

## COLLABORATION FOR PARISH CATECHETICAL AND OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRIES

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES:

“ ‘The parish must continue to be above all a Eucharistic community.’ This principle implies that ‘parishes are called to be welcoming and fraternal, places of Christian initiation, of education in and celebration of the faith, open to the full range of charisms, services and ministries, organized in a communal and responsible way, capable of utilizing existing movements of the apostolate, attentive to the cultural diversity of the people, open to pastoral projects which go beyond the individual parish, and alert to the world in which they live’ ” (Ecclesia in America, #41).

“Parish catechetical efforts should be coordinated with those of neighboring parishes, clusters of parishes, deaneries, and regions. As much as possible, parishes should share resources and avoid the duplication of catechetical services, especially so that the catechetical needs of poor or otherwise disadvantaged groups can be met. Organized catechetical programs for persons with disabilities should be provided on the most effective level: parochial, regional or diocesan. . . . In addition, other groups of people in other settings, such as daycare centers, nursing homes, and professional organizations, should be incorporated into the diocesan, regional, or parochial organization for catechesis” (National Directory for Catechesis, 256, 257).

“Careful consideration should also be given to the possibility of combining catechetical programs in smaller parishes, particularly if they share a single pastor or are planning to do so in the future. Smaller parishes are encouraged to share the services of a competent and qualified catechetical leader to ensure that the catechetical programs in the smaller parishes nevertheless have the benefit of sound catechetical planning, organization, and direction” (National Directory for Catechesis, 257).

“ . . . Inter-parish cooperation is a development and important dynamic that can increase learning opportunities for parishioners, especially (but not only) for smaller parishes” (Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, #98).

“At the same time, stewardship in and for the parish should not be narrowly parochial. For the diocese is not merely an administrative structure but instead joins communities called parishes into a “local church” and unites its people in faith, worship, and service. Indeed, the spirit and practice of stewardship should extend to other local churches and to the universal church—to the Christian community and to one’s sisters and brothers in Christ everywhere—and be expressed in deeds of service and mutual support” (Stewardship: A Disciples Response, 32).

THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RECOMMENDS:

1. Pastors and other parish ministers serving pastoral ministry, youth ministry and religious education seek opportunities for inter-parish collaboration with ministries, programs, and resources. Successful collaboration between parishes begins with pastors and leadership teams.
2. Parishes actively support inter-parish collaboration. Parishioners from all concerned parishes need to make an investment in the planning from initial steps to implementation.
3. Pastors serving more than one parish assist each community to discern its gifts and combine ministries accordingly.
4. The Office of Religious Education provides formation on collaborative ministry and provides support services for parish personnel to assist collaborative efforts among parishes. In service opportunities will be made available.
5. The Office of Religious Education provides a variety of resources through the Office of Religious Education Library, including an appendix of resources specific to collaboration. Parishes are encouraged to consult with diocesan staff for assistance in the selection of appropriate facilitators, mindful of the needs of the parish and their specific circumstances.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Pastors and Parish Ministers prepare their parishioners to enter into inter-parish ministries with the following general guidelines:

### Attitudes

- Allow quality time for prayer before, during, and after all meetings. Encourage persons not physically present for meetings to pray for the spirit of collaboration and unity of the church.
- Foster a culture of dialog so that there will be an increased understanding and mutual trust between individuals and among people.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to the ages of intended audiences, their work and school obligations, the need for child care, and other practical logistics.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to varying needs among bilingual communities and individuals within the overall calendar, schedule, and building use.
- Express gratitude to individuals and groups actively promoting and supporting a true spirit of unity and collaboration.
- Celebrate the unity and richness resulting from greater involvement and interest.
- Dream and imagine beyond traditional offerings.

### Discernment Phase

- Assemble gatherings which include pastors, parish ministers and ministerial team leaders which take into account the needs of the people they serve.
- Determine possible areas of collaboration or combined ministry.
- Gather feedback from leaders and participants in the inter-parish ministries.
- Discern strengths and weaknesses.
- Assess all responsibilities and areas of ministry including approaches, methodologies, and traditions.
- Develop a vision of church in mission.
- Consider the practical areas of what, when, where, who, why, and how.

### Development Phase

- Promote stewardship of human and material resources.
- Determine the sharing of the workload among staff and volunteers from all involved parishes.
- Cluster staff to serve multiple parishes effectively.
- Structure staff roles to ensure accountability and efficiency.
- Determine the financial needs of all inter-parish ministries.
- Determine compliance with Diocesan guidelines.
- Assist in the formation of competent parish ministers to serve a cluster of parishes.
- Share models and examples of effective programs and processes.

- Consider driving times, distances, and seasonal changes when developing adjustment to calendar of events and times.
- Develop a calendar which respects individual mass times and duration of liturgy to allow for full and active participation in one's parish.
- Embrace longstanding traditions among involved parishes especially holy day customs, patron saint day celebrations, and other seasonal activities.
- Select and employ qualified lay ecclesial ministers for responsibility for parish staff positions.

#### Enactment Phase

- Develop a budget including personnel costs, materials and other resources.
- Determine appropriate program fees for participants.
- Submit a report to the Office of Religious Education and maintain a copy for each parish file.
- Participate in inservice opportunities on the skills and attitudes that promote inter-parish ministries.
- Review existing calendars and determine priorities of activities and events to avoid competing priorities and schedule conflicts.
- Use household language for invitations to include widows and singles in target audiences.
- Model apprenticeship discipleship, engaging participants in quality opportunities for service learning and reflection.
- Celebrate the unity and richness resulting from greater involvement and interest.
- Communicate regularly with the entire parish regarding ideas, proposals, changes and provide explanations.

## CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING VARIOUS MINISTRIES

### ELEMENTARY CATECHESIS

1. Use the Diocesan Curriculum for Catechesis as the basis for all programs.
2. Welcome the catechists from all of the participating parishes into the new program(s).
3. If Generations of Faith and traditional elementary catechesis programs are coming together, a combination which draws aspects from both programs may be developed, with a multifaceted program.
4. Form a catechetical committee to enhance all aspects of faith formation with parishioners from a broad spectrum of interests and concerns.

### ADOLESCENT CATECHESIS/YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Determine the vision for the programs through a meeting with Pastors, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Youth Ministers.
2. Form a team that includes teens, parents, volunteers, catechists, and Youth Ministers from all of the involved parishes. The Youth Leadership Team must represent all of the parishes involved.
3. Be aware of the commonalities, uniqueness, gifts, talents, and resources of all of the people involved.
4. Think beyond traditional offerings and allow dreams to soar.
5. Include catechesis, liturgical, service, and social events.
6. Follow the Diocesan Curriculum for Catechesis and Renewing the Vision.
7. Move beyond the parish for service and social justice opportunities in the civic community.
8. Provide apprenticeship model of service with adults and youth sharing responsibility for social outreach activities and pre and post theological reflection.
9. Implement the three goals and eight components of comprehensive youth ministry as directed by Renewing the Vision.
10. Discern placement of Confirmation catechesis within parish ministry.

### ADULT FAITH FORMATION

1. Evaluate current strategies for on-going faith formation, sacramental preparation, liturgical celebrations, outreach, and young adult ministry.
2. Reaffirm the strengths and celebrate achievements.
3. Increase the vitality of faith formation, rather than simply changing the players, places, and times of current programs.
4. Develop new ideas and schedule flexible hours for busy adults, senior adults, adults with dependent children or parents.
5. Energize new people for ministry roles, and encourage current volunteers to consider new areas of service.

## RCIA

1. Invite all ministers, teams, and pastors to come together to identify strengths and/or challenges in the different components of the rite.
2. Implement catechesis, calendar, rites and celebration of the sacraments that address the unique circumstances of each parish.
3. Assess annually the strengths and weaknesses of the process in order to make necessary adjustments and/or adaptations.
4. Alternate the celebration of the Easter Vigil for parishes sharing one pastor.
5. Consider expanding teams to have responsibility for the periods of the RCIA, especially an ongoing inquiry team, ongoing catechumenate team, and key ministers for the RCIA as adapted for children of catechetical age.
6. Follow carefully the statutes and norms of The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and as Adapted for Children of Catechetical Age.

## COLLABORATION FOR CATECHETICAL AND OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRIES

Effective collaboration in combined ministries has been developed and provided in many areas of catechetical formation and pastoral ministry. Examples follow. Please contact the Office of Religious Education for further information and contact persons.

County wide supported:

- Child protection orientation
- Dinner and doctrine programs
- Inservice and training programs for a variety of ministries
- Luncheon lecture series
- Young adult ministry outreach
- Youth ministry service opportunities
- Youth ministry social gatherings

Inter-parish supported:

- Baptism preparation
- Bereavement support groups
- Catechist formation
- Catholic Charities service projects
- City outreach and civic community projects
- Communal Reconciliation service
- Confirmation catechetical process
- Confirmation celebrations
- Confirmation retreats
- Ecumenical processes and programs
- Evangelization processes
- Hispanic ministry
- Liturgical ministries reflection days
- Marriage preparation
- Men and women retreat opportunities
- Migrant ministry
- Missions for advent, lent, ordinary time
- Pastoral Council development
- RCIA processes
- Separated and divorced support groups
- Vacation Bible School
- Youth Ministry retreats
- Youth Ministry service opportunities
- Youth Ministry social gatherings