

DIOCESE OF ERIE
PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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100

PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

THE VALUE SOUGHT

A CLEAR ARTICULATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO THE REIGN
OF GOD.

110.00 The religious education program will have a written mission statement.

110.10 The religious education program mission statement will reflect Diocesan guidelines.

120.00 The religious education program will have a written vision statement.

120.10 The religious education program vision statement will reflect Diocesan guidelines.

200

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

THE VALUE SOUGHT

A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHARACTERIZED BY MUTUAL RESPECT, CHARITY AND JUSTICE.

201.00 Each parish will have a designated religious education leader(s) to assist the pastor.

201.10 The religious education leader(s) is a member of the Catholic Faith and models this tradition in both words and lifestyle.

202.00 Religious education leaders will have an Act 34 clearance from the Pennsylvania State Police. By decree of Bishop Donald W. Trautman (June 30, 1994), paid employees are required to provide this at their own expense. Religious education leaders will also have the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151) as required by Bishop Trautman on June 25, 2001.

210.00 The religious education leader(s) serves, under the direction of the pastor, as the educational administrator(s) in the parish for programs outside the parish school (if one exists).

211.00 The religious education leader will ensure that all materials presented under the auspices of the parish religious education program are in conformity with Church teaching.

211.10 The religious education leader will supervise catechists to ensure that they are covering the Diocesan Curriculum and meet the standards of 211.00.

220.00 Religious education leaders will meet Diocesan certification standards.

221.00 The designated religious education leader(s) will have as a minimum the credentials to meet Diocesan standards for an Administrator of Religious Education. Those who do not yet have these credentials will be enrolled in an approved certification program. Established by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on May 3, 1993.

230.00 Religious education leaders will enter into a professional agreement with the parish.

- 231.00 Religious education leaders will be assigned titles by the Diocesan Department of Religious Education based on the Religious Education Guidelines promulgated by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on May 3, 1993.
- 232.00 Use of the Diocesan process for development of a professional agreement is preferred.
- 232.10 A parish developing a professional agreement other than the one provided by the Diocese will include a job description and annual review process as part of the agreement.
- 233.00 Lay religious education leaders will be compensated, at least minimally, in accordance with the Diocesan salary process approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on May 3, 1993.
- 233.10 Lay religious education leaders will receive a benefit package in accordance with Diocesan guidelines approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on May 3, 1993.
- 233.20 Religious working in the capacity of a parish religious education leader will be compensated at the Diocesan salary and benefit scale for Religious.
- 234.00 Once a year religious education leaders will have a formal documented performance review initiated and performed by their immediate supervisor based on their job description.
- 235.00 Religious working in the capacity of a parish religious education leader will follow hiring guidelines established by the Vicar for Religious.
- 236.00 Religious education leaders will have access to Diocesan due process in the event of an employment dispute and are required to use this process before any non-canonical process.

240.00 Religious education leaders are required to participate in yearly continuing education and formation.

- 241.00 Religious education leaders will complete at least seven contact hours of academic continuing education per year. Academic continuing education is achieved through courses, workshops or conferences in theology, methodology or related subjects. [A contact hour is defined as participation in a learning environment excluding breaks, lunch, etc.] This requirement will be stated explicitly in the contract between the religious education leader and the parish and will be paid for by the parish or funds paid to the religious education leader specifically for this purpose.
- 242.00 Religious education leaders will participate in a retreat or other spiritual formation program each year. This requirement will be stated explicitly in the contract between the religious education leader and the parish.

250.00 Religious Education Leaders are to know and adhere to all provisions of Diocesan policy.

- 251.00 The religious education leader will obtain a completed *Class Planning Schedule Form* from each catechist for each year.
- 252.00 Religious education leaders will oversee the **training** of all catechists concerning the *Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse and Student Abuse Prevention and Response* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on October 18, 1995 and amended on January 25, 2001.
- 252.10 Religious education leaders will oversee catechists' **adherence** to the *Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse and Student Abuse Prevention and Response* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on October 18, 1995 and amended on January 25, 2001.
- 253.00 Religious education leaders will oversee the **training** of all catechists concerning the *Diocese of Erie Blood Pathogens Policy*.
- 253.10 Religious education leaders will oversee catechists' **adherence** to the *Diocese of Erie Blood Pathogens Policy*.

300

CATECHETICAL STAFF

THE VALUE SOUGHT

CATECHISTS INSPIRING THE CHURCH TO LIVE AND PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS THE CHRIST.

301.00 Catechists are members of the Catholic faith and model this in both words and lifestyle.

302.00 All catechists beginning service in the Diocese after August 1, 1994 will have an *Act 34* clearance from the Pennsylvania State Police. The cost will be paid by the parish as directed by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on June 30, 1994. Catechists are also required to have the *Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance* from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare as mandated by Bishop Trautman on June 25, 2001.

310.00 All catechists will have a confidential personnel file at the parish.

310.10 All records pertaining to the service of a catechist, as identified in the *Diocese of Erie Religious Education Leader Handbook*, will be maintained in their personnel file by the religious education leader.

320.00 All catechists will meet Diocesan certification standards.

321.00 All catechists will be certified according to Diocesan standards or be working toward this goal as defined in *Diocese of Erie Catechist Certification Guidelines* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on April 1, 1997.

321.10 Religious education leaders will keep records of catechist progress toward certification on the Diocesan form *Diocese of Erie - Catechist Certification Record*.

322.00 All catechists who have achieved full Diocesan certification will participate in at least four hours of continuing education (classes/workshops) per year.

323.00 All catechists will be in-serviced on the *Diocesan Child Abuse Policy* effective on October 18, 1995 by Bishop Donald W. Trautman.

324.00 All catechists will be in-serviced on the *Diocesan Blood Pathogens Policy* for Religious Educators.

330.00 All catechists are required to meet Diocesan instructional standards.

331.00 Catechists will submit a copy of their yearly *Class Planning Schedule Form* to the religious education leader outlining which lessons will be taught on which date. The religious education leader will be notified if this plan needs to be altered for any reason.

332.00 Each catechist's teaching will be formally observed by the religious education leader or designate at least once a year.

332.10 Each time a catechist is observed the information will be recorded on a *Diocese of Erie - Catechist Observation Checklist*.

333.00 No catechist will invite any person to enter a classroom or meet with students without first gaining stated approval of the religious education leader for each occurrence.

334.00 Each catechist will complete a *Diocese of Erie - Catechist Effectiveness Checklist* at the end of each year.

400 PROGRAM STRUCTURES

THE VALUE SOUGHT

GOOD ORDER, THE FOUNDATION OF DISCIPLINE, IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

401.00 Parishes will provide religious education programming for all the Christian faithful. (Canon 217)

- 401.10 Parishes will have a religious education program for every child/youth beginning in Pre-school and ending in the Twelfth grade.
- 401.11 Religious education program models may vary based on local need and the age of the children and youth being served.
- 401.12 If local needs require the combining of grades, the religious education program will have a written plan which demonstrates how the curriculum is covered.
- 401.20 All children/youth will have a minimum of 40 hours of religious education per year including instructional time, liturgical celebrations (excluding Sunday Worship unless it is a specific class responsibility), community building activities and service activities.
- 401.21 Each child's progress through the religious education program will be tracked through the maintenance of permanent records. This can be done either on cards available from the Diocese or through computer records.
- 402.00 Religious education programs will serve the special education needs of children/youth in their parish through a determined effort at total inclusion using *Individualized Education Plans* for each child/youth.
- 402.10 Religious education programs will serve the special education needs of adults in their parish through a determined effort at total inclusion.

- 403.00 Each parish will have a written plan for children who come to the program in need of remedial preparation for one or more sacraments. (refer to policy #640.00)
- 404.00 Parents are to be actively involved in the religious education of their children. They will be invited, consulted and informed of all major activities involving their children.
- 404.10 Parents will be informed anytime a child is to be taken off church property for activities such as retreats, service projects or community building activities. Two forms must be obtained for every trip off church property: 1) a signed Confidential/Release Form and 2) a signed Permission Form.
- 404.11 If Confidential/Release forms are kept on file, they must be updated each year. Outdated forms must be properly destroyed to protect confidential information.
- 404.12 A signed Permission Form is required for each trip off church property. No Permission Form may apply to more than one such trip.
- 404.13 A record of every trip made off church property is to be kept. This record must clearly demonstrate that the Confidential/Release Form and the Permission Form were collected for each activity. These records should be kept on file at the parish for one year. A sample form is located in Section 400 Resources page 48A.
- 405.00 Parishes will actively engage adult parishioners in continuing education concerning the relationship of faith and life and have a written plan for accomplishing this responsibility.

410.00 Religious education programs will have handbooks which follow *Diocesan Guidelines for Parish Religious Education Handbooks*.

- 411.00 Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a copy of the *Parish Religious Education Handbook*.
- 412.00 Catechists will have a *Catechist's Handbook* which explains their rights and responsibilities in accordance with diocesan guidelines and parish procedures.

420.00 If a parish can not run its own religious education program or a part of the program (e.g. youth ministry, or inclusion, etc.) the following three conditions must be observed:

- 421.00 Prior to the discontinuation or transfer of the program approval of the Vicar is required. When deemed appropriate by the Vicar, the Diocesan Religious Education Department will be consulted in an effort to maintain the children's/youth's identification with the local parish.
- 422.00 On the determination that a local religious education program or part of a program must be closed, the parish will consult with area parishes to determine where the children/youth should attend and make equitable financial arrangements for their religious education. The details of these arrangements will be in writing and signed by the appropriate persons.
- 423.00 The parish which is closing its religious education program or part of a program, will also have a written plan that outlines how the parish will maintain contact with the affected children/youth.

430.00 Each parish religious education program will seek Diocesan program certification every six years.

500

CURRICULUM

THE VALUE SOUGHT

WHOLE PERSONS KNOWLEDGABLY LIVE GOSPEL VALUES AND CATHOLIC TRADITIONS.

501.00 Religious education programs will teach the specific grade level requirements defined in the *Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum* approved for use by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on January 1, 1995.

501.10 Each parish will have a completed copy of the *Curriculum Parish Planning Worksheet* which assesses how its particular set of texts teach the Diocesan Curriculum.

501.20 Each parish will have a written plan that identifies those areas of the Diocesan Curriculum which are not covered adequately by their particular text series and current programming and develop a plan which outlines how these areas will be covered and in what time frame.

510.00 Parish religious education programs will participate in the *Diocesan Student Assessment Program* every three years as a part of their overall planning. Evaluation of the results of the *Assessment* will be reflected in the plan referred to in 501.20.

510.10 Parent(s) will be informed that their child will participate in the *Diocesan Student Assessment Program*.

510.20 Parent(s) will be informed that student results of *Diocesan Student Assessment Program* are available at the parish and must have access to the results if desired.

511.00 If a religious education program chooses to use report cards or other written reports of student progress, it will be clearly communicated to the parent(s) on the report that it measures a student's progress in knowledge about the faith and is not a measurement of their progress in the spiritual life.

520.00 Parishes must use texts from the *Diocesan Recommended Text List*.

520.10 Parishes considering a change in textbook series will use the *Diocesan Text Review Process* and maintain a copy of this for program certification.

600

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

THE VALUE SOUGHT

A JOYOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CREATOR AND CREATURE.

610.00 Parishes will follow the *First Penance Preparation Policies and Guidelines* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on September 1, 1995 and amended on July 18, 2005.

- 611.10 The Sacrament of Penance will be celebrated only with those who have been properly prepared, who are actively involved in the parish preparation process, and who freely choose to be reconciled.
- 611.20 Sacraments are celebrations of the believing community. The option for home-schooling during the preparation for this sacrament is discouraged except for serious pastoral need.
- 611.30 The time for first Reconciliation is once the person has reached the age of discretion. (Canon 989). Children who were baptized before reaching the age of discretion will celebrate First Reconciliation in second grade. (July 18, 2005)
- 611.40 The Sacrament of Penance will be celebrated prior to the child's reception of first Eucharist. (Canon 914)
- 611.41 There will be a significant period of time between the celebration of first Reconciliation and first Eucharist. The catechesis for Reconciliation must be done separately from the catechesis for first Eucharist, and the preparation periods for these two Sacraments must not take place within the same time period nor overlap in any way. (NCD #126)

612.00 Parent Policies

- 612.10 Parishes must provide a minimum of one meeting with parents prior to the child's celebration of first Reconciliation. Parent(s)/guardian(s), the primary educator(s) of their children, are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for first Reconciliation. This helps parent(s)/guardian(s) renew and strengthen their own faith, and enables them to serve as a positive faith example for their children.
- 612.11 Requirements for the preparation process leading to first Reconciliation are to be clearly communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s) in a timely manner.

613.00 Catholic School Policies

613.10 Children attending a Catholic school which is not in their home parish will prepare for and celebrate the sacrament in their home parish. Exceptions to this will only be made with the express consent of the child's pastor.

614.00 Catechist Policies

614.10 It is essential that a parish utilize the talents of the most gifted and highly trained catechists for preparation for this sacrament. The first celebration of this sacramental encounter with God through Christ is an experience of significant and special grace and deserves the parish's best effort.

615.00 Educational/formational content for first Penance

615.10 The preparation process must follow Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines published on 1/1/95 (Available in the Diocesan Religious Education Handbook - Section 500).

615.20 The preparation process must respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of the individuals.

615.30 The catechist for first Reconciliation will emphasize the love and mercy of a forgiving God, and the importance of repentance and conversion.

615.31 Sin will be presented in a manner and language understood by the child. (This issue is addressed directly in the religious education department video - *Sin & Discipleship* 1999 and in the accompanying information which is attached at the end of this document for reference).

615.32 Sacramental Reconciliation is required of those who are in serious sin; it is recommended for those in venial sin (Canon 988). The catechist of seven year old children must strive not to blur this distinction and make venial sin into something more than it is.

615.33 Catechesis for first Reconciliation should explore the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers, and scriptures of the Rite of Reconciliation. (NDC #36, B-2)

615.34 Children must understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation. (NDC #36, B-2)

615.40 A very simple Act of Contrition is to be used: one which is easily understood by the child (see the Religious Education Handbook 610 pg. 6).

616.00 Liturgical Policies

616.10 The liturgical experience of first Reconciliation will follow the *Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution* as described in the Book of Rites.

620.00 Parishes will follow the *First Eucharist Preparation Policies and Guidelines* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on September 1, 1995 and amended on July 18, 2005.

621.00 Administrative Policies

- 621.10 First Eucharist will be celebrated only with those who have been properly prepared (Canon 913 #1), who are actively involved in the parish preparation program, and who freely choose to receive.
- 621.20 Sacraments are celebrations of the believing community. The option for home-schooling during the preparation for this sacrament is discouraged except for serious pastoral need.
- 621.30 Children who were baptized before reaching the age of discretion will celebrate first Eucharist in the third grade. (July 18, 2005)
- 621.40 First Eucharist will be celebrated only with children who have previously been sacramentally reconciled. (Canon 914)
- 621.41 There will be a significant period of time between the celebration of first Reconciliation and first Eucharist. The catechesis for first Eucharist must be done separately from the catechesis for Reconciliation, and the preparation periods for these two sacraments must not take place within the same time period nor overlap in any way. (NCD #126)

622.00 Parent Policies

- 622.10 Parishes must provide a minimum of one meeting with parents prior to the child's celebration of first Eucharist. Parent(s)/guardian(s), the primary educator(s) of their children, are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for first Eucharist. This helps parent(s)/guardian(s) renew and strengthen their own faith, and enables them to serve as a positive faith example for their children.
- 622.11 Requirements for the first Eucharist preparation process are to be clearly communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s) in a timely manner.

623.00 Catholic School Policies

- 623.10 Children attending a Catholic school which is not in their home parish will prepare for and celebrate the sacraments in their home parish. Exceptions to this will be made only with the express consent of the child's pastor.

624.00 Catechist Policies

- 624.10 It is essential that a parish utilize the talents of the most gifted and highly trained catechists for preparation for this Sacrament. The first celebration of this Sacramental encounter with God through Christ is an experience of significant and special grace and deserves the parish's best effort.
- 624.20 The pastor or parochial vicar will be involved in the preparation of children and their parent(s) /guardian(s) for the celebration of first Eucharist.
(Canons 528/777)

625.00 Educational/formational content for first Eucharist

- 625.10 The preparation process must follow Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines published on 1/1/95 (available in Religious Education Handbook - Section 500).
- 625.11 The preparation process must respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of the individuals.
- 625.20 The child must know, in an age appropriate way, that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.
- 625.21 The child must be able to distinguish the body and blood of Christ from ordinary food. (Canon 913 #2)
- 625.22 The child must be able to demonstrate reverence appropriate to the situation.
- 625.23 Children who have already been baptized should be prepared, according to their capacity, for the Sacrament of Penance prior to their First Eucharist.
(NDC #36, A-3a)
- 625.24 The child should be taught, in an age appropriate way, that the Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all and the commemoration of his last meal with his disciples. (NDC #36, A-3a)
- 625.30 The child must know the proper response to the minister of Eucharist when presented with either the Eucharistic bread or the Eucharistic cup.
- 625.31 The child must be aware of the laws concerning Eucharistic fast.
- 625.32 The child must be able to demonstrate the proper hand position for the reception of Eucharist.

- 625.40 Children should be taught that from First Eucharist on, they can as full members of Christ's Body take part actively with the People of God in the Eucharist, sharing in the Lord's table and the community of their brothers and sisters. (NDC #36, A-3a)
- 625.41 The child should understand that the appropriate commitment to word and sacrament is the altering of our life so that our entire life is a response to Jesus with us.
- 625.42 The preparation process should be designed to develop in children an understanding of the Father's love, of their participation in the sacrifice of Christ, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NDC #36, A-3a)

626.00 Liturgical guidelines for first Eucharist

- 626.10 First Eucharist will normally be celebrated within the Easter season.
- 626.11 First Eucharist is not to be celebrated on Holy Thursday.
- 626.20 The liturgy will be kept simple in order to prevent the appearance of a "performance."
- 626.30 The opportunity to receive both the Eucharistic Bread and Eucharistic Cup is to be provided. Education and rehearsal on receiving the Blood of Christ is important and will be provided so that receiving from the cup is a reasonable option for the child.

630.00 Parishes will follow the *Sacrament of Confirmation Preparation Policies and Guidelines* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on September 1, 1995.

631.00 Administrative policies

631.10 Confirmation will be administered only to those who have been properly instructed, actively involved in the parish program, and who freely choose to be confirmed. Parishes have the responsibility to provide adequate opportunities for preparation of candidates for this sacrament. Requirements for the Confirmation Program should be clearly communicated to both candidates and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

631.11 The appropriate period for the celebration of Confirmation is to be no earlier than the eleventh grade.

631.12 All Confirmation names must be that of a saint of the Church. (**Only saints whose names can be found in *Butler's Lives of the Saints* may be used.**) This policy does permit the use of Scripture names of the holy persons/angels of both the Old and New Testaments.

631.13 Each Confirmation candidate must request the Sacrament from the Bishop in a letter that follows the attached instructions. The appropriate personnel in the parish must review all letters to ensure that the Bishop does not receive letters from candidates indicating that they do not wish to be confirmed or containing inappropriate material.

631.14 The pastor or his representative must interview each candidate at least once at the end of the preparation process.

632.00 Retreat Policies

632.10 The Confirmation retreat is an important part of the candidate's preparation and is not to be omitted. (Pennsylvania's Act 175 offers a ready opportunity for release of students for such retreats during the school day.)

633.00 Service policies

633.10 Service opportunities are an important part of the formation of young Catholics. Parishes are to provide service opportunities for the confirmation candidates based on the needs of the local community.

634.00 Liturgical policies

634.10 The ordinary minister of Confirmation in the Catholic Church is the Bishop. However, the Church has provided for the administration of this sacrament by priests. If Bishop Trautman is not available, he will delegate the minister for Confirmation.

634.30 The proper readings and prayers of the day are to be used on all Sundays of Easter, on Ascension, and on Pentecost. The weekdays of Easter Week, plus all solemnities regardless of when they occur would follow this same principle.

634.31 The ritual mass with the ritual readings are to be used on Sundays in Ordinary Time.

634.32 Celebrations taking place on the weekdays of the Easter Season and Ordinary Time will follow the ritual Mass of Confirmation in the Sacramentary and the readings for Confirmation in the Lectionary.

634.40 The Liturgy Planning sheet should be returned to the Office of Worship at least 10 days prior to the celebration.

634.41 The form concerning altar servers should be sent to the minister of Confirmation. The altar servers will be sent a thank-you note.

635.00 Parent policies

635.10 As the primary educators of their children, parent(s)/guardian(s) are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children.

636.00 Sponsor policies

636.10 Sponsors are to be confirmed, practicing adult Catholics other than the candidate's parents. Since Confirmation is the completion of Baptism, one's godparent could well be a candidate for this role. Sponsors do not have to be of the same sex as the candidate.

637.00 Educational/formational content for Confirmation

- 637.10 Candidates should be taught that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism. (NDC #36, A-3)
- 637.11 Candidates should be taught that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds. (NDC #36, A-3)
- 637.12 Candidates should be taught about the role of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. (NDC #36, A-3)
- 637.13 The preparation process must respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of the candidates
- 637.14 The preparation process for Confirmation should include instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula. (NDC #36, A-3)

700

RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

THE VALUE SOUGHT

EDUCATION IN THE SACRED ARTS REQUIRES OUR NOBLEST EFFORT.

701.00 Parishes will provide religious education programs with adequate resources, both personnel and fiscal, to assure a quality formation in the Gospel for all parishioners (children, youth and adults). Canon 229

- 702.00 Parishes will provide materials to catechists for effective and quality programming. These materials will include, but not be limited to, textbooks, paper, writing implements, media materials, etc.
- 703.00 Parish religious education programs will have access to secretarial support services.
- 703.10 Parish religious education programs will have access to adequate business machines (copiers, computers, etc.) to run the program.
- 704.00 Parish educational facilities will have essential educational equipment including such items as TV/VCRs, chalkboards or equivalents, flipcharts, overheads, etc. so that the Diocesan Curriculum can be faithfully presented.
- 704.10 Classes/groups that meet in parishioners' homes will have access to the same equipment as is available at the parish if it is the decision of the parish to have groups meet in homes.
- 705.00 Religious education programs will plan for the integration of advanced technology into their program, including but not limited to computers, Internet access, etc.

710.00 Parish religious education programs will have a budget and follow *Diocesan Religious Education Budget Guidelines*.

710.01 Budgeting will provide resources for the religious formation of children, youth and adults to ensure that the *Diocesan Curriculum* can be faithfully presented.

720.00 Parish facilities will strictly adhere to child safety and welfare regulations.

721.00 Parish educational facilities will be suitable and comfortable to those for whom the space is primarily intended.

722.00 The Diocese of Erie does not sponsor any Middle School dances. Some dances have been advertised as “Catholic.” There is no permission to use that title in identifying any such dances. The Diocese of Erie in no way, shape, or form sponsors these dances. Such dances are not associated with the Catholic Church, its schools, institutions, programs, and/or organizations. Approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on August 6, 2000.

730.00 Visible signs, symbols and images of the Catholic Tradition will be present in classrooms and throughout the parish educational spaces.

731.00 The Sacred Scriptures will be reverently and tastefully displayed in every space used as a classroom.

800

RELATIONSHIPS

THE VALUE SOUGHT

THAT ALL MAY KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD IN THE WAY WE TREAT THEM.

801.00 As the primary educators of their children, parent(s) will be informed of all activities of the religious education program that affect their children.

802.00 As the primary educators of their children, parent(s) will be consulted whenever major decisions need to be made concerning the program.

810.00 Both parents and parishes will follow the *Diocese of Erie Guidelines for Homeshooling* in circumstances concerning the home schooling of children in religion.

820.00 Confidentiality will be strictly enforced concerning students and other staff members.

820.10 The discussion of the physical, psychological, mental or emotional condition of any student with anyone outside of official parish staff except the student's parent(s) or those the parent(s) designate is strictly prohibited.

820.20 In each instance of Aids/HIV infection, only those with a **legal** right to information about the health and well being of another person can be informed.

DIOCESAN POLICIES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (ABBREVIATED)

QUICK REFERENCE LIST

- The religious education program has a written mission statement.
- The religious education program has a written vision statement.
- The parish has a designated religious education leader other than the pastor.
- The religious education leader meets Diocesan certification standards.
- The religious education leader has a signed Professional Agreement with the parish.
- The religious education leader is justly compensated.
- The religious education leader participates in yearly continuing education and formation.
- Catechists are all practicing members of the Catholic faith.
- There are confidential personnel files for each catechist at the parish.
- The catechists have achieved Diocesan Certification or are in the process.
- All catechists have been in-serviced on the Child Abuse and Blood Born Pathogens Policies.
- All catechists have completed a yearly Class Planning Schedule Form.
- Each catechist is observed teaching by the religious education leader once a year.
- The parish has a program for every child beginning in preschool through twelfth grade.
- The religious education program has a minimum of 40 hours per year, including instruction, liturgical celebrations, community building and service activities.
- The parish serves the special education needs of children/youth using an IEP.
- A written plan exists for children in need of remedial preparation for one or more sacraments.
- The parish has adult faith formation opportunities and has a written adult education plan.
- The religious education program has handbooks for the parents/students and each parent has a copy.
- The religious education program has handbooks for the catechists and each catechist has a copy.
- Specific grade level requirements are taught as defined in the Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum.
- The parish has a written plan that identifies those areas of the curriculum not being covered in the text series and outlines how these areas will be covered.
- The parish participates in the Diocesan Student Assessment Program every three years.
- The parish is using a text series that has at least a satisfactory rating on the Diocesan Evaluation Tool.
- The parish follows the First Penance Preparation Policies and Guidelines of the Diocese of Erie.
- The parish follows the First Eucharist Preparation Policies and Guidelines of the Diocese of Erie.
- The parish follows the Confirmation Preparation Policies and Guidelines of the Diocese of Erie.
- The parish follows the RCIA guidelines when planning for its adaptation for children.
- The parish provides the religious education program with adequate resources, both personnel and fiscal, to assure a quality formation in the Gospel for all parishioners.
- There are visible signs, symbols and images of the Catholic tradition in each learning area.
- The Sacred Scriptures are visibly and reverently displayed in each learning area.
- The parish follows the Diocese of Erie Guidelines for Homeschooling.
- The parish informs parents of all activities in the religious education program that affect their children.