

Diocesan Policies
September, 2003

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown gratefully acknowledges the dedicated efforts of the following committee members for their service on the parish policy committee:

Charleen Blum
Sr. Martha Burbulla, CCW
Helen Curcio
Connie Curfman
Mary Heinrich
Dorothy Kardohely
Tom McConnell
Aileen Ropp
Jeanne Thompson
Madeline Wirfel

Francine Swope—Secretary

We would also like to thank the following persons for reviewing the policy:

Rev. Monsignor Stanley Carson
Dr. Charles Koren
Larry Sutton

A. 1. CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM

“It is necessary for catechists to have a deep faith, a clear Christian and ecclesial identity; as well as a great social sensitivity” (GDC, 237). The diocese recommends, therefore, that all catechists attain master catechist status as described in the catechist and youth ministry formation programs.

BASIC CATECHIST FORMATION

Contains Basic Theology, Scripture, and Methodology
(2) - 8 week sessions (16 hours total)
It is recommended that this course be taken first.

METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP

A one day workshop that presents developmental characteristics as well as skills and techniques for teaching.

ADULT CATECHESIS COURSES

These courses will provide catechists with the basic teachings of the Catholic Church on topics central to catechesis.
Each of the 10 courses are comprised of (8) - 2 hour sessions (160 hours)

AC-30-A-Sacraments
AC-30-B-Old Testament
AC-30-C-New Testament
AC-30-D-Principles of Christian Morality
AC-30-E-Catholic Social Teaching (Peace and Justice)
AC-30-F-Prayer and Spirituality
AC-30-G-Church History
AC-30-H-Liturgy
AC-30-I-Creed
AC-30-J-Adult Faith Formation (Psychology of Religion)

MASTER CATECHIST STATUS

Master Catechist Status may be attained by either completing the Diocesan Catechist Formation Program as described above or completing the third year of Lay Ministry Formation in catechesis.

CONTINUING FORMATION

To keep Master Catechist Status current, those who have achieved Master Status are Required to complete 30 hours of continuing formation every 3 years.

A. 2. YOUTH MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM

BASIC YOUTH MINISTRY FORMATION

Contains basic formation on developing: adult leadership, youth evangelization, mature disciples, small group communities and peer ministry.

It is recommended that this course be taken first.

METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP

A one day workshop that presents developmental characteristics of youth as well as skills and techniques for youth ministry.

ADULT CATECHESIS COURSES

These courses will provide youth ministers with the basic teachings of the Catholic Church on topics central to youth formation.

Each of the 10 courses are comprised of (8) - 2 hour sessions (160 hours)

AC-30-A-Sacraments

AC-30-B-Old Testament

AC-30-C-New Testament

AC-30-D-Principles of Christian Morality

AC-30-E-Catholic Social Teaching (Peace and Justice)

AC-30-F-Prayer and Spirituality

AC-30-G-Church History

AC-30-H-Liturgy

AC-30-I-Creed

AC-30-J-Adult Faith Formation (Psychology of Religion)

MASTER CATECHIST STATUS

Master Catechist Status may be attained by either completing the Diocesan Catechist Formation Program as described above or completing the third year of Lay Ministry Formation in youth ministry.

CONTINUING FORMATION

To keep Master Youth Minister Status current, those who have achieved Master Status are required to complete 30 hours of continuing formation every 3 years.

B. HANDBOOKS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

All parish religious education / youth ministry programs should have parent / student handbooks, which outline the rights and duties of parents, children / youth, and volunteers. Parents should be required to sign a statement that they have read and agree to be governed by the handbook as a condition of enrollment. This statement is to be dated and kept on file by the DRE / CRE / Youth Minister.

Handbooks should include the mission statement and goals of the program, clearly detail expectations of children / youth, parents and catechists / volunteers, and state parish policy for religious education, youth ministry, and sacramental preparation. Important rationales for the development of handbooks include consistency of parish policy, a clearly stated policy that fosters responsibility and accountability for parents, children / youth and catechists/ volunteers, and legal safe guards.

Many of the items found in the policy sections of the *Guidebook* already may be included in parish handbooks. In addition, the following list should also be included.

- Parish mission statement
- Goals of the program
- Admission policy
- Attendance and punctuality
- Custody and considerations
- Disciplinary procedure
- Expectations for catechists / volunteers and youth ministers
- List other relevant parish activities and programs
- Policy for the cancellation of class
- Procedure for communication with parents / guardians
- Religious education schedule
- Registration and program fees
- Respect for persons and property
- Role of the Parent (s)
- Sacramental preparation guidelines
- A sheet to be signed by a parent indicating that they have read the information