. If a second child-protection compliant adult is not available for each class, then it must be possible for the DRE or another child-protection compliant adult to visit, observe, or stop-in to the class.

In Family Faith Formation programs, parents are not required to complete the OPCYP process so long as the parents are at the table with their own children. In addition, children may only be seated next to their parent, or an OPCYP compliant adult.

In a regular Religious Education (CCD) program, **if a parent wishes to assist *only* their child (who may have learning needs) in the classroom they need not be compliant.**

Youths may serve as aides, but must never be in charge of minors. They do not count as a “second child-protection compliant adult” (see above).

Chaperones (e.g., volunteers in charge of minors) must be at least 21 years of age and OPCYP compliant. The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children for a day trip:

Preschool Grades **1:4** K–5 Grades **1:6** Grades 6–8 **1:8**

Students are to be assigned to specific chaperones for the duration of the day.

See student records, 3. ADMINISTRATION OF PARISH FAITH FORMATION.

Program Overview

Each year, at least 30 hours of systematic, age-appropriate, faith formation instruction is to be offered and available to each child and youth. Classes are to be offered on site, led by catechists who are dedicated to this important ministry.

It is recommended to have one week assigned 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.

A summer intensive program for Religious Education (e.g., classes offered for one or two weeks during the Summer) is not permitted to replace a school year program.

If family faith formation is offered by the parish, onsite sessions led by catechists must occur at least every-other week, as well as parent with child at home catechesis.

To successfully progress through the faith formation program, students must:

- Have regularly attended classes (and must “make up” missed classes).
- Successfully learned grade-level educational requirements (see **Religious Education Standards of Learning**).

In addition to the 30 hours of instruction:

- **Plan an orientation day at the beginning of the year school. This orientation day would provide an ideal time to distribute and collect all necessary paperwork for the year.**
- **Plan an extra day for inclement weather or emergency cancellation.**

As part of (included in the 30 hours of instruction) all children's faith formation programming:

- **Emergency drills must be done once annually.**
- **Safe Environment Training (Circle of Grace) must be provided by the last Friday in December. (See**

Registration (see Parish Administration of Faith Formation, Ch. 3 for necessary records)

Children normally register at the grade-level in which they receive education at school.

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*.

Off-cycle faith formation classes may need to be offered.

Approved Curriculum for Children:

Elementary Materials may be chosen from the following publishers:

- Ignatius Press (including Augustine Institute)
- Loyola Press
- Sophia Institute Press
- Our Sunday Visitor
- Catholic Education Center
- TAN Publications (textbook curriculum)

The Diocese of Arlington does not specify approved texts for High School; however, the Office of Youth Ministry provides a curriculum for use free of charge (Emmaus). Access is provided in the DRE Portal.

The **Religious Education Standards of Learning** (available on the Diocesan website and in DRE Portal) are designed to determine successful grade-completion and the ability to advance in the faith formation program. When utilized, these Standards of Learning ensure that all students in the Diocese receive a standardized catechesis.

Not all approved texts are fully compliant with the Standards of Learning. The DRE must ensure the curriculum they choose complies with the Standards of Learning (both Elementary and High School), or supplement their curriculum to ensure compliance.

A system should be in place to assess each student's progress throughout the year. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should be notified of all feedback.

Responsibilities of Catechists for Children's Faith Formation

Each class is assigned catechist(s)/aid(s), who will:

- Observe the Policies and Guidelines of the Office of Faith Formation.
- Be compliant with the Office of Child Protection (See Ch. 2A)
- Be committed to their ministry as catechists under the direction of the parish Director of Religious Education and Pastor.
- Teach the provided curriculum for the whole year, which is to align with the Standards of learning.
- Teach the Safe Environment Training session, called "Circle of Grace"
- Perform the Emergency drills (evacuation and lock down).
- Maintain administrative records (Sacrament preparation materials, attendance, etc.).
- Assist with Sacrament Preparation (upon request).

Attendance for Children's Faith Formation

Catechists must accurately record attendance for each session. Poor attendance is to be brought to the Director of Religious Education for immediate action. Missed sessions should be made up. 6+ hours of unexcused absences from Religious Education may be cause to repeat the grade-level.

Sacrament Preparation

Sacrament Preparation is incorporated in the Religious Education Classes. In parishes with a school the instruction for school children will occur in the school, however, administration and coordination of the Sacraments typically falls under the DRE. It is important for schools and parishes to work together for Sacrament Preparation.

Sacrament preparation is a two-year process. Preparation for First Holy Communion includes grades 1 and 2. Preparation for Confirmation must include grades 7 and 8.

There are times children receive their Sacraments off-schedule for various reasons. Sacrament Preparation for any child is to be at least two years.

For children NOT BAPTIZED and who are above the age of reason (7+) or who were baptized Protestant, they are to be placed in an OCIC program (OCIA adapted for children). These children will become Catholic and receive their Sacraments of Initiation at the same time.

For children BAPTIZED CATHOLIC, who are late receiving first Penance/Eucharist, make-up classes should be offered. These are often called "Off-Cycle Sacrament Classes."

- Whenever possible these children should be incorporated with their peer group
- These children need two years of preparation to receive their Sacraments
- Children who need both Eucharist and Confirmation may not receive their First Communion at the Confirmation Mass.
- Students may attend their grade-level class plus attend Sacrament preparation (being two years of formation), or children may attend a special class for Sacrament preparation for two years. Sacrament Preparation may be offered over the summer for intensive study if the child(ren) participates in the grade level classes.

The Director of Religious Education may choose any curriculum, so long as it aligns with the Diocesan Elementary Standards of Learning (available on the Diocesan website and in the DRE Portal). **As part of Confirmation preparation, students must complete a thorough study of Salvation History, so to come know and love Christ and to understand His Church.** It is recommended that one year be dedicated to Salvation History as part of Confirmation preparation (e.g., grade 6 or 7).

IV. Safe Environment Training for Minors: Circle of Grace

Quick Reference

Each year, the DRE must schedule a Safe Environment Training session as part of their regularly scheduled 30 hours of Religious Education program (and before December 25th). A make-up date must also be scheduled for students who miss the class.

All instructors (catechists/teachers) must be trained to teach the materials, per the licensing agreement, including parents of the homeschool children in your program. As a courtesy to homeschool families, the parish may offer an on-site session of Circle of Grace using the family-model, fulfilling their requirement for the instruction of minors and eliminating the need for parents to attend training.

Any homeschooling groups that utilize the parish sign a facilities agreement. Section 1.3 states that they must comply with the regulations of the Office of Child Protection, specifically, adults must be Virtus compliant, students must receive Safe Environment Training (Circle of Grace) and therefore the teachers must be trained to provide the instruction of Circle of Grace per the licensing agreement. These groups are to have their own Child Protection Liaison, and will submit their own Safe Environment Training report to the Office of Child Protection.

Catechists are to use Religious Education class time to teach the curriculum. The presentation may not run in the background (students must be focused on this program. It may not be presented during other activities.) Homeschool children are to receive safe environment training from their parents (their educators), using materials provided by the DRE.

Family Faith Formation programs are required to teach Safe Environment Training during an on-site gathering. Circle of Grace provides a methodology for the family group model.

Safe Environment Training is required each year for grades 1-12. All children registered in the parish religious education program are required to receive training using the Circle of Grace program.

At least one week before the class is taught, parents must be informed of the class and provided with resource materials. These must not be sent home with the child.

DREs may not offer for parents to opt out of the program. **Parents may request to opt out of classroom instruction. Then, a form may be provided that formally opts-out and verifies they have assumed the responsibility to educate their children at home. DREs need to ask if this material has been taught (twice, if necessary).**

Safe Environment Training and Report Deadlines

1. All training and make-up sessions must be completed prior to the LAST FRIDAY in December.
2. **The Safe Environment Training Report is due on the LAST FRIDAY of January. Those who are tardy will be reported to the COO and Vicar General of the Diocese.**
3. A copy of all Compliance Reports must be maintained in perpetuity.

V. Guidelines for Nurseries (during Mass or Religious Education)

Quick Reference

Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and OPCYP compliant. The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children is:

Preschool Grades **1:4** K-5 Grades **1:6**

Note: Children who are preparing to receive First Holy Communion, or who have received their First Holy Communion are to attend Mass.

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

In order to maintain the religious exemption, parents must not leave Church property without their children at any time.

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, however, is encouraged.

Consider whether the nursery will be equipped to handle diapering and bathroom assistance for the children. If assistance is needed, it is best to have two persons assist with toileting needs, and parents should be informed if there was a need to help the child. If assistance will not be possible, 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 must contain the parent's name, cell phone number, the child's name, date, any food allergy conditions, and time signed-in, time signed-out.
- 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).
- 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 in place regarding the following situations:

- 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 to be offered (notification of allergies/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.
- Room maintenance and sanitation of surfaces and toys.

VI. Vacation Bible School/Summer Programs and Day Camps

Quick Reference

Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and OPCYP compliant. The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children for a day trip:

Preschool Grades **1:4** K–5 Grades **1:6** Grades 6–8 **1:8**

Students are to be assigned to specific chaperones for the duration of the day.

Retain medical forms and permission slips when incidents occur in perpetuity.

Vacation Bible Schools/Summer Programs and Day Camps are optional programs that are often coordinated by the Director of Religious Education and/or the Catholic School of a parish.

Programs are available for purchase. Any Catholic curriculum may be used and is at the discretion of the coordinator.

Vacation Bible School/Summer Programs and Day Camps often have young children. Please review the policies for Nurseries.

Parents should register students in advance and sign any necessary waivers (see Administration of Children’s Faith Formation).

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

- **A sign-in and sign-out page must contain the parent’s name, cell phone number, the child’s name, date, any food allergy conditions, and time signed-in, time signed-out.**
- **Name tags must be provided for the children.**
- 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.

VBS/Summer Programs and Day Camps should have procedures in place regarding the following situations:

- How to contact parents if their child becomes ill, has an accident, or is ready to go home.
- Snacks to be offered (notification of allergies/allergens).
- An emergency plan, including an emergency evacuation plan. Let parents know where the designated meeting place would be in case of evacuation.
- Room maintenance and sanitation of surfaces.

VII. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd/Atrium

Quick Reference

Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and OPCYP compliant. The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children is:

Preschool Grades **1:4**

K-5 Grades **1:6**

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based Children's Faith Formation program. Administration of this program should be handled the same as Children's Religious Education.

There are various Atriums in place in the Diocese of Arlington; many are also home school programs.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (for ages 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12) is approved for Religious Education through Grade 6, so long as the Standards of Learning are taught and learned.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is not approved for Grades 7 and 8, which are considered Confirmation Preparation years.

Atriums often accept registration of young children. Please review the policies for Nurseries.

VIII. Retreats and Field Trips/Off-site Events and Activities (See Code of Conduct)

Quick Reference

Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and OPCYP compliant. The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children for a day trip:

Preschool Grades **1:4** K–5 Grades **1:6** Grades 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.

Students are to be assigned to specific chaperones for the duration of the field trip.

Retain all carpooling records and sleeping arrangement records in perpetuity. Authorized Driver form: <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/risk-management/driver-program/authorized-driver-program/>

Retain medical forms and permission slips in perpetuity.

Permission slip:

https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/uploadedfiles/cda/pages/youth_ministry/youth_ministry/permission_slip_form.pdf.

Administration

Retreats and Field Trips/Off-Site Events may be planned to enhance the catechetical program and expand the religious experiences of the child.

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 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.

Outside the Diocese

There are a number of youth ministry and catechetical opportunities and activities that are available outside of the Diocese of Arlington: museum/shrine visits (e.g. Bible Museum, Franciscan Monastery, National Shrine, Shrine of Elizabeth Ann Seton, etc.), programs (e.g. Mount 2000, Steubenville conferences, Catholic Heart Workcamp, etc.).

When planning any parish event outside the diocese, the Director of Religious Education 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.

Adults and participants are required to follow and adhere to the more stringent of the child protection policies. **If there is a difference between the Diocese of Arlington and the policies of the local diocesan jurisdiction in which the event takes place (or through which the group travels), the more stringent of policies take precedence.** Examples include:

- **Diocese of Richmond:** All individuals 10 years of age or older, regardless of their academic year, are adults and may not participate in youth events as youth, or sleep in locations with youth. *Best practice: Since it is also not prudent to have these individuals sleep with the adult volunteers, consider a room set aside for high school young adults.*
- **Archdiocese of Washington:** All adults must complete the ADW background check and Virtus training (Arlington's training does NOT transfer) prior to participating or chaperoning a youth event (March for Life events are exempt).

OPCYP is happy to assist you in answering questions or clarifying policies related to the Office of Child Protection.

Event Supervision

Each event must be adequately supervised. (See quick reference, previous page.) Volunteers must sign the Risk Awareness form:

https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/uploadedfiles/cda/pages/youth_ministry/youth_ministry/volunteer%20risk%20awareness%20agreement_form.pdf

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 is not available, the event must be cancelled.
- **Student must comply with the dress code (see Student Safety).**
- **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.

Overnight Events

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 (including 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 by their DRE.**

Planning overnight events must take into consideration the following policies:

- **If any adult volunteer must enter a sleeping area with young people, a second unrelated 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 in perpetuity.**
- 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.

Medical Treatment during Events and Activities

- **For events and activities (on or off site), one of the adults must have Medical Administration Training certification if there is a child who needs medicine**

administered. If there is no MAT certified adult present, the parent must attend to their child's medical needs.

- **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).**

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.**
- **The transportation of one minor should only occur if two non-related adults are present in the vehicle.**
- When possible, drivers should only drop off and pick up youth from a predetermined location that is not at the youth's house.



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

FIELD TRIP PERMISSION SLIP

As the parent/legal guardian of _____ permission is hereby given for my son/daughter to go on a School/Parish field trip with their class to: _____ (**Destination**) on (month/date/year). The meeting time will be _____ at _____ (location) and the pickup time will be _____ at _____ (location).

I understand and acknowledge that participation in the activities involves inherent risks of injury to my child including risks associated with transportation by motor vehicle. I agree to indemnify the Parish, Youth Ministers, Volunteers, and the Diocese of Arlington for any costs or expenses arising out of my child's participation in the activities including the cost of any medical care given my child or any expenses or fees incurred in any lawsuit arising as a result of any damage or injuries caused by my child in the course of his or her participation in the activity.

I further give my consent to that in my absence the above-named minor be admitted to any hospital or medical facility for diagnosis and treatment. I request and authorize physicians, dentists, and staff, duly licensed as Doctors of Medicine or Doctors of Dentistry or other such licensed technicians or nurses, to perform any diagnostic procedures, treatment procedures, operative procedures and x-ray treatment of the above minor. I have not been given a guarantee as to the results of examination or treatment. I authorize the hospital or medical facility to dispose of any specimen or tissue taken from the above-named minor.

Date of Birth Date of last Tetanus Booster

Known allergies including any allergies to medicine (Continue on back of form if needed)

Any other medical problems which should be noted (Continue on back of form if needed)

Name of Parent/Guardian

Address City/State/Zip

Phone Home Work Mobile

Person responsible for charges (if different from above)

Address City/State/Zip

Phone Home Work Mobile

Person to notify if parent/guardian is unavailable

Phone Home Work Mobile

Family Physician Phone

Insurance Carrier & Policy Number

Signature of Parent and Date

Signature of Witness and Date

IX. Religious Education of People with Special Learning Needs

Quick Reference

Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and OPCYP compliant.

The required minimum ratio for chaperones/supervisors to children for SPRED is: **1:1**.

Parents of children in integrated classes may assist only their child if the parent is not Child Protection Compliant.

Children and adults with disabilities may need accommodations or modifications to fully access and benefit from the curriculum for religious instruction. Disabilities and differences may include learning disabilities, autism, Down syndrome, physical disabilities, behavioral and social disabilities, etc.

Parents should be informed that religious education programs rely on volunteers from the parish who may not have professional experience and therefore may need assistance in understanding what is helpful for their child.

Parishes should seek out volunteers who are committed to serving children with special needs and their families.

Administration

Children with special learning needs should be registered as part of the Children's Faith Formation programs of the parish. Placement in appropriate classes is determined by the Director of Religious Education. The DRE should consider the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional needs of the student when placing a child in a class.

Parents must inform the Director of Religious Education in writing if any classroom accommodation or modification to instruction is necessary to ensure their child's success and should also provide a summary of their child's IEP/ISP. Assistance in understanding or implementing the IEP/ISP is available through the Coordinator for Special Needs Ministries in the Office of Faith Formation.

Catechists for Individuals with Disabilities

The Director of Religious Education must provide the classroom catechist with appropriate instructional and behavioral recommendations/guidance in order to effectively teach a child with specific disabilities.

All volunteers should be provided with training and support in developing their ministry.

In the event parents request confidentiality, a catechist/volunteer may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Catechists for individuals with disabilities must:

- Allow for physical needs accommodations (e.g.), wheelchair accessibility, and provide preferential seating for students who are visually impaired or hard-of-hearing.

- Work with parents to understand the special needs of their child and provide reasonable accommodations.
- Adapt content and method of instruction to meet students' needs.
- Prepare students to receive the Sacraments of Initiation.
- Teach all students fairly and with respect.

Classes for Students with Special Learning Needs

Students with special learning needs may be incorporated into various parish faith formation programs, including:

A. Integrated Classes

Whenever possible, children with special learning needs should be integrated in regular religious education classes. When appropriate and available, a classroom aide, sibling, or parent may be asked to assist a specific child. Non-Child Protection Compliant parents of children in integrated classes may assist only their child in the classroom.

B. Homeschool

Children with special learning needs may be homeschooled at the parents' request when a parish religious education program is unable to meet the specific needs of a child. Instructional material for homeschooling should be provided or approved by the parish. The parish must also maintain contact with the parents to ensure continuity of religious instruction. Parents may also choose to homeschool other non-disabled children in the family.

C. SPRED

When children with disabilities cannot have their needs met in a typical catechetical program, a **Special Religious Development** (SPRED) program should be offered. Parishes in close proximity may join together to provide a consolidated, regional program.

SPRED is a religious education program for persons with significant disabilities. Together with adult catechist volunteers, they form a small faith community that fosters and nourishes spiritual and personal growth. By participating in SPRED, those with significant disabilities discover God's action, love, and presence in their lives. SPRED provides an opportunity for celebration and worship and teaches and prepares people with disabilities to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (*Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist*) and Penance.

The Office of Faith Formation assists parishes in providing religious education for those who have special needs and offers catechist formation to volunteers who teach them. Assistance includes developing the SPRED program and providing services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Contact the Coordinator for Special Needs Ministry at the Office of Faith Formation.

Safety Guidelines for SPRED

SPRED is a ministry to the most vulnerable population and safety and protection are necessary elements of the program. 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.

To 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 clearly in all rooms used by volunteers and should include Emergency 911, non-emergency police, parish office, and rectory.
- Behavior and safety expectations for minors 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 (with 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 notified of any behavioral incidents or problems acted out by their child.
- 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).

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. Therefore:

- Leaders must be proactive and conduct periodic facility safety inspections as well as identify any hazards in order to help prevent accidents.
- 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.
- The group leader or designee must maintain keys to doors while children are present.

USCCB 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>

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.

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.

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.**

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.

X. Mixed Religious Education Events (See Code of Conduct)

Religious Education and Youth Ministry

There are times when Religious Education and Youth Ministries collaborate on events and host mixed group events and programs. When coordinating such events/programs, it is important that both Office of Faith Formation and Office of Youth Ministries policies and guidelines are applied.

In addition, the Office of Child Protection policies apply to all diocesan, parish and Catholic school activities in the Diocese of Arlington where youth are present. It is important to review the entire Code of Conduct with volunteers and to highlight sections of particular relevance (e.g., relating to safe facilities, or social media, or off-site events, etc.) See also *VI. Retreats and Field Trips/Off-site Events and Activities*, above.

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.

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 holy life.

Middle School and High School Events

Middle school and high school youth should not participate in mixed events due to reasons of maturity and experience. This does not preclude high schoolers being used to assist in middle school events, such as assisting small group leaders, serving as high school helpers, etc. However, per diocesan policy, they may not have supervisory authority over other youth with the exception of those official and Diocesan-recognized programs that are designed to foster leadership as an inherent part of the program, e.g., scouting programs.

College and High School Mixed Events

All events located at or on diocesan locations or property, regardless of the organizer, in which high school participants are commingling with or being supervised by college students are required to follow diocesan policy and ensure that all adults 18 years and older are fully compliant. (Exception is made for those who are 18 years of age and still enrolled in high school.)

Minors and Adults

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.

B. 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). Adult Faith Formation is necessary for a thriving and growing Church.

Generally speaking, Adult Faith Formation is categorized into programs (e.g., classes, groups, etc.) and events (one-time events).

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.

Administration

Most programs, groups, and events have leaders who coordinate them. It would be efficient to have a list/handbook of programs and their coordinator’s contact information. This could be distributed to new parish registrants or posted on the parish website.

In order to book programs and events, it is imperative that the space be reserved. Priority should be given to regular meetings over events.

Registration is generally not required for Adult Faith Formation, but RSVPs for events are helpful for planning purposes. The exception may be OCIA. (See Ch. 5 Sacrament Preparation, OCIA.)

Adult Faith Formation opportunities are generally promoted in the parish bulletin and on the parish website. Ideally, social media and e-communications are implemented to reach parishioners through various, sharable formats.

Formats of Adult Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation make have various formats, including:

- Small groups (by topic, e.g., book clubs, or association, e.g., Men’s/Women’s groups)
- Classes (e.g., OCIA, Returning Catholic Classes)
- Events (retreats, conferences, etc.)
- Online Programs
- Hybrid Programs

Topics of Faith Formation include: Catechism, Scripture, Church History, Theology, Spirituality, Pastoral Theology, Topics of interest, etc.

Some diocesan sponsored and/or approved Adult Faith Formation Resources include (in alphabetical order):

CAINA (cainaweb.org)
Catholic Biblical School (catholicbiblicalschoolva.org)
Catholic International University (catholicciu.edu)
Catholic Education Center (catholiceducationcenter.com)
Institute of Catholic Culture (instituteofcatholicculture.org)
Formed (formed.org)
Franciscan at Home (franciscanathome.com)

Currently, great emphasis is placed upon evangelization and discipleship. Some programs used in the diocese are:

Alpha
Casting Nets
ChristLife
Divine Renovation
Evangelical Catholic
Forming Disciples in Mission
Forming Leaders in Mission
Renewal Ministries
Siena Institute (Called and Gifted Workshop)
The Search

More resources can be found under the evangelization page on the diocesan website.

Catechists who teach adults should be encouraged to attain Specialized Certification or Master Catechist Certification in the areas in which they teach. See Catechist Certification Guidelines for details.

Open Parish Events

Open parish events (open to parishioners or community – with or without advanced tickets/registration) do not require all adults to be Child Protection Compliant.

Open Parish Events may include fundraisers (e.g., a parish festival), liturgical celebrations (e.g., Christmas Event), Evangelization and Community events (e.g., yard/bake sale, theatre performances), etc.

Those who directly engage children (as a youth activity leader) as part of a planned Open Parish Event must be Child Protection Compliant, regardless of parental presence. Examples include:

- **children’s activity leaders when children are separated from parents (even for family faith formation),**
- **child care providers for adult groups/events**
- **youth volunteer service supervisors when youths are separated from the open public (e.g., in a kitchen), etc.).**

5. Sacrament Preparation

Quick Review

As a norm, Sacrament Preparation consists of two years of faith formation (e.g., if First Communion is received in grade 2, the child must have attended grades 1 and 2). Exceptions may be made by the Director of Religious Education on an individual basis.

In parishes where the program is dominantly driven by Sacrament Preparation, it is suggested that two- or three-years preparation be provided for each of the following: Baptism (if needed), First Penance, First Eucharist, Confirmation.

Sacrament Preparation may be part of the regular religious education classes or may be offered in addition to the regular classes.

For many families, Sacrament Preparation is a time to return to the Church. Receiving the Sacraments should be a time of joy; preparation should provide a sound formation for the child and not impose an undue burden on families.

Note: Choice of Sacramental Preparation materials are at the discretion of the DRE.

Administration

- The Director of Religious Education must coordinate the necessary classes, parent meetings/communications, rehearsals, and retreats/workshops for Sacrament Preparation.
- The Director of Religious Education must order catechetical materials and supplies for the rites/retreats/celebrations.
- **The Director of Religious Education is responsible for gathering all Sacrament Preparation paperwork, including necessary documents for recording the Sacraments. This paperwork must include birth and Baptism certificates.** It may include: a registration form, retreat registration, confirmation gown order form, Saint report, parent interview, etc. See each Sacrament (hereafter) for requirements for each Sacrament.
- **The DRE, or Sacramental Registrar, is responsible for recording the Sacraments in a timely fashion, according to the Sacramental Register Handbook.**

A. Infant Baptism (ages 0-6)

For Adult Baptisms (ages 7+), see OCIA.

Quick Reference

Required:	Suggested/Optional:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish registration of parents (or permission from their pastor) • Birth Certificate or Certificate of Live Birth from Hospital • Baptismal Register Information Form • Godparent/Christian Witness Certificate/Affidavit(s) <p>Record Sacrament (per Sacramental Register Handbook) in Baptism Register, issue Baptismal Certificate.</p> <p><i>Suggestion: Keep a copy of the Birth Certificate and Baptism Certificate on file for future Religious Education Registration.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with parents, ensure valid marriage and practice of the faith • Baptism Class for parents/godparents • Rehearsal • Parent's Social/Mentoring Program • Welcome package from parish outlining liturgies, programs, ministries, etc.

Overview

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

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 Classes are also often an important first step to inviting young families to participate in parish programs and to meet others in the church community. Ideally, a welcome package will be offered to the parents, informing them of parish liturgies and programs. Parents should be encouraged to join parent-groups or be introduced to other young families in the parish.

In the case of unmarried parents, or parents in irregular marriages, the couple should be encouraged to have their marriage recognized by the Church. The parish priests should avail themselves to pastoral counseling and marriage preparation.

Administration

The DRE should coordinate classes and order the supplies necessary for Baptism Preparation. These supplies include:

- Baptism Certificates
- Baptism Candles
- White Garments (if supplied by the parish)
- Catechetical Materials
- Parish Registration Forms
- Baptismal Register Information Forms
- Sponsor Affidavits/Certificates
- Welcome materials from the parish and other pastoral materials

All paperwork is to be received before scheduling a Baptism. This paperwork includes:

- **A birth certificate or live birth record of the person to be baptized is to be provided by the parents/guardian of an infant. (A birth certificate is required for anyone age 7 or older.)**
 - Note: If this document cannot be produced before the Baptism, do not delay the Baptism. Instead, do not issue the certificate until the documentation is produced.**
- **Baptismal Register Information Form, verified by the catechumen (if an adult) or the parent/guardian if the catechumen is a minor (see sample).**
- **Sponsor/Godparent/Proxy certificate(s) or affidavits (see sample).**
- **Any permission from the home Pastor to baptize a child outside the parish boundaries should be sought.**

The Director of Religious Education is to gather all the necessary paperwork. If the DRE does not record the Sacraments, they are to provide the information needed to the registrar in an orderly fashion.

Copies of birth and Baptism certificates should be kept on file (digital or physical) for future registration in parish faith formation programs. Directors of Religious Education should encourage parents of baptized children to register in faith formation classes no later than first grade.

The DRE/Registrar is to ensure:

- **Baptisms are recorded according to the Sacramental Register Handbook**
- **Certificates are issued**
- **Records are updated in the parish database**

If the DRE does not record the Sacraments, they are to provide pertinent information to the registrar in an orderly fashion.

Catechesis for Infant Baptism

The Pastor or the DRE will determine requirements for Infant Baptism classes. Catechesis for Infant Baptism (ages 0-6) is directed to adults (parents and/or godparents).

It is advisable to have a rehearsal, or at least review the Rite of Baptism, with parents before the ceremony.

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.

Opportunities should be presented to help young families live the faith and find support in their home parish. Such opportunities may include:

- Visits by an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for women on bed rest or after childbirth (and grief or post-partum ministry if needed)
- Parent/Child groups, Family fun days, etc.
- Nursery care and Infant/Toddler programs
- Faith Resources in the "Cry room"
- Vacation Bible School
- Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten

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.

Special Circumstances

Emergency Baptisms

Children baptized in an emergency will need information to be gathered to record the Sacrament. If the Ritual of Baptism is later supplied at the home parish, then missed Baptism Classes can be attended.

If the family needs pastoral ministry (e.g., for a premature child, a child with disabilities, etc.) then other ministries should be notified to reach out to the family to offer charity and prayer.

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 parents should undergo the same formation as birth parents. **The Sacrament should be recorded according to the Arlington Diocese Sacramental Register Handbook.**

If the parish has an Adoption Ministry, families should be encouraged to participate.

Children presented for Baptism by persons of the same sex

These cases are to be presented to the Pastor, so he may address the situation.

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 have arrangements made 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.**

Sample Baptismal Register Information Form

NAME OF BAPTIZED: _____

LAST First Middle

Date of Birth: _____ City/State of Birth: _____ Sex: _____

Date of Baptism: _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Father's Religion: _____

Mother's Full Maiden Name: _____

Mother's Religion: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ Zip Code: _____

Father's Telephone #: _____ Mother's Telephone #: _____

Father's E-mail: _____

Mother's E-mail: _____

Godfather or Christian witness (male) _____

Godmother or Christian witness's Religion (female): _____

Proxy's Name & Religion (if applicable): _____

Note: One of your godparents must be Catholic. Proxy for: _____

Has the child been privately baptized (due to an emergency)? _____ Where? _____

- Yes, I am a registered parishioner (attach verified, up-to-date copy of parish registration).
- Yes, I have attached a certificate of live birth or a birth certificate (required if the child is age 7+).
- Yes, I have attached godparent/sponsor certificates or affidavits of both the godfather and godmother (or Christian witness, or proxy).

I verify this information to be accurate, and I consent to the Baptism: _____

Signature of baptized/parent/guardian

This section is to be completed by the celebrant and returned to the Recorder of Sacraments:	
Celebrant: _____	Date: _____
Special Circumstances:	
<input type="radio"/> Conditional Baptism	
<input type="radio"/> Emergency Baptism (with / without Emergency Confirmation)	
<input type="radio"/> Supplied the Rites of Baptism dated: _____ by: _____	
<input type="radio"/> Ritual Ascription to: _____ (send notification)	
<input type="radio"/> Adult Baptism – Age 7+ (with / without Communion; with / without Confirmation)	
<input type="radio"/> Other Notations (e.g., Marriage, Death)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate sent	<input type="checkbox"/> Baptized added to family in parish database, including Baptism information

Sponsors or Godparents

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

It is preferred (and the norm) to have a Catholic godfather and a Catholic godmother; two practicing Catholics of the opposite sex. The requirements for a Catholic godparent or sponsor are listed below. Every sponsor and/or godparent must provide a sponsor certificate or affidavit, signed by their home Pastor.

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

- **Be designated by the catechumen/candidate (or parents/guardians of a minor), 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.**
- **Not be the father or mother of the one to be Baptized. Sponsors for OCIA may include a spouse or fiancé.**

Christian Witnesses

Parents may choose to have a Catholic godparent and a Christian witness (so long as they are of the opposite sex). **A person baptized into 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. A fallen away Catholic (including a baptized non-catechized Catholic) may not serve as the Christian Witness.**

A Christian witness is to:

- **Be designated by the catechumen/candidate (or parents/guardians of a minor).**
- **Provide evidence of their Baptism by means of a baptismal certificate, letter from their pastor, or a signed and witnessed affidavit (sample provided below).**

Proxies

If the Sponsor/Godparent cannot be present for the rite, a proxy may be chosen by the baptismal candidate (if they are above the age of reason), their parent (if they are a minor), or their pastor/his delegate. The proxy stands in the place of the absent Godparent (and is also recorded in the Baptismal Register). **The Proxy must also fulfill the above-noted requirements of a Sponsor/Godparent. The Proxy must provide a sponsor certificate/affidavit, signed by their home pastor (or in cases of imminent need, witnessed by the clergy of the parish of celebration). A parent may act as a proxy for a sponsor or godparent at their child's Confirmation, but not at their child's Baptism.**

Sample Baptism Sponsor/Proxy Affidavit

I, _____ will be the Sponsor/Proxy
for the Baptism of _____ (Person to be baptized)
at _____ (Catholic Church name)
in _____ (City), _____ (State).

According to Diocesan regulations and Canon Law (872-874), I meet the following qualifications:

- I am a practicing Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation.
- If I am married, my (present) marriage is a valid Catholic marriage.
- As a practicing Catholic, I will receive Communion at the Mass.
- I am at least 16 years old.
- I am not the mother or father of the candidate.
- I have every intention of fulfilling my role as Sponsor or Proxy.

I am serving as:

- Sponsor.
- Proxy (must not be the parent).

I am an active registered member of _____ Catholic Church
in _____ (City and State). In accepting the
role as Sponsor or Proxy, I hereby testify that I meet all the requirements to be a Sponsor or Proxy.

Sponsor/Proxy Signature
Date:

Priest's Signature (and seal)
Date:

Sample Baptism Christian Witness Affidavit

I, _____ will be the Christian Witness

for the Baptism of _____ (Person to be baptized)

at _____ (Catholic Church name)

in _____ (City), _____ (State).

According to Diocesan regulations and Canon Law (872-874), I meet the following qualifications:

- I have was baptized at: _____
- I am a practicing Christian.
- I was not baptized Catholic.
- I am at least 16 years old.
- I am not the mother or father of the infant to be baptized.
- I have every intention of fulfilling my role as Christian Witness.

I am serving as:

- Christian Witness of the Baptism

Christian Witness Signature

Date:

Received by:

Date:

B. Confirmation

Quick Reference

Required:	Suggested/Optional:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Birth Certificate and Baptism Certificate (should be on file) · Reception of First Penance and Eucharist · Confirmation Register Information Form (verify information with Birth Certificate; if names or parents are different, then pursue necessary legal documentation) · Sponsor/Proxy Certificate/Affidavit · 2-year Sacrament Preparation, including study of Salvation History (See Standards of Learning). · Confirmation Retreat · To receive Confirmation, the candidate is to be in the state of grace – opportunity for Confession is to be provided before Confirmation. <p>Record Sacrament in the Confirmation Register according to Sacramental Register Handbook, and record notation in the Baptismal Register (or send notification to parish of Baptism); issue Confirmation Certificate.</p> <p><i>Suggestion: Return Sacramental Records to individual/family, including Birth and Baptismal Certificates.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Confirmation Rehearsal (with Confessions available) · Service Hours (e.g., Works of Mercy) · Saint Report · Letter to Pastor/Bishop requesting Sacrament · Assimilation into Youth Ministry Program · Student interviews

Overview

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 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.

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. 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. A parent or a spouse may act as proxy for a sponsor at Confirmation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is recorded in the parish Confirmation Register according to the Arlington Diocese Sacramental Register Handbook.

Administration

The DRE should coordinate classes (these may be part of the Religious Education program or in addition to grade-appropriate classes) and order the supplies necessary for Confirmation (as needed). These supplies include:

- Texts/Catechetical Materials
- Retreat/Reception Supplies
- Robes (if supplied by the parish)
- Confirmation Register Information Forms
- Sponsor Affidavits/Certificates
- Confirmation Certificates
- Confirmation Gifts (if supplied by the parish)
- Book at Photographer (optional)

All paperwork must be received before scheduling a Confirmation. This paperwork includes:

- **A birth certificate**
- **A Baptism certificate**
- **Verification of reception of First Penance and First Holy Communion**
- **Confirmation Register Information Form, verified by the candidate (if an adult) or the parent/guardian if the candidate is a minor (see sample)**
- **Sponsor/Proxy certificate(s) or affidavits (see sample)**
 - **Sponsor Certificates are required for parishioners of your home parish**
- **Any permission from the home Pastor to confirm a child outside the parish boundaries should be sought**
- **Any dispensations needed for a valid Confirmation**

The DRE/Registrar is to ensure:

- **Confirmations are recorded according to the Sacramental Register Handbook**
- **Notifications sent to parishes of Baptism**
- **Certificates are issued**
- **Records are updated in the parish database**

If the DRE does not record the Sacraments, they are to provide pertinent information to the registrar in an orderly fashion.

Catechesis for Confirmation

For candidates to receive Confirmation, they must have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation. Sacrament Preparation in the Diocese of Arlington must include two years and study of Salvation History. 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. Please refer to the Elementary Standards of Learning, including the section on Scripture.

Catechesis for the Sacrament of Confirmation:

- Helps the candidate firmly believe in Christ, as Lord and Savior.
- Helps the candidate 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.
- 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). A rehearsal is required.

Confirmation Name

In the 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.

Confirmation Retreat

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

Special Circumstances

A Woman Pregnant out of Wedlock

In the case of a young woman who is pregnant out of wedlock and who wishes to receive the Sacraments of the Church, the individual may 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.

A Candidate who does not wish to be Confirmed

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

Catholic High School Students (off-Cycle) Confirmation

High School students (above the age of the parish confirmation class, which is usually grade 8 or 9) normally do not participate in the Confirmation ceremony for parish youths. They are to receive Confirmation with adults at the Cathedral (usually at Pentecost).

The exception to the norm is for them to receive Confirmation at the Easter Vigil (or another suitable time), in which case delegation must be received for the priest to administer the Sacrament. Whenever a priest Confirms a Baptized Catholic, delegation must be first be attained, except in cases of true emergency.

Adult Confirmation

Adults do not participate in the Confirmation ceremony for parish youths; they will normally receive Confirmation with adults at the Cathedral (usually at Pentecost).

The exception to the norm is for them to receive Confirmation at the Easter Vigil (or another suitable time), in which case delegation must be received for the priest to administer the Sacrament. Whenever a priest Confirms a Baptized Catholic, delegation must be first be attained, except in cases of true emergency.

Confirmation at the Cathedral (Catholic Adults and High School students, see above.)

Adult/Youth Confirmations are coordinated by the Office of Divine Worship. Each year, Pastors/Directors of Religious Education receive an application package.

Each application must be recommended by their Pastor (verifying their readiness for the Sacrament). The DRE should coordinate Adult Confirmation Classes and assist with gathering the correct paperwork, including:

- Birth Certificate
- Recently issued Baptism Certificate (within 6 months of celebration)
- Sponsor Certificate

- Marriage Certificate if Convalidation occurs within 6 months (and is not notated on the Baptism Certificate)
- Application Form
- Pastor Recommendation

Permission for Confirmations to occur outside the parish or diocese

It is the Bishop's desire that all candidates receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in their home parish. This practice emphasizes the ecclesial dimension of the Sacrament of Confirmation as a celebration for the whole Church and parish community, not merely the candidate and/or family alone.

- **Permission for celebration *outside the home parish but within the diocese* is to be granted by the home Pastor to the parish of celebration, and proof of preparation from the home parish office of religious education must verify readiness to receive the Sacrament.**

Delegation from the Bishop is required for Confirmation to be celebrated outside the diocese.

The Bishop is willing to consider requests for this delegation on a case-by-case bases, but only under the following conditions:

1. The candidate must be at least the standard diocesan age of Confirmation, having completed 14 years of age.
2. There must be some pastoral reason for making an exception, such as:
 - a. a long-standing pastoral connection to a parish outside the diocese
 - b. a long-standing pastoral or familial relationship with the celebrant
 - c. a reasonable hardship for family members to travel to the parish celebration
3. A request for an exception should be made by the pastor (not by the family or individual candidate) directly to me in writing, in which he explains well why I should consider it.

Sample Confirmation Register Information Form

NAME: _____

LAST

First

Middle

Date of Birth: _____ Age at Confirmation: _____

City and State of Birth: _____

Church of Baptism: _____

City/State of Church of Baptism: _____

Date of Baptism: _____

Residence/Address: _____

_____ Telephone: _____

Church and Year of First Eucharist: _____

PATRON SAINT: _____

FATHER'S NAME: _____

LAST

FIRST

MIDDLE

MOTHER'S NAME: _____

MAIDEN

FIRST

MIDDLE

SPONSOR'S NAME: _____

LAST

FIRST

MIDDLE

Will a Proxy stand in for the Sponsor? YES NO

PROXY'S NAME: _____

LAST

FIRST

MIDDLE

- Yes! I have attached a birth certificate (if not already on file).
 - Yes! I have attached a Baptism certificate (recently issued if age 16 or older).
 - Yes! I have attached my Sponsor's certificate or affidavit.
 - Yes! I have attached a Sponsor's certificate or affidavit for my Proxy (if needed).
- I verify that my child has not already been Confirmed and I give permission for my child to be Confirmed.

_____ (Parent Signature)

_____ (Date)

Date of Confirmation: _____ Minister: _____ Bapt. Reg. Pg: _____

Certificate made and sent

Notation in Baptismal Register/Sent

Update parish database

Sample Confirmation Sponsor/Proxy Affidavit

I, _____ will be the Sponsor/Proxy
for the Confirmation of _____ (Confirmation Candidate)
at _____ (Church name)
in _____ (City), _____ (State).

According to Diocesan regulations and Canon Law, I meet the following qualifications:

- I am a practicing Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation.
- If I am married, my (present) marriage is a valid Catholic marriage.
- As a practicing Catholic, I will receive Communion at the Mass.
- I am at least 16 years old.
- I am not the mother or father of the candidate.
- I have every intention of fulfilling my role as Sponsor or Proxy.

I am serving as:

- Sponsor.
- Proxy (may be the parent).

I am an active registered member of _____ Catholic Church in _____ (City and State). In accepting the role as Sponsor or Proxy, I hereby testify that I meet all the requirements to be a Sponsor or Proxy.

Sponsor/Proxy Signature

Date:

Priest's Signature (and seal)

Date:

Sample Letter Requesting Delegation for Confirmation

Date

Most Reverend BISHOP NAME
The Bishop of Arlington
200 North Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Most Reverend BISHOP NAME,

I am writing to you to request Delegation for the Sacrament of Confirmation for NAME who was born DOB and Baptized at NAME OF CHURCH in CITY, STATE on DATE OF BAPTISM and received the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist on DATE OF FHC at NAME OF CHURCH.

NAME has been formed in the faith. She/He has participated in the requirements for CONFIRMATION. REASON FOR DELEGATION.

Therefore, I am requesting Delegation for CONFIRMATION on DATE at NAME OF CHURCH by PRIEST CELEBRATING CONFIRMATION.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature of Pastor
Pastor

Signature of NAME
Director of Religious Education

Sample Notification of Confirmation

NOTIFICATION OF CONFIRMATION

From

_____ Catholic Church

located at:

in _____ City, _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Name: _____ Sex: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Date of Baptism:** _____

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Baptized in your Church (Name): _____

located at: _____

in _____ City, _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Contracted the Sacrament of Confirmation

on _____ (date).

Celebrant/Notations:

Yes, I have received your notice and recorded notation in the Baptismal Register

on _____ (date).

_____ (Signature)

C. First Holy Communion

Quick Reference

Required:	Suggested/Optional:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth Certificate and Baptism Certificate • First Communion Register Information Form (verify information with Birth Certificate; if names or parents are different, then pursue necessary legal documentation) • First Confession before First Communion • 2-year Sacrament Preparation, see Standards of Learning. <p>Record Sacrament in First Communion Register according to the Sacramental Register Handbook, issue First Communion Certificate.</p> <p><i>Suggestion: Keep a copy of the Birth Certificate, Baptism, and First Communion Certificate on file for Confirmation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsal of First Penance • First Holy Communion retreats/workshops • First Holy Communion Rehearsal (with Confessions available)

Overview

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).

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

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

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).

Administration

The DRE should coordinate classes (these may be part of the Religious Education program or in addition to grade-appropriate classes) and order that supplies necessary for First Communion (as needed). These supplies include:

- Texts/Catechetical Materials
- Retreat Supplies
- First Communion Gifts (if supplied by the parish)
- First Communion Certificates
- Book at Photographer (optional)

All paperwork must be received before scheduling First Communion. This paperwork includes:

- **A birth certificate**
- **A Baptism certificate**
- **First Communion Register Information Form, verified by the student (if an adult) or the parent/guardian if the student is a minor (see sample)**
- **Any permission from the home Pastor for a child outside the parish boundaries to receive First Communion should be sought**

The DRE/Registrar is to ensure:

- **First Communions are recorded according to the Sacramental Register Handbook**
- **Notifications sent to parishes of Baptism**
- **Records are updated in the parish database**

If the DRE does not record the Sacraments, they are to provide the records to the registrar in an orderly fashion.

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. Please refer to the Elementary Standards of Learning.

Church Law presumes that First Communicants have reached the use of reason at age seven, and make their First Confession before First Communion (Canon 914).

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.
- Teaches that “the Holy Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Christ” and that “what appears to be bread and wine are actually His living Body” (NDC 122).
- Helps children to participate actively and consciously in the Mass.
- Helps children to receive Christ’s Body and Blood, Soul, and Divinity in an informed and reverent manner.

A First Communion rehearsal is encouraged, and a proximate opportunity for first communicants and their families to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be provided so that all may worthily receive the Eucharist at the First Communion Mass.

D. Penance and Reconciliation

Quick Reference

Required:	Suggested/Optional:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Birth Certificate and Baptism Certificate · First Communion Register Information Form · First Confession before First Communion · 2-year Sacrament Preparation <p>DO NOT record First Confession in a Sacramental Register.</p> <p>DO NOT issue a First Confession Certificate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · First Penance retreats/workshops · Rehearsal

Overview

For children to receive Reconciliation, 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. Please refer to the Elementary Standards of Learning.

Church Law presumes that a child reaches the use of reason at age seven. 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).

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is not recorded in a parish register. No certificate is to be given.

Administration

The DRE should coordinate classes (these may be part of the Religious Education program or in addition to grade-appropriate classes) and order the supplies necessary for Penance (as needed). These supplies include:

- Texts/Catechetical Materials
- Retreat/Workshop Supplies
- First Confession Gifts (if supplied by the parish)
- Coordinate Penance service and stipends

All paperwork must be received before scheduling a Confession. This paperwork includes:

- **A birth certificate**
- **A Baptism certificate**
- **First Communion Register Information Form, verified by the student (if an adult) or the parent/guardian if the student is a minor (see sample)**

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

- Acknowledge God's unconditional love for us.
- 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.
- Turn to Christ and the Church for Sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Understand that "Sacramental Confession is a means offered to 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.
- Understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation, including memorizing the format so 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).**

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

E. Off-Cycle Sacraments

Catholic children sometimes do not participate in religious education at a young age, and they do not receive First Penance/Eucharist in second grade. In the Diocese of Arlington, Sacrament Preparation is a two-year process.

In these cases, children may either:

- 1) Participate in a two-year special Sacraments preparation class, or**
- 2) Be placed in their regular grade class plus Sacraments preparation classes.**

Some parishes find their programs to be primarily off-cycle Sacrament Preparation. In these cases, we recommend two years preparation for each Sacrament: Baptism (if needed – otherwise, Salvation History), Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

When Catholic children present themselves for Confirmation, who have not had any religious instruction since their first Communion, it is recommended that their Confirmation preparation last three years, to include: Salvation History, Catechism, and Sacrament Preparation.

Those above the age of reason (7) and who are baptized Catholic must be confirmed by a Bishop or delegation must be obtained for the parish priest to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Curriculum

The choice of materials to be taught is at the discretion of the Director of Religious Education. It is suggested this curriculum be modelled on the OCIA program.

When placing children, the Standards of Learning may be helpful to assess the knowledge of the child. It is also important to consider the social situation of the child. For example, a third-grade child could be placed in a second-grade class, but a seventh-grade child could not.

Administration

The DRE should coordinate classes (these may be part of the Religious Education program or in addition to grade-appropriate classes) and order the supplies necessary for the Sacraments (as needed). These supplies include:

- Texts/Catechetical Materials
- Retreat/Workshop Supplies
- Gifts (if supplied by the parish)
- Sacrament Certificates

All paperwork must be received before scheduling a Sacrament(s). This paperwork includes:

- **A birth certificate**
- **A Baptism certificate (if the child is age 7+ and unbaptized, see OCIA)**
- **First Communion Register Information Form, verified by parent/guardian if the student is a minor (see sample)**
- **Any permission from the home Pastor for a child outside the parish boundaries to receive Sacraments.**

F. The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA, formerly 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 and 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). They must be adequately trained in the truths of the faith (Scripture and Tradition) 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 OCIA program, which offers options for catechumens (unbaptized persons), candidates (validly baptized persons), and combined groups. The program may be adapted for children, for those with special circumstances and learning needs, or for baptized but uncatechized Catholics.

The program itself consists of four stages (1-4) and their corresponding rites:

1. Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

*Rite of Entrance/Rite of Welcoming/Combined Rites of Entrance and Welcoming
(Catechumens/Candidates/Both)*

2. Period of the Catechumenate

The Rite of Sending and Rite of Election (Adult Catechumens only; our diocese does not celebrate a combined rite with Rite of Recognition with Candidates)

3. Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Penitential Rite (2nd Sunday of Lent – Candidates)

1st Scrutiny (3rd Sunday of Lent – Catechumens)

Handing On of the Creed (week following 1st Scrutiny – Catechumens)

2nd Scrutiny (4th Sunday of Lent – Catechumens)

3rd Scrutiny (5th Sunday of Lent – Catechumens)

Handing On of the Lord's Prayer (week following 3rd Scrutiny – Catechumens)

Rites of Immediate Preparation (Holy Saturday – Catechumens)

Easter Vigil and Reception in the Church (Catechumens and Candidates)

4. Period of Mystagogy

Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate will vary in length based on the individual, but is in addition to the length of time for the Catechumenate. It is a time to develop initial conversion through evangelization. **Participants are to be led through Scripture**, prayer, and friendly conversation to an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ as the fullness of God's revelation.

Early in this process, a personal interview with each catechumen and candidate should be conducted to hear their “first faith” and to determine sacramental status, any previous Church affiliation, and if there are any marriage issues/impediments that need to be resolved before their eventual celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

It is necessary to gather both the birth certificate of the inquirer, as well as any marriage licenses/declarations of divorce/death certificates of spouse(s).

If the inquirer was baptized, a copy of the Baptism certificate or proof of Baptism must be provided to the Church.

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 and/or convalidation is pending, they may not celebrate the Rite of Election or receive the Sacraments of the Church until they are free to enter a canonical marriage.**

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 Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, the inquirer should be assisted in identifying a qualified sponsor (see Children’s Sacraments for Sponsor qualifications), who can accompany them in their faith journey.

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

Period of Catechumenate

Upon entry into the catechumenate, catechumens incur the following obligations:

- 1. They are to participate in the Liturgy of the Word, preferably on Sundays and other holy days of obligation, with the community if possible (see OCIA 81). Catechumens are to be dismissed from the liturgical assembly, at least on Sundays, after the Homily and before the Creed to reflection the Word of God just proclaimed;**

2. **They will continually purify their motivations for Baptism, live an upright life, and be ready to witness to their conversion to Christ, as they see to grow in their knowledge of and assent to what the Church believes and teaches (CIC cc. 206 and 865#1).**

In addition, catechumens may:

1. Participate in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church, especially works of mercy;
2. Take advantage of opportunities given to Catholic parents in the parish or region concerning the enrollment of their children in Catholic schools;
3. Be buried in a Catholic cemetery.

Catechumens may not proclaim the Word of God or serve at the altar during the liturgy.

Statute 6 of the National Statutes on the Catechumenate and the RCIA notes that **the Period of 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.”

Norm 6 of the National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults states that the formation of catechumens is to be comprehensive. It is to be:

1. Suited to the liturgical year and supported by the Church’s liturgy;
2. Rooted in Sacred Scripture, the truths of Catholic doctrine and the moral life, and aided by catechetical texts, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, texts based upon that Catechism, such as the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, and other approved texts by the local ordinary;
3. Exercised in works of service and charity (OCIA 75).

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. The Bishop usually presides at this rite, and all adult 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, where it is signed by the Bishop (or his delegate). The Book of the Elect returns to the parish and is to be kept with the Sacramental Registers.

Period of 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.

As proximate preparation for initiation into the Church, the Elect, as well as those who assist them and participate in the celebration of the Easter Vigil with them, are encouraged to keep and extend the paschal fast of Good Friday, as determined by CIC canon 1251, throughout the day of Holy Saturday until the end of the Vigil itself (see Sacrosanctum Concilium 110, and OCIA 185/1).

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). Those needing a convalidation should have it celebrated before reception into the Church, or immediately after the Easter Vigil.

All Sacraments are to be recorded soon as possible after reception. All are to be recorded as indicated in the Sacramental Register Handbook.

Period of Mystagogy

“Mystagogy” means “*learning about the mysteries*”. It is an initiation into God’s self-revelation. **It is a process of growing in the faith through prayer, learning and practicing with other believers.**

Sacramentum Caritatis, Section 64, is entitled ‘Mystagogical Catechesis’. There it says, “The Church’s great liturgical tradition teaches us that fruitful participation in the liturgy requires that one be personally conformed to the mystery being celebrated, offering one’s life to God in unity with the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the whole world... The mature fruit of mystagogy is an awareness that one’s life is being progressively transformed by the holy mysteries being celebrated. The aim of all Christian education, moreover, is to train the believer in an adult faith that can make him a “new creation”, capable of bearing witness in his surroundings to the Christian hope that inspires him.’ 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.

Following the Period of Mystagogy, and to the extent possible, neophytes may benefit from meeting periodically to deepen their Christian formation, especially through opportunities that enhance their participation in the life of the parish or similar community (see OCIA 244 and 235). After initiation, only previous unbaptized persons are to be called converts.

Reception of Individuals Baptized in Another Church or Ecclesial Community (Protestants)

Generally speaking, for a Baptism to be valid the following conditions are required:

- Consent of the person to be baptized; for minors age 6 and below, the desire of the parent or legal guardian is sufficient. For a person above the age of 6, that person must give their consent to be validly baptized.
- The water used has to be recognizable as water, so dirty water or a liquid that contains water and other ingredients (like soda, wine, beer, or saliva) means that it's not a valid baptism.
- The person who is being baptized cannot baptize themselves; it must be done by another person.
- The water has to flow three times upon the head of the baptized while saying, "[Name], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The pouring of the water must happen simultaneously with those words, and the person pouring the water must be the same person who says the words.
- The flowing water can be a full immersion in water, or pouring the water over the head of the person receiving baptism. Also, the water has to flow at least a little, so that it symbolizes cleansing, whereas still water doesn't carry that same symbolic meaning (the water cannot be traced as a cross on the forehead).
- In the case of an emergency where the unbaptized person is in danger of death, anyone can baptize that person so long as the conditions above are met. If the newly baptized person survives, then that person should seek out a Catholic priest to complete the rest of the Rite of Baptism.

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).

The following are presumed to have valid baptisms:

- All Eastern non-Catholics (including Orthodox churches), Baptisms/Confirmation recognized
- Episcopalians
- Lutherans
- Methodists

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.

Baptisms done by full immersion, where the individual is put under the water only once are valid but illicit.

If there is a doubt regarding the validity of a baptism, research must be done to investigate the validity of baptism, including visiting the parish of baptism website, calling the parish to ask how baptisms are done/have been done, reading the rites books.

If after an initial investigation, there is serious doubt of the validity of baptism, then a conditional Baptism must be performed (as soon as possible, and before the reception of other Sacraments). Confirmation is to be conferred at the same time.

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. 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.
- 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 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 according to the Sacramental Register Handbook.

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. **You will need to contact the Tribunal for assistance in every case.**

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.

In all Sui Iuris cases, when Eastern Catholic and Orthodox individuals are to receive sacraments in a Latin Rite Church, contact the Chancellor for assistance.

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

Minors above the age of Reasons

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.

- 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 Protestant 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.**
 - **In these cases, record the protestant baptism in the Baptismal Register, with a notation that their parent(s) are Catholic and will raise the child in the Faith. When the child makes First Communion, this will serve as their profession of faith and notation should be added to the Baptismal Register.**
 - **These children will receive faith formation with their peer group.**

 - 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 of Holy Communion will serve as the Profession of Faith. Of course, at Confirmation,

the Baptismal promises are renewed by the Candidate, thereby signifying again a Profession of Faith.

Baptized 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 (ages 7-16)**, they should be catechized for the reception of First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation. Such children may enter an appropriate special (off-cycle) 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 outlined in the Sacramental Register Handbook.

Adult Confirmation for Baptized Catholics (See Confirmation)

Sample OCIA Inquiry/Intake Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (h/c) _____ (w) _____

Email: _____

Please circle your answer: either yes or no.

Sacramental Background

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Have you been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you been baptized in a non-Catholic Christian Church? | Yes | No |
| 3. Have you received First Holy Communion in the Catholic Church? | Yes | No |
| 4. Have you received the Sacrament of Penance in the Catholic Church? | Yes | No |
| 5. Have you been Confirmed in the Catholic Church? | Yes | No |

Marital & Family Status

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Have you ever been married? | Yes | No |
| If no, then you may go to question 7 below. | | |
| 2. Is this your first marriage? | Yes | No |
| 3. Is this your spouse's first marriage? | Yes | No |
| 4. Were you and your present spouse Married in the Catholic Church? | Yes | No |
| 5. Is your spouse Catholic? | Yes | No |
| 6. Are you presently (or have you been) separated or divorced? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you have children? | Yes | No |
| 8. If you have children, are the children baptized? | Yes | No |
| 9. Have you ever received instruction in the Catholic Faith before? | Yes | No |
| 10. Have you already had an interview with a priest? | Yes | No |
| 11. Is it your intent to join the Catholic Church? | Yes | No |
| 12. Have you chosen a Sponsor/Godparent? | Yes | No |

Signature

Date

Sample Sacramental Registers Information Form for OCIA

NAME OF NEW CATHOLIC _____
LAST/MAIDEN First Middle

Residence/Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Date of Birth: _____ City/State of Birth: _____ Sex: _____

Age at time of reception of sacraments: _____ This person is a minor (age 17 or younger).

Father's Full Name: _____

Father's Religion: _____

Mother's Full Maiden Name: _____

Mother's Religion: _____

Sponsor: _____ Certificate Received: Yes

Proxy (if applicable): _____ Certificate Received: Yes

Previously unbaptized

Baptized Protestant - Certificate Received: Yes

Baptized Catholic (delegation needed for Confirmation) – Baptism Certificate Rec'd: Yes

Date of Baptism: _____

Church of Baptism: _____

Church of Baptism City: _____ State: _____

If previously baptized, Date of Profession of Faith: _____

Date of Confirmation: _____

Confirmation Name: _____

Date of First Holy Communion: _____

Celebrant of sacraments: _____

This Person is married. Spouse: _____ Certificate Received: Yes

Married Name: _____

Civil Marriage (date and location): _____ Canonically Valid Yes

Convalidation Date: _____ Celebrant: _____

Other notations: _____

For Office Use:

- Catholic Marriage that was celebrated (e.g., Convalidation) recorded in Marriage Register
- Confirmation recorded in Confirmation Register
- First Communion recorded in First Communion Register
- Baptism and/or Profession of Faith recorded in Baptism Register and
 - Notation of Confirmation (if previously baptized Catholic, send notification to parish of Baptism)
 - Notation of First Communion (if previously baptized Catholic, send notification to parish of Baptism)
 - Notation of Marriage (if a convalidation has occurred, send notification to Catholic spouse's parish of Baptism)
- Certificate(s) made and sent
- Add to parish database

Sample Letter Requesting Delegation for Confirmation at Easter Vigil

DATE

Most. Rev. BISHOP NAME

200 N. Glebe Rd., Suite 914

Arlington, VA 22203

Your Excellency:

I am writing on behalf of the OCIA program at CHURCH NAME. The following named individuals were baptized Roman Catholic, and are in our OCIA program, desiring to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation (and First Holy Communion). They have been properly catechized and are well-disposed to receive these Sacraments. These Catholic Candidates include:

LIST NAMES HERE

I write to you, requesting the faculties for NAME OF PRIEST, to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil at NAME OF CHURCH for these individuals. I thank you for your time and consideration of our request. Please contact me should you need further documentation.

Respectfully yours,

NAME, Phone Number

Director of Religious Education

I acknowledge that the above-named Candidates have received proper formation and are ready to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. I request the faculties to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation on Easter Vigil at CHURCH NAME to those named above.

Sincerely yours,

NAME OF PRIEST

Sample Letter Requesting Delegation for Confirmation

Date

Most Reverend BISHOP NAME
The Bishop of Arlington
200 North Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Most Reverend BISHOP NAME,

I am writing to you to request Delegation for the Sacrament of Confirmation for NAME who was born DOB and Baptized at NAME OF CHURCH in CITY, STATE on DATE OF BAPTISM and received the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist on DATE OF FHC at NAME OF CHURCH.

NAME has been formed in the faith. She/He has participated in the requirements for CONFIRMATION. REASON FOR DELEGATION.

Therefore, I am requesting Delegation for CONFIRMATION on DATE at NAME OF CHURCH by PRIEST CELEBRATING CONFIRMATION.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature of Pastor
Pastor

Signature of NAME
Director of Religious Education

Tool to Evaluate Valid Baptisms

Was this person baptized? Yes or No *If No, then this person is a catechumen. You're done!*

If yes: What religion? _____

- **Obtain a copy of the baptismal record.**
- **If a baptismal record is not available, obtain an affidavit or evidence of Baptism.**

The following Baptisms are presumed valid:

- All Eastern Rite Catholics and Orthodox
 - *If baptized Eastern Non-Catholic or Orthodox, please contact the Tribunal for instructions.*
- Episcopalians
- Lutherans
- Methodists

Any other Baptism should be evaluated by means of:

1. Contacting the Church:

- Research their website
- Research in their rites book(s)
- Ask the minister how Baptisms are done/have been done

2. Interviewing Individual (or witness), asking:

a. Who baptized you? *You cannot baptize yourself.*

b. What year were you baptized? How old were you? Do you remember your Baptism?

Can a Baptismal Certificate be presented?

Can an affidavit be attained if a certificate cannot be obtained?

c. How did the Baptism occur?

- Was water used?
- Did you have a Baptism by immersion? Please describe this.
- Was the water poured over your head? How many times?
- Was a cross traced on your forehead?

Note: if flowing water was not used, it is not a valid Baptism due to absence of matter.

d. What words were said when you were baptized? The only correct form is:

Name. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Invalid baptisms with incorrect form may include the words:

- *We baptize*
- *In the name of the Creator/Redeemer/Sanctifier*
- *In the name of Jesus*

The words of baptism must be said at the same time as the pouring/immersion.

If there is doubt of a valid baptism after investigation, contact the Office of Divine Worship.