



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL FOR PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Preface

All in all, it can be taken here that catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.

CATECHESI TRADENDAE,
ON CATECHESIS IN OUR TIME, JOHN PAUL II

This Administrative Manual is designed to provide all Catechetical leaders with information concerning the conditions, best practices, and policies affecting the management of Faith Formation Programs within the Diocese of Brooklyn. All Catechetical Leaders should read, understand, and comply with the provisions of the administrative manual. It describes many of our shared responsibilities as leaders of programs within the diocese.

While every attempt has been made to create policies that allow for individual adaptation, the policies contained within reflect State of New York Law and the Safe Environment mandates of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

No administrative manual can anticipate every circumstance or question concerning policy that may arise. The Diocese of Brooklyn reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policy or portion of this manual from time to time as it seems appropriate. Questions about any policies contained in this manual should be directed to the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

May God grant us an abundant harvest as we labor in the vineyard of the Lord as good and faithful missionary disciples.



Very Reverend Joseph R. Gibino, STM, Ph.D.
Vicar for Evangelization and Catechesis

Introduction

Introduction

Welcome to the position of Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. On behalf of the entire Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis, we welcome you as collaborators in the catechetical vocation. Our prayer is that all faith formation programs are centers of excellence committed to providing a quality religious education for our Catholic children and their families. As such, we hold dear our shared commitment to Gospel values, the core teachings of the Church, and lived witness to the faith. Your role as the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education at (Parish) is integral to the success of our school in advancing the Church's mission of preaching, teaching, and evangelizing.

This Catechetical Leader Administrative Manual is provided to you by the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis to assist you in fulfilling your duties. It contains information regarding employment procedures, responsibilities, and benefits that pertain to you as a Catechetical Leader. It will answer questions you may have regarding the personnel practices of the diocese, and you are asked to familiarize yourself with its contents and to follow them.

The *Directory for Catechesis* (2020) consider the role of the Catechetical Vocation as:

Catechesis is an essential part of the broader process of renewal that the Church is called to bring about to be faithful to the command of Jesus Christ to proclaim always and everywhere his Gospel (cf Matt 28:19). Catechesis participates according to its own nature in the effort of evangelization, so that the faith may be supported by an ongoing maturation and express itself in a way of life that must characterize the very being of the disciple of Christ. Because of this, catechesis is related to the liturgy and charity in making evident the essential unity of the new life which springs forth from Baptism (§1).

Table of Content

Chapter 1 Page 5

Office Mission Statement and Essential Components

- 101 The Mission Statement of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis
- 102 Ten essential components
- 103 Local Religious Education Program Goals and Objectives

Chapter 2 Page 6

Faith Formation at the Diocesan Level

- 201 Diocesan Bishop
- 202 Vicar for Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis
- 203 Directors of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis
- 204 Leadership Team Within the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis
- 205 Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Committee

Chapter 3 Page 8

Religious Education at the Parish Level

- 301 Pastor and Parochial Vicar
- 302 Deacon
- 303 Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation/Religious Education
- 304 Parish Catechist
- 305 Catholic School/Academy Principal
- 306 Other Parish Religious Education Personnel

Chapter 4 Page 11

Community Relations

- 401 Rationale – Parish Community
- 402 Parental Involvements
- 403 Fees
- 404 Local Public Schools
- 405 Parent Handbooks

Chapter 5 Page 13

Student Records and Safety Concerns

- 501 Student Records
 - 501:1 Access to Records
 - 501:2 Statement of Record Retention

- 502 Attendance Register
- 503 Student Registration and the Permanent Record Card
- 504 Student Emergency Information
- 505 Student Discipline Records
- 506 Codes of Conduct (Behavior)
- 507 Health Concerns
- 508 Arrival and Dismissal
- 509 Traffic Safety
- 510 Release of students from the program
- 511 Student Accidents and Accident Reports
- 512 Insurance
- 513 Child lures Prevention
- 514 Child Protection Services
 - 514:1 Reporting

Chapter 6 Page 20

Instruction

- 601 Approved Calendar
- 602 Local Calendar
- 603 Program hourly requirements
- 604 Staff meetings
- 605 Emergencies
 - 605:1 Unscheduled Closings
 - 605:2 Fire Drills
 - 605:3 Knowledge of Emergency Procedures
 - 605:4 Chain of Command
 - 605:5 Crisis Management Plan for Religious Education
- 606 Curriculum
 - 606:1 Primary goal
 - 606:2 Guidelines
 - 606:3 Local Curriculum Development
 - 606:4 Family Life curriculum
- 607 Instructional arrangements
 - 607:1 Materials
 - 607:2 Copyright procedures
 - 607:3 Retreats and Field Trips
- 608 Evaluation of student progress
 - 608:1 Communicating Student Progress
 - 608:2 Documentation

Chapter 7 Page 24

Physical Plant

- 701 Building Arrangement Issues
- 702 Building Safety

CHAPTER 1

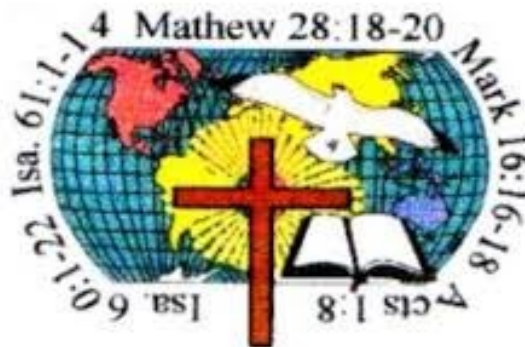
Office Mission Statement and Essential Components

101 The Mission Statement of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

The Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis in the Diocese of Brooklyn offers lifelong and comprehensive formation in the Catholic Faith to all persons so that they may become disciples of Jesus and witnesses to the Gospel. This mission, through servant leadership, is to promote faith formation for children, youth, adults, families, and all persons of special needs in a variety of settings in our multicultural and urban diocese. Through our ministry, we collaborate with other diocesan offices and agencies in forming people of faith to actively engage in the New Evangelization.

103 Local Religious Education Program Goals and Objectives

Each parish is unique and should be mindful of this diversity and consider the local needs. Each parish must develop a stated strategic plan for its religious education programs. Goals, objectives, and specific strategies to accomplish the goals of the local religious education programs should serve to further the mission of the Church which is to lead all to know and love Christ.



CHAPTER 2

Faith Formation at the Diocesan Level

201 Diocesan Bishop

Ultimate responsibility for faith formation and religious education in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn rests with the Diocesan Bishop, “herald of the faith” and authentic teacher. As such, the Diocesan Bishop offers direction and support to the ministry of faith formation through his leadership, his actions, and the work of his staff and Diocesan offices and agencies. Bishops are, “Beyond all others the ones primarily responsible for catechesis, the catechist par excellence.” As chief catechist in the Diocese, the Bishop is responsible for the total catechetical mission of the local Church.

202 Vicar for Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

The Vicar for Evangelization and Catechesis supervises the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese of Brooklyn. These include the programs for Faith Formation at all levels of parish life, Youth Ministry, Family Life Ministry and Pre-Cana, and the Right to Life Ministry. In collaboration with one another, the directors of these ministries provide initial and on-going formation in ministry for those serving in our parishes, schools, and academies. The Vicar serves as a communicator between the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and the Diocesan Bishop.

The Vicar for Evangelization and Catechesis is responsible also for effective advocacy and communication of the catechetical mission of Catholic education in Brooklyn and Queens. The Vicar oversees the Secretariat for Evangelization and Faith formation and assists pastors/administrators and catechetical leaders in furthering the catechetical mission of the Church in the Diocese. The Vicar is appointed by and accountable to the Diocesan Bishop.

203 Directors of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

The Directors are responsible for effective advocacy and communication of the catechetical mission of Catholic education in Brooklyn and Queens. The Directors oversee and assist Pastor/Administrator and Catechetical Leaders in furthering the catechetical mission of the Church. They are appointed by and accountable to the Diocesan Bishop and report to the Vicar.

204 Leadership Team Within the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

The Bishop does not minister alone. He works with his priests and those whom he appoints to assist him in this important work. He designates skilled and professional staff members, under the direction of the Vicar for Evangelization and Catechesis. In addition to general oversight, the Vicar with the leadership team of the Secretariat is responsible for the following areas:

- Adult Faith Formation
- Catechist Faith Formation
- Special Needs Faith Formation
- New Evangelization
- Parent Engagement
- Curriculum
- Childhood Faith Formation
- Adolescent and Young Adult Faith Formation
- Marriage and Family Life

205 Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Committee

The Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Committee is composed of representatives of the local community as well as members of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and other diocesan offices and agencies. It is responsible for identifying and expressing the goals and objectives of the office and formulating policies they deem necessary as suitable to achieve these objectives and goals. The Vicar of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis serves as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

CHAPTER 3

Religious Education at the Parish Level

301 Pastor and Parochial Vicar

The Pastor, by appointment of

the Bishop in accord with Canon Law, is invested with the responsibility for providing faith formation and religious education for those entrusted to his care. Thus, the Pastor/Administrator is the chief administrative officer of the total parish Faith Formation program. As such, he has the responsibility for setting and maintaining the spiritual tone of the parish. He is primarily responsible for seeing that the catechetical needs are articulated and met, and that appropriate leadership is available to serve the various needs of all age groups. The role of priests in the catechetical effort of the parish is an important source of leadership. Parochial Vicars exercise their leadership through their encouragement, their liturgical-sacramental ministry, and their involvement in planning, catechizing, and providing liturgical celebrations for the religious education programs, in collaboration with Catechetical Leaders.

The Pastor ensures that:

- Catechesis is emphasized in a way that provides age-appropriate opportunities for adults, youth, and children
- A total parish plan for catechesis is developed and implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership
- Catechesis for adults of all ages is a priority—adult formation should be provided in such a way that parishioners recognize it as the parish’s primary catechetical mission
- The catechesis of youth and young adults is situated within a comprehensive plan for youth ministry in the parish
- Catechists at all levels are well-formed and trained for the task.
- Catechetical formation is available for all language groups
- The baptismal catechumenate is a vital component in the organization of catechesis in the parish
- The catechumenate is an essential process in the parish, one that serves as the inspiration for all catechesis
- Couples asking for the sacrament of Matrimony receive a comprehensive marriage preparation, “by preaching, by catechetical instruction adapted to children, young people, and adults, indeed using the means of social communication” (Can. 1063).
- The faithful are instructed in the meaning of Christian marriage and the role of Christian spouses and parents (Can. 1063).
- The role of priests in the catechetical effort of the parish is a special source of leadership.

Priests exercise their leadership through their encouragement, liturgical/sacramental ministry, and involvement in planning, catechizing, and providing liturgical celebrations for the faith formation programs in collaboration with the DFF/CRE, as determined at the parish level.

302 Deacon

Deacons, under the guidance of their Pastor/Administrator and in collaboration with the priests and other members of the parish leadership also share in the catechetical mission of the parish through their preaching, teaching, and witness to Christian service. Their involvement in the catechetical mission of the parish is highly encouraged. The USCCB has highlighted two important aspects of the Deacons' ministry: marriage and family life and Evangelization. Both aspects of ministry are crucial for Faith Formation programs.

303 Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation/Religious Education

The Director of Faith Formation (DFF)/Religious Education (DRE) or Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) shares in the parish catechetical ministry and functions as a member of the parish leadership as designated by the Pastor/Administrator.

The DFF/DRE/CRE is responsible for the implementation of the total parish Faith Formation catechetical program and the coordination of the sacramental programs of both the school/academy and the religious education program. In this capacity, the DFF/DRE/CRE works in collaboration with the other parish leadership members: Parochial Vicars, Pastoral Associates, Principal(s), Deacon, Music Director, etc.

In as much as each parish is unique, the specific relationships need to be clarified locally by the Pastor/Administrator. The general focus is on mutual planning, support, and personal involvement. The DFF/DRE/CRE endeavors to keep the staff and parishioners informed about the parish religious education program, diocesan initiatives, and the Diocesan Strategic Plan. The DFF/DRE/CRE serves as a member of the parish pastoral council. In addition, the DRE/CRE interacts collaboratively with other parish organizations/societies.

304 Parish Catechist

The role of the catechist in assisting the Church to fulfill its responsibility to hand on the gift of Faith is most important. Indeed, the quality of the catechetical and pastoral activity is at risk if it does not rely on competent, trained, and well-formed personnel who are people of Faith.

All catechists must be at least eighteen years of age before being eligible to work in a parish program without direct supervision, appropriately trained according to diocesan norms, and practicing Catholics.

All catechists are to participate in the Diocesan Living and Leading by Faith Catechetical Leader and Catechist Faith Formation Program.

305 Catholic School/Academy Principal

The Catholic school/academy plays a critical role in realizing the goals of Catholic education.

Certain functions relating to catechesis are basic and relate directly to the internal development of the school community and are the principal's responsibility, assisted by the School/ Academy Religion Coordinator.

The school/academy is an integral part of the parish. Certain areas of its life call for collaborative efforts between the principal and the parish DFF/CRE. In all matters involving the teachers and/or the students in the Catholic school/academy related to the religious education programs, the DFF/CRE should be in dialogue with the principal. When programs affect both the school/academy and the religious education program, especially sacrament programs, the DFF/CRE and the principal should attempt to reach a consensus in their decision-making. The Pastor/Administrator is the final arbiter in situations where there is no obvious consensus.

All school/academy principals are responsible for providing each DFF/CRE, by October 15 of each year, a list of students who attend the school/academy from a particular parish.

306 Other Parish Religious Education Personnel

Parishes may employ other Faith formation Leaders to serve as Youth Minister, RCIA Coordinator, Adult Faith Formation Coordinator, Pastoral Associate, etc. These leaders share in the catechetical ministry of the parish and function as members of the parish leadership as designated by the Pastor. Written job scopes help identify and describe their responsibilities concerning the parish Faith formation programs and the area within which they exercise their pastoral and catechetical leadership role.

CHAPTER 4

Community Relations

401 Rationale – Parish Community

Parish Faith Formation programs do not operate in isolation but are an integral part of the parish community. A good relationship with this community enhances the effective operation of the religious education program and fosters opportunities for life-long faith formation.

402 Parental Involvements

Parents (hereinafter the term parents shall include legal guardians and legal custodians) are the primary religious witness of the faith to their children. The parish religious education program provides an organized curriculum to assist parents in developing a complete process of faith formation for their children. Parents work in partnership with the DFF/CRE and catechist because of a common interest in the faith formation of the child. This partnership is expressed in many ways, such as attendance at Sunday Mass, involvement in the spiritual and social life of the parish, and participation in and/or support of the parish religious education program activities. The Church places a high priority on the faith formation and religious education of adults; therefore, parents must be encouraged to participate in educational and spiritual activities to increase their knowledge and adherence to the faith. **The Eucharist is the center of our faith life and parents must realize that attendance at Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation is required.** Other parental responsibilities include, but are not limited to, attendance at parent meetings, developing family faith rituals and other evangelizing activities and experiences at home, and ongoing communication with the catechist and DFF/CRE.

403 Fees

An articulated and reasonable policy regarding registration fees and other program fees is a matter for local determination. Fees are determined by the DFF/CRE in consultation with the Pastor/Administrator. Every attempt should be made to itemize program fees before the spring program registration period. The policy for the collection of fees should be communicated to the parents before or at the time of registration and be included in the Parent Handbook. **However, no student should be refused religious education or sacramental preparation because of the inability to pay the fees.**

404 Local Public Schools

The DFF/CRE should keep lines of communication open with the public-school officials in the local school districts. Attendance at district meetings and participation in programs that benefit the students in the religious education programs are encouraged. Visits to the local public school to meet with the principal are encouraged as is the sharing of the program's annual calendar and schedule with the local public school.

Adherence to the Chancellor's Regulations for Released Time should be strictly observed.

Students in the released time program are issued a card, to be countersigned by their parent and addressed to the public-school principal, requesting the release of the student from school for purposes of religious instructions. The electronic document is available from the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

405 Parent Handbooks

The DFF/CRE will develop and disseminate a Parent Handbook that comprehensively outlines the rights and responsibilities of all persons in the religious education program. The handbook would include, among other things, the Mission Statement of the program as well as policies and procedures regarding attendance, discipline, emergencies, and the evaluation and reporting of student progress developed after careful review and consideration of this manual.



CHAPTER 5

Student Records and Safety Concerns

501 Student Records

All student records are the property of the parish and are strictly CONFIDENTIAL. The parish must designate and maintain an office in which the records are kept safely.

The DFF/CRE is responsible for maintaining all permanent records of students in the religious education program. The DFF/CRE is also responsible for the preparation, privacy, transcription, and dissemination of such records.

Parishes must use the standardized permanent record cards. The electronic document is available from the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

501:1 Access to Records

Parents have a right to receive copies of all their child's records. All persons, except appropriate parish program authorities, should be denied access without written parental permission or according to appropriate judicial process, i.e., court order, subpoena, etc.

502:2 Statement of Record Retention

All student permanent record card shall be maintained permanently in a safe location from the date the student leaves the program.

502 Attendance Register

An attendance register is maintained for each class by the catechist. It must be legible, updated, and include each student's record of both absences and tardiness. If attendance is maintained on the computer, a hard copy must also be kept. Computer records should be maintained in a secure "password" protected program. The Pastor/Administrator is responsible for the maintenance of the password. The attendance register is never taken from the parish premises. At the end of the year, the total number of absences and instances of tardiness is transferred to the student record. **Class Attendance Registers- (The register may become a legally significant document and therefore must be kept on file for a minimum of 6 years.)** The electronic document is available from the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

503 Student Registration and the Permanent Record Card

A single standard permanent record card shall be kept for each student enrolled in the religious education program. Student information is recorded at the time of registration and updated each year that the student is in the program.

Parents should present an original Baptismal certificate for the student at registration. Once this information is recorded on the record card, the original certificate is returned to the parent. Programs must keep a photocopy of the Baptismal certificate with the student's record card. The date of reception/initial reception of any sacrament should be recorded on the record card.

When a student transfers to another program, the DFF/CRE of the receiving program should request a copy of the record card before the student is placed in a class. The sending program retains the original record. **Student Permanent Record Card (provides student name, birth date, religion, sacramental history, attendance, etc.) Retain permanently. Student Files (registration**

forms, progress reports, emergency information and discipline records etc.) Retain five years. The electronic document is available from the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

504 Student Emergency Information

Emergency information is completed by the parent at the time of the student's initial registration in the program and updated annually. Any changes to this record are made in writing by the parent.

The electronic document is available from the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

505 Student Discipline Records

Student discipline records are viewed as internal documents to which only parents and appropriate parish program authorities have access. Discipline records are not sent with a copy of the student's permanent record card if a student transfers to another religious education program.

507 Codes of Conduct (Behavior)

Each religious education program should implement a code of conduct that reflects Christian values. This code of conduct should be reasonable, fair, compassionate, and of nature, which considers the developmental level of understanding and ability of the students. The goal of this code is to assist the students in understanding themselves as being made in the image of God and enabling them to develop into individuals who are self-disciplined and self-actualized.

This code of conduct should be published in communications to parents, students, and catechists so that all concerned know what is expected. Local handbooks are the preferred means of communication.

507:1 Student Considerations

1. All corporal punishment is not only unacceptable but is strictly forbidden, illegal, and punishable by law.
2. Adequate and proper supervision of students must be always maintained. Students should not be in classrooms, hallways, or other parts of the building unsupervised. **No student under the age of 18 may ever under any situation be left as a supervisor of any child. There must be a responsible adult with any child at all times, including hall or bathroom monitors.**
3. Instances of consistently inappropriate behavior should be communicated to the parents. Every effort should be made to work with the parents to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. The Pastor/Administrator is the final arbiter when mutually acceptable solutions are not achieved.

508 Health Concerns

At the time of registration, the DFF/CRE should request that the parent notify the DFF/ CRE of any pertinent medical conditions or health concerns impacting the student. This information should be shared with the catechist under applicable law.

At all times, only the parent of the child is allowed to dispense medicine of any type; this includes over the counter medications. The DFF/ CRE, catechist, and parent should make proper arrangements to be certain that the parent is available to administer any required medication as needed.

509 Arrival and Dismissal

Parents must be given information clearly stating the expected time of arrival and dismissal for the program and the procedures to follow. Parents should be told where the students are to meet the catechists, where they will be dismissed, and where they will be taken if no one meets the students at dismissal. Regard for student safety must be upheld while students are on school/church premises.

510 Traffic Safety

Before the opening of the school year, the DFF/CRE must be in contact with the local police regarding any necessary arrangements for the protection of the students during arrival and dismissal. Local police will be given a copy of the program's calendar and will be informed in advance about any changes in the schedule.

511 Release of students from the program

Students are expected to be in attendance for the full class session. If for any reason a student must leave class before the regular dismissal hour, a parent or an adult authorized by the parent must come to the religious education office, sign the student out of the program for the day, and accompany the student out of the building.

In instances where an authorized adult is escorting the student, such authorization must be in writing from the parent and presented to the DFF/CRE. In extreme emergency cases where such written authorization is not possible, a phone call directly from the parent to the DFF/CRE may constitute authorization.

Since no student of any age is ever to be dismissed from the building unescorted, except at regular dismissal time, a student may never be sent home for assignments, books, or for disciplinary reasons, or sent on errands for anyone.

512 Student Accidents and Accident Reports

In case of an accident, the DFF/CRE will contact the parent, or the individual identified on the student's emergency information. If the parent cannot be reached at the emergency number, the DFF/CRE should call 911 and follow police instructions. **A written accident report giving the date, time, circumstances, witnesses, and actions taken should be kept on file.**

513 Insurance

The parish is insured through the Peter Turner Insurance Company for claims arising out of any action about the Religious Education Program. **The Parish Services Corporation should be informed immediately of any accidents. The DFF/CRE should prepare an incident report on the form provided by the Parish Services Office. The report should be sent to the Director of Parish Services Corporation and a copy kept on file at the Parish.** It should be made clear to parents that the parish insurances do not cover injuries or medical expenses resulting from accidents in which no negligence is involved or alleged.

514 Child Lures Prevention

For children enrolled in Religious Education Programs, the Diocese provides safety awareness training. Child Lures Prevention is a program used to empower children to keep themselves safe from all predators who might harm them. **All Religious Education programs are required to present this program to every child, every year.** All parishes should have a copy of the program (DVDs and manual) in their possession. If a DFF does not have one or is not comfortable presenting the program, the Safe Environment Office has a list of Diocesan-trained presenters who can come in and present the program to the children. Once the program is completed, the DFF is required to send in a completed Child Lures Compliance Form to the Safe Environment Office. For a more detailed description of the requirements for presenting the Child Lures Prevention Program, please refer to the section titled "Child Lures Prevention – Religious Education" in the back of this manual. If you have any questions regarding the Child Lures Prevention Program, please call 718-281-9674.

515 Child Protection Services

The abuse or maltreatment of children is against the law. Local Law creates a child protective system with five fundamental components:

1. Detection through third party recognition of children in danger, including mandatory and permissive reporting of suspected child abuse and maltreatment
2. Emergency protective custody of children in "imminent" danger
3. State Central Register of reports of suspected child abuse and maltreatment
4. Child protective services:
 - a. to verify reports
 - b. to provide immediate protection of children
 - c. to begin the process of helping families by providing rehabilitation and ameliorative service
5. When necessary, Family Court action to remove a child, or to impose treatment, and/ or criminal court action for prosecution of the perpetrator

515:1 Reporting

New York State Law requires school officials to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. The DFF/CRE as the administrator of religious education programs should follow these guidelines for children under the age of 18 in parish religious education programs.

Both the Education Law and the Social Services Law of the State of New York clearly and forcefully mandate such reporting. The statute refers to "reasonable suspicion" of child abuse; therefore, any suspicion must be reported by the DFF/CRE to the State Central Registry. This preliminary report must be followed by a written report, DSS2221-A. The law provides no excuse for failure to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse. After the written report, the DFF/CRE should notify both the Pastor/Administrator of the parish and the Vicar of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis that a report has been made to the Central Registry. For more Information contact please call 718-281-9674.

To make a report, call the statewide Central Registry at 1-800-635-1522. It is desirable to have the following information available when phoning in a report:

1. Name and address of the child and parents/legal guardians or another person responsible for the care, if known
2. The child's age, sex, and race
3. The nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or maltreatment, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, or maltreatment to the child or siblings
4. The name of the person(s) responsible for causing the injury, abuse, or maltreatment, if known
5. Family composition
6. Source of the report
7. The person making the report and where that person can be reached
8. Any action was taken by the reporting source, including the taking of photographs and X-rays, removal or keeping of the child, or notifying the medical examiner's office or coroner
9. Any additional information which may be required by regulation, or which may be helpful

A written report (Form DSS2221-A) should be completed within 48 hours. For more Information contact please call 718-281-9674.

515:2 Immunity from Liability

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in the making of a report, taking of photographs, placing a child in protective custody, or providing service under the duties of the child protective service under the law has immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise result from such actions. Conversely, any person, official, or institution required to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, and who willfully fails to do so, maybe guilty of a crime and might be held civilly liable for proximate damages caused by the failure to report.

515:3 Definition of Child Abuse

1. The Family Court Act of the state of New York defines child neglect or abuse as the act, or failure to act, by any parent or caretaker that results in the death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child under the age of 18.

Child Abuse

- Child physical abuse occurs when a parent or caretaker inflicts or allows someone to inflict serious physical injury other than by accidental means.
- This includes, but is not limited to, shaking, beating, biting, kicking, punching, and burning. It is also considered abuse if a parent creates a condition or allows the condition to be created, that leads to a child becoming the victim of serious physical injury.
- Child sexual abuse includes incest, rape, obscene sexual performance, fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, sodomy, and any other contact such as exposing a child to sexual activity, or commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution of a minor or production of pornographic materials involving a minor.

515:4 Definition of Child Neglect

The Family Court Act of the state of New York defines child neglect or abuse as the act, or failure to act, by any parent or caretaker that results in the death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child under the age of 18.

Child Neglect

Neglect is defined as the failure of a parent or caretaker to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm. Some examples include:

- Failure to support a child's educational needs either by keeping a child home from school for unexcused reasons or not following up with a child's educational needs despite the school's outreach to the parent or caretaker.
- Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter.
- Failure to provide medical or mental health care (including drug abuse services).
- Leaving a child alone who is not developmentally able to be left alone without adequate supervision.
- Leaving a child with someone without establishing a plan for the provision for food, clothing, education, or medical care.
- Leaving a child with someone that does not have the ability to appropriately supervise or protect the child.
- Subjecting a child to humiliation, fear, verbal terror, or extreme criticism.
- Using corporal punishment beyond what is objectionably reasonable, and it results in the physical or emotional harm of a child.
- Exposing a child to family violence.
- Parent or caretaker using drugs to the point of not being able to adequately take care of a child.
- Keeping, manufacturing, or selling drugs in the presence of a child, or giving drugs to a child.

516 Substance abuse

The Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) is a prevention and drug abuse intervention program funded through the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services and sponsored by the Department of Education of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

All religious education programs should have a policy that informs students, parents, and catechists of the procedures to be followed when a student is found to be using drugs/alcohol.

This policy should include a clear and simple explanation of the respective rights and responsibilities of all those involved in an incident of drug/alcohol use. The written policy should reflect the administrator's serious concern for the student who uses drugs/alcohol, as well as for those students who may be influenced by their peers to experiment with these substances.

An administrator who would like assistance in formulating a policy tailored to the needs of a particular religious education program population should contact the regional coordinator of the PDHP program.

The PDHP program provides individual, group, and family counseling for children referred through schools and parishes. The program offers educational and referral services for students, faculty, and parents.

All parishes are eligible to participate and should contact the regional coordinator to learn more about the program.

517 Safe Environment Policies

As a response to the Diocesan Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People established in 2002, Diocesan Bishop Robert Brennan reiterates the following mandates for all employees in every parish and/or school/academy. This mandate also applies to any person in a parish and/or school/academy who volunteers with children.

All persons must fulfill three requirements before they begin their service or employment. They are:

Virtus – "Protecting God's Children for Adults"

The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session instructing adults of the Church that to protect children you must have continuous awareness and vigilance. This awareness session makes trainees understand the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods, and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps one can use to prevent child sexual abuse.

There are VIRTUS workshops held at the two diocesan locations, 310 Prospect Park West in Brooklyn and the Immaculate Conception Center in Douglaston every month. A current schedule of workshops can be found on the VIRTUS website, www.virtus.org. Any parish, school/academy can also host its workshop. For more information, please see the section titled "Hosting a VIRTUS Workshop".

Codes of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is a document that acknowledges the importance of legal, professional, and responsible conduct of those who work with children and young people. All clergy, employees, and volunteers are required to read the Code of Conduct and to sign a Statement of Acknowledgement Form. The Code of Conduct is distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. Members of the clergy should read the Code of Pastor/Administrator Conduct, copies of which can be obtained from the Office of Clergy Personnel and the Diaconate Formation Office.

Background Search Authorization

All employees and volunteers are also required to have a criminal background screening completed before they start their employment or service. These forms are also distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. All background screenings (employees and volunteers) will be done through the Safe Environment Office. The searches are done through Selection.com. All information is kept confidential and if a positive result is returned, the Pastor/Administrator/administrator will be notified, and appropriate steps will be taken.

Effective February 1, 2022, All Clergy, employees, and volunteers must renew their training every 7 years by taking Protecting God's Children On-Line version. The training will be available on each individual Virtus account.

CHAPTER 6

Instruction

601 Approved Calendar

Annually, the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis distributes an approved calendar. Parish religious education programs should follow this calendar.

602 Local Calendar

Each Parish issues a local calendar modeling the approved calendar. **A copy of the local calendar should be sent to the Facilitator for Outreach at the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis by August 1st of each year.** Variations from the calendar are to be reported to the Vicar for the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and Pastor/Administrator when they occur.

603 Program hourly requirements

Each parish is expected to schedule thirty-five (35) sessions at ninety (90) minute classes per catechetical year for a total of fifty-two and a half (52.5) hours of instruction per catechetical year. At least two sessions must be dedicated to the Family Life curriculum.

604 Staff meetings

The DFF/CRE is encouraged to hold staff meetings with the catechists at least monthly. These meetings provide an opportunity for program planning and evaluation and professional formation and spiritual growth.

605 Emergencies

605:1 Unscheduled Closings

It is the responsibility of the DFF/CRE to determine the necessity of canceling classes. All parents and volunteers should know where information may be obtained when the Religious Education Program classes are canceled.

605:2 Fire Drills

The DFF/CRE must be aware of the fire drill procedures for all facilities being used for religious education classes. The DFF/CRE must communicate specific procedures to the catechists. A practice fire drill should be held within a month of starting classes each year and at least every other month thereafter.

605:3 Knowledge of Emergency Procedures

It is the DFF's/CRE's responsibility to see that all personnel associated with the religious education program know exactly what to do in an emergency. In addition, the DFF/CRE should ensure that written emergency procedures are posted in a conspicuous place in all the areas in use for religious education classes. These procedures should include written instructions and appropriate phone numbers for the Police Department and the Fire Department.

605:4 Chain of Command

The DFF/CRE can't be always on hand. An appropriate chain of command to act in an emergency should be established and published.

605:5 Crisis Management Plan for Religious Education

Every parish religious education program should have a crisis management plan in place. There should be a copy of this plan in the religious education office and the parish rectory. **An electronic copy of this plan should be sent to the Facilitator for Outreach for the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.**

In parishes with schools/academies, the existing School Crisis Management Plan may be expanded, adopted, or adapted to address crises involving the parish religious education program.

This plan would be used in the following situations (but is not limited to):

- Death of a student, catechist, Pastor/Administrator, etc.
- Serious illness of a student, catechist, Pastor/Administrator, etc.
- Violence or violent death
- Bomb threat
- Bio-hazard threat
- Suicide

Procedures to be followed:

- Selection of the crisis response team
- Identifications of the family liaison person
- Organization of staff/telephone network
- Identification of crisis consultant/counselor
- Identification of community response people
- Designation of a security person
- Identification of media liaison person
- Development of suggestions for classroom discussion
- Identification of crisis center and counseling room
- Formation of parish policy on funerals
- Formulation of policy for parish memorials
- Interface with student leaders
- Availability of readings on death
- Plan for calling in substitute catechists
- Plan for future catechist meetings
- Identification and contact with at-risk students
- Drafting a letter for parents
- Plan for parent/community meeting
- Plan for evaluation

606 Curriculum

606:1 Primary goal

The primary goal of the program of religious instruction in parishes of the Diocese of Brooklyn is to provide learning experiences that will develop the knowledge, concepts, attitudes, and skills necessary for an individual's faith formation and personal encounter with Christ.

606:2 Guidelines

The diocesan norm for catechetical tasks, standards, and outcomes is found in *The Seed is the Word of God—A Resource for Catechetical Planning* (School/Academy version and Parish version). Outlined in this document is the course of study for the education and formation of all children and youth in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

606:3 Local Curriculum Development

Local curriculum development for the parish religious education program is the responsibility of the DFF/CRE. The curriculum should be evaluated considering the parish's religious education goals and Strategic Plan by the Pastor/Administrator and the DFF/CRE in conjunction with catechists on an annual basis.

606:4 Family Life curriculum

Parents are the first and most important witnesses of the faith to their children. They educate by word and example. Their role is irreplaceable. Many Catholic parents and guardians look to the religious education program and resources of the Catholic School/Academy and parish religious education programs for assistance, particularly in education in human sexuality and family life. The Family Life Curriculum is a curriculum that offers an understanding of basic life issues that is consistent with Catholic teaching. Family and sexuality education through a Catholic perspective seeks to foster family values, to promote the right to life and the dignity of each human person, to stress the importance of wholesome relationships and personal responsibility, to teach the value of conscience formation, and to give inspiration for living lives that are moral and chaste.

607 Instructional Arrangements

607:1 Materials

The responsibility for the selection of religion textbooks and instructional materials for the parish religious education program rests with the DFF/CRE by Diocesan norms. The religion textbooks for the elementary school program should be selected collaboratively by DFF/CRE and the school/academy principal in consultation with the catechists. Parishes should only use texts that are listed with the Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Parishes may check this information <https://www.usccb.org/committees/catechism/conformity-review-list>

607:2 Copyright procedures

The use of music during liturgies and special prayer services is essential to prayer and catechesis. Words and music may not be reprinted from a textbook, songbook, record, tape, etc. Without the written permission of a publisher. Reprinting music without the proper permission is both a legal and justice issue. Ignoring copyrights violates a composer's and a publisher's right to income and recognition. Copyright infringement may subject the parish to legal liability.

The following guidelines have been developed by the Liturgy Office:

1. No words or music may be reprinted without the permission of the publisher.
2. Permission is obtained by writing to publishers for an annual license or one-time use.
3. When music is reprinted with permission, the following process should be used: Only words and /or melody may be reprinted. (No arrangements or chords may be included). Failure to comply with this term could cause the license to be terminated.
4. The title of the song and the name of the composer must be included above each song.
5. Publishers prefer that credit be noted after each song as follows: Copyright © (correct date) by (name and address of publisher). All rights reserved or used with permission.
6. The license number must be printed after or under "used with permission or reprinted with permission"
7. A copy of the music or program must be sent to the publisher for their files.
8. Any additional guidelines sent by the publisher must be followed

607:3 Retreats and Field Trips

Any retreat should be a definite extension of the religious education process appropriate to the student's age/grade. Students should be prepared for the retreat to derive the greatest benefit. Only a licensed public carrier, fully insured, should be used to transport students the retreat. The staff is entrusted to protect the students from harm.

A permission slip signed by the parent is necessary for each student participating in an offsite retreat. No student may leave the religious education program campus for a retreat without a signed permission slip for any reason. An adequate number of responsible adult chaperones must accompany students. Chaperones should take copies of the permission slips, which include emergency telephone numbers for each student, on the retreat. The originally written permission slips should be kept under the record retention schedule.

The DFF/CRE should offer advanced notification of retreats to the local public schools that the religious education students attend when those trips will be held during the school day.

Please Note: Field Trips of any kind are not allowed under current Diocesan Norms. No overnight retreats are allowed.

608 Evaluation of student progress

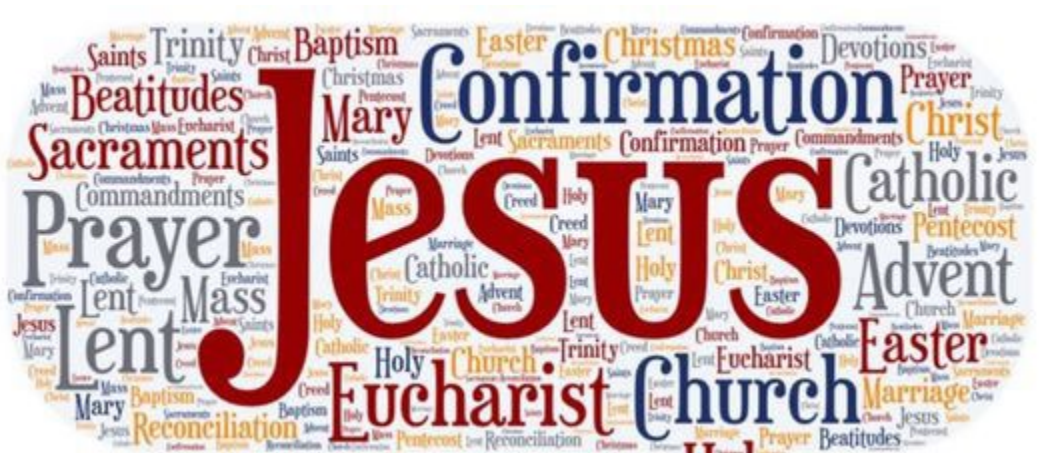
608:1 Communicating Student Progress

Since the parent is recognized as the primary witness of the faith to the child, it is the responsibility of the DFF/CRE to communicate to the parent the requirements necessary for the student's successful advancement in the parish religious education program. In the true spirit of the New Evangelization, adequate and continuous communication with the parent must take place to enable each student to have the opportunity to succeed in the program.

In instances where the student is experiencing difficulties, it is advised that the DFF/CRE maintain a written record of these communications with the parents. Criteria for student advancement within the religious education program are locally determined and enforced.

608:2 Documentation

After each term of the religious education program, each student should receive a copy of the Student Progress Cards. The electronic document is available from the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis. The class catechist completes the progress card.



CHAPTER 7

Physical Plant

701 Building Arrangement Issues

The complete physical plant of a parish may comprise several buildings. In situations where the parish religious education programs and the school/academy use common space, the DFF/ CRE and the school/academy principal should develop an amicable working arrangement for use of the premises. The arrangement addresses issues such as areas to be used, scheduling, access to phones and public address systems, and allocation of costs. Such a working arrangement must meet with the approval of the Pastor/Administrator.

702 Building Safety

Any building that houses a religious education program must meet the building, safety, and occupancy requirements of the City/State of New York.

1. The building(s) must always be secure. A responsible person should be stationed at the designated entrance while the program is in session.
2. No one should be allowed to impede exits while classes are in session.
3. All exit doors must be fitted with panic bars and be unlocked from the inside.
4. Exits (doors and interior gates in the surrounding yards) must not be obstructed or locked during program hours, inclusive of gates on outdoor areas.
5. Chains, padlocks, etc. put on doors for security when the building is closed, must be removed before students enter the building, and may not be replaced until all classes have left the building.
6. Storage space should be away from routes of egress and should be ventilated and fire-resistant.
7. Stairways must not be obstructed and space under stairways should never be used for storage.
8. Seats in gymnasiums, auditoriums, and lunchrooms should be spaced to provide definite aisles for prompt exiting; aisles that terminate at exits should be marked.
9. Electrical equipment should be checked regularly to be sure that it does not present a hazard.
10. Cleaning supplies and other potentially hazardous materials must be stored in locked areas out of reach of students

703: Parish Use of Leased School Space

Any building or portion of a building that houses a religious education program must comply with all terms of the lease agreement between the Parish and the Tenant. For more information contact Mary Salta-Wald of Rocklyn Asset Corp. at msaltawald@rocklynasset.org. For those that are not aware, Rocklyn Asset is a Diocesan agency that handles all Diocesan and Parish real estate related matters.