

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Tracking student progress is motivated by two issues. The first is an awareness and commitment to the reality that parent(s) are the primary

educators in the faith. We have a sacred responsibility to empower parents - to the same degree that parents have a responsibility to support parish educational efforts. The great danger when two “agencies” like the family and the parish attempt to share a responsibility is that one side or the other either dominates or diminishes. The only road to a mutual relationship is through communication.



While student progress reports in and of themselves do not constitute adequate communication between

parish and parent(s), they are one piece of a much larger web of interaction.

The second issue that supports the use of student progress reports is the notion of accountability. Just as communication is a two-way relationship so also is accountability. On the one hand, the use of progress reports tracks whether or not the child is attentive to the religious education process and suggests to the child that we are serious about our work. When the progress report goes home it indicates to the child that the parish and parent(s) are united in this endeavor.

The progress report also holds us, the religious education community, accountable to the parents to provide quality services. Parents have a right to know what the child is supposed to be learning and whether or not the child is in fact learning.

The Diocese has a “Religious Education Program Report of Progress.” This form is available from the Department of Religious Education for a nominal fee. It is available as a service to the parishes of the diocese.

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Please be aware that it is not required that the parish use this form to report student progress. The requirement is to do the reporting - how the parish chooses to do the report is a matter of choice. Comments have been made that the progress report is “too school-oriented” and that a letter written to parents by the catechist is a preferable method of reporting student progress. This approach is certainly acceptable, keeping in mind the following suggestion and cautions.

The suggestion would be to provide catechists with the diocesan progress report so that information from it can be included, e.g., what was covered in the term, attitude, behavior, attendance, etc. The cautions: be sure to obtain and keep a copy of what is sent to the parents and require a parental signature to demonstrate that the parent has indeed seen the letter.

As a final word concerning student assessment. Every effort must be made to help catechists understand that there is a difference between faith and information about faith. These assessment instruments relate to “information about the faith” not faith itself. Faith is about a relationship with God in which one comes to love God in return for God’s love already shown. While it is silly to suggest that information about the one who is loved is unimportant, it is just as silly to suggest that someone can not love God if they don’t know when God set the Hebrews free from Babylon. This is an area where great caution needs to be exercised.

