



Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry
Directory for Catechesis

MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH CATECHESIS

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHS:

“The togetherness of the Lord Jesus with the two disciples of Emmaus, his walking with them, dialoguing, accompanying, helping to open their eyes, is a source of inspiration for walking with young people. Within these dynamics, the gospel must be proclaimed to the world of young people with courage and creativity, the sacramental life and spiritual accompaniment must be presented” (Directory for Catechesis, #244).

“Catechesis in the world of young people requires continual renewal, reinforcement, and realization in a larger context of youth pastoral care” (Directory for Catechesis, #245).

“Unafraid of focusing on the essential, the presentation of the faith to pre-adolescents is to take pains to sow within their hearts the seeds of a vision of God that can ripen over time: the illustration of the *kerygma* is to pay special attention to the Lord Jesus as a brother who loves, as a friend who helps one to be at one’s best in relationships, does not judge, is faithful, values skills and dreams, bringing one’s desires for beauty and goodness to fulfillment” (Directory for Catechesis, #247).

The Synod said that “youth is an original and stimulating stage of life, which Jesus himself experienced, thereby sanctifying it” (Christus Vivit, #22).

“Jesus, in the years of his youth, was “training:” being prepared to carry out the Father’s plan. His adolescence and his youth set him on the path to that sublime mission” (Christus Vivit, #27).

THE OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION AND LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY RECOMMENDS:

1. Parishes, having as a priority the catechesis of all their children, will recognize, support and challenge the junior high youth in their growth as persons and believers.
2. Parishes will provide developmentally appropriate, comprehensive catechetical formation for junior high youth consisting of the five tasks of catechesis.
3. Parishes will provide catechetical activities to foster Catholic and parish identity.
4. Catechetical leaders, in collaboration with the parents and guardians of the youth, will provide for faith formation through age-appropriate instruction and activities.
5. Parishes will provide catechetical in-service opportunities for all of middle school/junior high catechists (including those families who choose home based catechesis), considering their specific needs and employing principles of adult faith formation.

GUIDELINES

STRUCTURE

- Middle School/Junior High catechesis and ministry is designed to meet the specific needs of early adolescents in grades seven and eight. Although it is similar in some ways to elementary catechesis and in some ways to high school catechesis, it is a unique age, requiring a distinct approach.
- Since junior high is ordinarily structured within the elementary catechetical formation, most teachings and guidelines for elementary catechesis will be appropriate for junior high.
- Parents and guardians of junior high age youth are responsible for communicating with the pastor and his delegate catechetical formation most appropriate for their family situation.
- Parishes will offer at least 36 hours of instructional catechesis and 14 additional hours for service, community building, and prayer. Catholic Schools will offer 150 to 225 minutes per week of catechetical instruction and other time for community building, service, and prayer.
- Parishes and schools will have a defined two-year plan of instruction based on the objectives of the Diocesan Curriculum for Catechesis. They will use texts and resources approved by the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry. When appropriate, junior high youth may participate in planning the curriculum and activities.
- In parishes and Catholic Schools, the catechetical sessions for middle school/junior high will be of an appropriate size so that faith sharing and community building can be effectively communicated through constructive interaction and personal involvement.
- Parishes that have families who choose home based catechesis will communicate to the parents and guardians the need for faith sharing and community building as integral parts of formation. Parishes may suggest ways that are possible within their parish structure.
- Parishes will provide for the faith formation of children with disabilities.

CATECHISTS AND ADULT ADVISORS

- All middle school/junior high catechists in Catholic schools, Parish processes, and home based catechesis will meet the qualifications of catechists as stated in this directory (see E1).
- Middle School/Junior High catechists are encouraged to be certified or to be working toward diocesan certification.
- In addition to catechists, parishes may call forth and enable other adults to serve as advisors to middle school/junior high ministry, assisting with community building, service, and prayer and worship.
- Catechists and advisors to middle school/junior high youth will be informed about family systems, community resources, referral and intervention procedures and early adolescent development.

ADMINISTRATION

- The administrators of the faith formation processes are the pastor and/or designated representative(s).
- Permanent records and parish sacramental records are to be maintained by the parish administrator for each junior high age youth. Certification and fingerprint records will be maintained for all catechists and aides.

- An annual formation schedule will be formulated to include a calendar of instruction, activities, and parish events for the junior high youth and their families. Youth should be involved in program/calendar development when appropriate. The plan should include opportunities for service, community building, and prayer.
- Administrators will communicate with the parents and guardians regarding their rights and responsibilities in the faith development of their children.
- Administrators will provide parents and guardians opportunities to become involved with junior high ministry planning and its implementation.
- Dialogue and collaboration are encouraged among all programs providing catechesis and ministry to junior high youth of the parish.
- Reports regarding junior high catechesis and ministry will be submitted to the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry or the Office of Catholic Schools.

FINANCE

- Parishes will budget and allocate sufficient funds to maintain quality junior high catechetical formation. Funds should be available for:
 - Textbooks and materials for youth
 - Manuals and materials for catechists and advisors
 - Catechist, advisor and parent formation and certification fees
 - Community building activities for youth, parents, catechists, and advisors
 - Background check fees of catechists and adult advisors
- An annual financial report of income and expenses will be prepared for catechetical formation. A financial report form can be found in the Directory for Catechesis (F-8).

EVALUATION

- Parishes will annually evaluate their formation for junior high youth. The process should include opportunities for evaluation by the youth, parents and guardians, catechists, advisors, and administrators. An evaluation procedure is available in the Directory for Catechesis section H.
- Evaluations will be useful in designing formation and calendars for catechesis of middle school/junior high youth.
- The annual evaluation and financial report will be made available to the pastor and the parish pastoral council.