

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

RATIONALE FOR CERTIFICATION

The Diocese of Erie recognizes four levels of leadership within the religious education community. Each level has a distinct title. These titles are directly related to the amount of formal education and/or training and experience the individual has obtained to perform the role of religious education leader. The decision to use formal education as the criteria is warranted because it is both objective and verifiable. Attempting to make distinctions on the grounds of experience alone leaves a situation of no more than subjective evaluation.



See the charts on pages 2-3 for a quick overview of how various responsibilities are handled by people with varying degrees of educational background and experience. These distinctions in title are important from two perspectives. The first is related to the ability of the religious education leader to speak on behalf of the Church as an agent of the pastor. It seems obvious, but also significant, that a person trained in religious education/theology with a Masters degree would have significantly more independence than a person with a high school diploma when teaching for and in the name of the Church. This concern is reflected in the development of the following job descriptions. The direction of a religious education program falls more heavily on the pastor when the parish hires either a Facilitator or Administrator and shifts toward the religious educator when they have more training and experience.

The second rationale for job titles is related to questions of justice. There are two issues of justice for which the use of titles is an appropriate response. The first issue, stated directly, is that if everyone is a Director of religious education no matter his or her background or training, then the term becomes meaningless. The issue is analogous to the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the ordained. It is certain that all the baptized share in the priesthood of Christ; without appropriate distinctions however, the role of the ordained could be blurred or lost. The same is true for religious education leaders. The distinctions are not intended to create classes but rather to acknowledge that, in fact, training and experience need to be recognized. It seems appropriate and just that we are not asking religious education leaders to perform tasks for which they have not been properly prepared.

Related to this is the notion of just wages. Distinctions in title based on training and experience ought to impact wages and benefits. The practice of “rewarding” someone with a title they have not earned and then not paying them a just wage constitutes a diminution of the ability of others who have rightfully obtained a particular title to earn a decent living.

Job descriptions are available for three of the four levels of religious education leadership used within the Diocese of Erie. (Facilitators use the same job description as Administrators.) The following chart highlights how various duties are handled differently among the various levels of leadership. These distinctions are important for issues related to hiring and job performance evaluation. The “bolded” items in the chart draw attention to these differences among the three job descriptions.

MESSAGE	DRE	CRE	ARE
<p>B. Enable “critical thinking skills” so that the Church of today will be prepared for tomorrow.</p>	<p>B. Enable “critical thinking skills” so that the Church of today will be prepared for tomorrow.</p>	<p>B. Promotes education in “critical thinking skills” so that the Church of today will be prepared for tomorrow.</p>	
<p>C. Initiates, organizes and evaluates religious education programs that respond to the needs of all parishioners across the life-span in concert with the sound educational and research principles and the teachings of the Church.</p>	<p>C. Initiates, organizes and evaluates religious education programs that respond to the needs of all parishioners across the life-span in concert with the sound educational and research principles and the teachings of the Church.</p>	<p>C. Administers an established religious education program that responds to the needs of all parishioners across the life-span under the supervision of the Pastor or his delegate.</p>	
<p>D. Is responsible for the appropriate use of texts, audio-visuals, etc. in catechetical programs so that all resources meet standards set by sound educational practices and the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.</p>	<p>D. Is responsible for the appropriate use of texts, audio-visuals, etc. in catechetical programs so that all resources meet standards set by sound educational practices and the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.</p>	<p>D. Provide appropriate texts, audio-visuals, etc. for catechetical staff so that all resources meet standards set by the Pastor and the Diocesan Religious Education Office.</p>	
<p>E. Enables the writing and ongoing revision of a parish catechetical mission statement and the goals and objectives that respond to that mission which is always a response to God’s love and grace.</p>	<p>E. Follows the parish catechetical mission statement and sets goals and objectives that respond to that mission which is always a response to God’s love and grace.</p>	<p>E. Follows the parish catechetical mission statement and the goals and objectives that respond to that mission which is always a response to God’s love and grace.</p>	

COMMUNITY - The job performance duties within the job descriptions are the same across all three levels of leaders		
DRE	CRE	ARE
ADMINISTRATION		
A. Recruits, trains (provides access to Diocesan training) and supports volunteer catechists for those areas of the catechetical program where volunteerism is appropriate.	A. Provides resource persons for the training and support of catechists as needed.	A. Recruits and supports (provides access to Diocesan training) volunteer catechists for those areas of the catechetical program where volunteerism is appropriate.
B. Calls and ordinarily presides over regular and special meetings of the staff of the parish Religious Education program as required.	B. Calls regular and special meetings of the staff of the parish Religious Education program as required. The coordinator will preside over meetings when possible and provide other appropriate resource persons when necessary.	B. Calls and facilitates regular and special meetings of the staff of the parish Religious Education program as required. The administrator will arrange for appropriate leadership for these meetings as required.
G. Is an advisor to the Education Committee of the Pastoral Council or other appropriate parish structure.	G. Is an advisor to the Education Committee of the Pastoral Council or other appropriate parish structure.	G. Reports activities of the religious education to the Education Committee or other appropriate parish structure
WORSHIP		
E. Leads (or trains appropriate leadership) for parent meetings for sacraments appropriate to the parish structures and Diocesan guidelines in concert with sound theological and educational principles.	E. Arranges parent meetings for sacraments appropriate to the parish structures and Diocesan guidelines in concert with sound theological and educational principles. The coordinator is encouraged to lead parent meetings within the limits of their expertise and to provide other resource persons when appropriate.	E. Arranges parent meetings for sacraments appropriate to the parish structures and Diocesan guidelines in concert with sound theological and educational principles. The administrator is expected to participate in parent meetings for the administration of the details of the program but not to provide theological expertise.
SERVICE - The job performance duties within the job descriptions are the same across all three levels of leaders		