

Parish Religious Education Guidelines for those desiring to teach at Home



Canon Law

It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop to issue norms concerning catechetics and to make provision that suitable instruments for catechesis are available. (Canon 775 #1)

Pastors have the responsibility for sacramental preparation and all catechesis so that the faith of the faithful becomes living, explicit, and productive through formation in doctrine and the experience of Christian living. (Canons 843 #2; 773; 777)

Catechetical instruction is to be given by using all helps, teaching aids, and instruments of social communication which seem more effective so that the faithful, in a manner adapted to their character, capabilities and age, and conditions of life, are able to learn Catholic doctrine more fully and put it into practice more suitably. (Canon 779)

Guidelines

As the Bishops wrote in their pastoral letter, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, catechesis “is a perennial task and joy for the Church of Jesus Christ...[Yet] rarely if ever has it been more pressing a need more urgent a duty and more ennobling a vocation.”

Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical life and sacramental activity. In the light of the entire process for catechesis to include the four components of knowledge, community, service and worship, home schooling independent of the community cannot replace catechesis or sacramental preparation in the church parish community. (*General Catechetical Directory* #17; *National Directory for Catechesis* #32-33; *Catechesi Tradendae* #202-26).

“The parish must continue to be the prime mover and preeminent place for catechesis” (*Catechesi Tradendae* #67).

“Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area; they are educators because they are parents” (*Letter to Families, 1994*). The Church as a universal community finds order in the principle of subsidiarity which means “a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1883).

The following are guidelines which allow for families and parishes to work collaboratively.

1. Parents will register for Religious Education in the parish and declare their option for teaching at home in the proper registration timeframe of the parish.
2. Parents will meet with the parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss their program for schooling their children at home and together create an agreement including but not limited to the following:
 - Name of a textbook that will be used throughout the year that has been approved by the Bishop of Green Bay in order to provide a scope and sequence for learning. This does not exclude the use of supplemental textbooks or resources.
 - The approved number of hours of religious education totaling at least 30-35 hours per year (Policy #6007).

- Assessment of knowledge and faith development determined by the Pastor and/or Religious Education Director/Coordinator according to the student's year of study (Canon 777)
 - Dates for assessment (including the national ACRE test in 5th, 8th, and 11th grades) determined by the parents and the Religious Education Director/Coordinator.
 - Participation in family retreats, family liturgies, diocesan events and youth retreats according to the parish Religious Education Director/Coordinator.
 - Expectations regarding the reception of the sacraments which are to take place in the parish in which the family is registered.
 - Tuition depending on use of parish resources
3. Children are to participate in the **immediate** sacramental preparation (classes specifically pertaining to the preparation of the sacrament and the rite) as required or approved by the pastor and Religious Education Director/Coordinator which includes on site preparation, interviews for sacramental readiness, practice for sacramental celebration, retreats, and appropriate rites.
 4. Parents and parish religious education programs are to teach the truth, beauty, and goodness of the true faith that Christ passed onto the Church.
 5. The pastor or parish religious education director/coordinator should invite the parents to be involved in the catechetical certification process.

Sample Agreement for Parishes and Families who desire to teach at Home

Student Name _____

Parents' Names _____

Approved Textbook being used _____
(Approval Letter by Bishop Ricken in 2013 for 5 possible catechetical textbook series from K-8th grade)
(Approval Letter by Bishop Ricken in 2014 for 4 possible catechetical textbook series from 9-12th grade)

Dates of Assessments/Due dates for homework or unit assessments (tests, worksheets, interviews, etc.)

Date of the ACRE Assessment (for 5th, 8th, and juniors only) _____

Number of catechetical instructional hours will meet or exceed 30-35 hours Yes No
(Policy #6007, Diocese of Green Bay)

Dates of required Retreat _____

Dates of classes for immediate Sacramental preparation _____
(student is asked to join the parish community for this preparation, at their own parish, confirmation hours total at least 12 hours per Diocesan requirements)

Parents will...

- Cooperate with the parish family
- Pray for and with their children
- Foster their own personal faith life through personal relationship with Christ
- Act as the primary educators of their children through word and example
- Attend Saturday night/Sunday Mass each week
- Teach the content that is outlined in the approved textbooks
- Introduce their children to the parish community

The parish will...

- Provide the sacraments and proper preparation for the sacraments
- Pray for and with the children and their families in their Religious Education program
- Cooperate with parents and empower them to be their children's first teachers
- Assist with providing quality catechetical resources including textbooks
- Provide training, support, spiritual enrichment, and formation for their catechists
- Conform their program to the direction of the Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay
- Provide opportunities for encountering Christ through retreats
- Provide families time to learn alongside of their children
- Notify and communicate with families especially in regards to family nights, sacramental opportunities, or other parish opportunities

Homeschooling Parent: By signing this agreement, I strive to be a witness and holy teacher for my child and uphold the teachings of Christ and His Church. I pledge to go to Mass each Sunday and be involved in the parish community, to work in unison with the parish Director/Coordinator of religious education, and strive for quality communication between my family and the parish.

Parish Representative: By signing this agreement, I agree to support each family in reasonable ways so that their formation might be supported and encouraged by the parish community. I also pledge to help each family incorporate into the parish community.

Signature of Parent

Signature of Pastor

Signature of DRE/CRE

Date

Date

Date