

GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

For homeschooling families and families who choose home-based catechesis

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES:

“Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest year. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of the children and parents” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2226).

“It is for this reason that the Christian community must give very special attention to parents. By means of personal contact, meetings, courses and also adult catechesis directed toward parents, the Christian community must help them assume their responsibility – which is particularly delicate today – of educating their children in the faith” (General Directory for Catechesis, #227).

“Sacred ministers cannot deny the Sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them. Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the Sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by the competent authority” (Code of Canon Law, #843).

“In the Diocese, catechesis is a unique service performed jointly by priests, deacons, religious and laity in communion with the Bishop. The entire Christian Community should feel responsible for this service” (GDC #219).

GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- ❖ Inform the Pastor and/or his delegate of your decision to homeschool your children in religious education in order to be placed on the mailing list for communications relative to catechesis.
- ❖ Implement the Diocese of Youngstown Curriculum for Catechesis as promulgated by Bishop George V. Murry, S.J. in 2009. This curriculum specifies learning objectives by grade level, preschool through grade 12.
- ❖ Use the religion text selected by your parish, or select religion texts and resources from those approved by the Office of Religious Education, accompanied by age-appropriate resources, activities and media.
- ❖ Participate in ongoing faith formation and in-service opportunities, such as those provided by the parish and the diocese, e.g. catechist formation courses.
- ❖ Involve your family regularly in parish activities and liturgical ministries.
- ❖ Monitor your child(ren)'s progress in meeting the objectives of the Curriculum for Catechesis.
- ❖ Communicate frequently with your Parish DRE / Director of Faith Formation / Catechetical Leader.
- ❖ Contact the pastor and catechetical leader regarding the immediate preparation for the reception of the sacraments well in advance of the anticipated celebration. Participate in parent meetings and other activities provided by the parish.

GUIDELINES FOR PASTORS AND CATECHETICAL LEADERS

- ❖ Identify all families in the parish with school-aged children and learn in which catechetical program (school, parish, home) they will participate.
- ❖ Communicate regularly with homeschool families through newsletters, parish flyers, church bulletins and meetings.
- ❖ Make available guidelines relative to general catechesis, sacramental catechesis, and the approved list of textbooks from the Office of Religious Education.
- ❖ Provide catechetical resources including the Curriculum for Catechesis, textbooks, and media to parents (upon request, and for the cost of the materials).
- ❖ Invite parents to ongoing formation opportunities and provide in-service on the use of catechetical materials and media.
- ❖ Invite parents and children to participate in parish activities, especially those of community building, service outreach, and liturgical celebrations.
- ❖ Keep records of all school age children, especially for sacramental records.
- ❖ Work with families in assessing the child's readiness for sacramental reception and in accomplishing the parish expectations for preparation. It is the responsibility of the pastor in every case to make the final determination of readiness.

PREPARATION FOR AND CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

- ❖ Normally, children baptized as infants are to celebrate First Reconciliation and First Eucharist after at least two years of catechesis, usually at age 7 or 8.
- ❖ Children are to be catechized and prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time at least three months before celebrating First Eucharist.
- ❖ The age at which young people will normally be presented for the Sacrament of Confirmation is during the eighth grade. In parishes in which the celebration is every other year, some students will be in the ninth grade.
- ❖ Immediate preparation (normally a few months before the celebration) for sacraments is the responsibility of the parish community, directed by the Pastor and his delegates. Children, parents, and sponsors will participate in the sessions that are provided for them.
- ❖ Sacraments are celebrated in the Church with the parish community gathered, since liturgical actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself which is the “Sacrament of Unity.”
- ❖ Guidelines for ongoing and immediate preparation for the reception of sacraments are available through the pastor and catechetical leaders. The parents and the parish will work together to accomplish the expectations of preparation and the options for celebration.

OHIO LAW

In accordance with Ohio compulsory school attendance law, parents who seek home based instruction for their child must notify the public school superintendent of the public school district in which the parents reside.

PARISH ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

Students are eligible to participate in athletic programs that are sponsored by the parish. Since a home-based student is not enrolled in a Catholic school, he or she is not eligible to participate on Catholic school-sponsored teams according to the Ohio High School Athletic Association requirements.