



Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry
Directory for Catechesis

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 years. 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).

“Enabling families to take up their role as active agents of the family apostolate calls for an effort at evangelization and catechesis inside the family. The Church is called to cooperate with parents through suitable pastoral initiatives, assisting them in the fulfillment of their educational mission” to become above all the first catechists of their own children” (Directory for Catechesis, #124).

“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).

“While a number of parents make the choice to educate and catechize their children at home, in general, parents and guardians are catechists for their children precisely because they are parents and guardians, not because they have developed any specialized skills. The catechesis given by the parents with the family “precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.” When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to bring up their children in the practice of the faith and to see to it that the divine life that God gives them is kept safe” (National Directory for Catechesis p. 235).

GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- Inform the Pastor and/or his delegate of your decision regarding a home based model for your children and request communications relative to catechesis and sacramental preparation.
- Implement the Diocese of Youngstown Curriculum for Catechesis as promulgated by Bishop David J. Bonnar in 2021. 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 Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry, 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 for lifelong learners.
- 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 Director of Faith Formation or 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 FAITH FORMATION 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 all families.
- Make available guidelines relative to general catechesis, sacramental catechesis, and the approved list of textbooks from the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry.
- 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, or older.
- 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.