

General Parish Catechesis Policy

The following is the policy for the Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota, pertaining to parish catechesis programs in general (taken from Diocesan Catechetical Manual, Section II. Policy, pages 4-5).

1. *Prayer*: In large part, the success of a catechetical program rests upon the prayer life of the parish. For this reason every parish should pray for the success of their catechetical programs, specifically,
 - a. prayers should be included in the weekly petitions for students and catechists
 - b. intercessors should be assigned to each class
 - c. special times of eucharistic adoration and other liturgical celebrations for this intention should also be planned

2. *DOC or DRE*: The success of a catechetical program in part depends on its organization and implementation. For this reason, every pastor should have a parish director. In the past, this person has been called a director of religious education (DRE). More accurately, parishes may call this person a director of catechesis (DOC). In most instances, **the responsibilities of such a position are so important and time consuming that this person should be employed by the parish. Rural parishes (less than 200 families) are asked to be creative, not exempt. Possibly, diocesan aligned parish clusters might hire one person to work for the entire cluster. Possibly, smaller parishes might include coordination of additional responsibilities e.g. evangelization, RCIA, apostolic works, nursing home programs, bookkeeping, etc. Finally, smaller parishes might compensate these people in ways other than salaries, e.g. providing a place to live, etc.** Failure to provide an adequate and living wage often creates several negative consequences:
 - a. parishes will not be able to get the most capable person for the position;
 - b. the person's commitment and availability both for the position and their own formation and training will lag if they are working in another position;
 - c. the pastor and the staff will not be able to unify their efforts; and
 - d. perpetuation of the notion that catechesis is not important, i.e. if one isn't willing to pay, it must not be worth it.

Section V of the Diocesan Catechesis Manual provides further guidance in this area.

3. *Catechists*: Catechists should be fully initiated in and be in full communion with the Catholic Church. In collaboration with the diocese, parishes are to provide for the formation of catechists. Section V provides further guidance in this area.

4. *Catechumenal Model:* Like the catechumenal process or RCIA, catechetical programs must be catechetical, pastoral and liturgical (sacramental). Both RCIA and catechesis are the responsibility of the parish as a whole.

5. *Adult Catechesis.* Catechesis should be first directed towards adults. For most parishes, this effort will entail a dramatic change in priority. There is no easy way to begin this change.

6. *Child Catechesis.* Parishes must also provide catechesis for children. These programs are needed to assist parents. Putting adult catechesis first does not mean discontinuing catechesis for children.

7. *All People:* Parish catechetical programs must seek to accommodate not only different age groups, but also various cultures, educational abilities, physical needs, and schedules.