
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.

> Mission statement / Vision statement defined

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

- > What to consider before writing
- > Example: Department of Religious Ed Mission and Vision Statements
- > Tool to write a mission statement

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

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

- > Tool to write a vision statement

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.

Resources for hiring a religious education leader:

- > Introduction
- > Qualities to Consider
- > Parish Needs Assessment
- > Job posting and Advertising
- > Interview questions / legal guidelines
- > Interview Form
- > Reference checking
- > Reference checking Employer form
- > Reference checking form

202.00 The religious education leader(s) is a member of the Catholic faith and models this tradition in both words and lifestyle. This policy is further explained by the document *Standards of Catholic Practice* approved by Bishop Trautman on December 21, 2010.

- > Standards of Catholic Practice

203.00 Religious education leaders will be assigned titles by the diocesan Department of Religious Education based on the *Religious Education Policies* promulgated by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on May 3, 1993.

- > Religious Education Leader titles defined

204.00 Religious education leaders must meet current requirements identified by the *Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children*. Paid employees are required to provide this at their own expense as required by Bishop Trautman on June 25, 2001.

- > Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children
- > Office for the Protection of Children and Youth

204.10 When parishes are hosting catechetical classes in homes, the adult screening and training standards as stipulated by the *Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children* will apply.

> Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children - Section III-C #11

205.00 Every parish will have a confidential personnel file for the religious education leader(s) which contains all appropriate records. As defined by current diocesan policy.

> Personnel file contents for Religious Education Leaders

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).

> Month by Month tasks of a Religious Educator

> The role and duties of a Religious Education Leader

> Understanding the RE Leader's place in Church relationships

> Why are there a variety of titles for religious educators

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.

> Teaching authentically

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.

> Titles for religious educators used by the diocese

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

> Diocesan Professional Agreement Template

231.00 The elements of a Professional Agreement shall include a job description and a process for the completion of an annual review.

> 230 - Professional Agreement - pages 15-23

232.00 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.

> 230 Professional Agreement Worksheets - pages.7-12

232.10 Lay religious education leaders will receive a benefit package in accordance with Diocesan guidelines approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on May 3, 1993.

> 230 Professional Agreement - page. 11

232.20 Religious working in the capacity of a parish religious education leader will be compensated at the Diocesan salary and benefit scale for Religious.

> Contact the Director for Religious

233.00 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.

> Performance Appraisal Forms

> Exempt Employee Evaluation Form (Diocesan)

> Non-Exempt Employee Form (Diocesan)

> Not sure which one to use - see "Wage and Hour Worksheet"

234.00 Religious working in the capacity of a parish religious education leader will follow hiring guidelines established by the Director for the Office for Religious.

> Contact the Director for Religious for details

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.

- > Resources for Continuing Education
- > Continuing Education / Spiritual formation recording form

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.

- > Resources for continuing Spiritual Formation
- > Continuing Education / Spiritual formation recording form

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

- > Religious Education Leader as Steward

251.00 The religious education leader will obtain a completed *Class Planning Schedule Form* from each catechist for each year.

- > Class Planning Schedule Form

252.00 Religious education leaders will oversee the **training** of all catechists and volunteers concerning the current *Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman.

- > Diocesan resources for the Protection of Children and Youth

- 252.10 Religious education leaders will oversee catechists' and volunteers' ***adherence*** to the current *Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children* approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman.
- > Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth
 - > Catechist Personnel File requirements concerning child protection
 - > See Child Protection page to download annual report forms
- 253.00 Religious education leaders will oversee the ***training*** of all catechists concerning the *Diocesan Blood Pathogens Policy*.
- > Diocesan Policy for Blood Pathogens
 - > Blood-Pathogens In-service form
 - > Blood Pathogens incident reporting form
- 253.10 Religious education leaders will oversee catechists' ***adherence*** to the diocesan *Blood Pathogens Policy*.
- > Catechist Personnel File requirements concerning blood pathogens

300 Catechetical Staff

The Value Sought

Catechists inspiring the Church to live and proclaim
the Gospel of Jesus the Christ.

301.00 Each parish will recruit and train a sufficient number of catechists to serve the formation needs of the parish community (children and adults).

- > The role of the catechist
- > Recruiting tips
- > Form for recruiting volunteers
- > Application form for volunteers
- > Orienting new catechists
- > Supporting catechists

302.00 Catechists are members of the Catholic faith and model this in both words and lifestyle. This policy is further explained by the document *Standards of Catholic Practice* approved by Bishop Trautman on December 21, 2010.

- > Standards of Catholic Practice
- > Standards of Catholic Practice form

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

- > Catechist Personnel file contents

310.10 All records pertaining to the service of a catechist, 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 current *Diocese of Erie Catechist Certification Guidelines* approved by Bishop Trautman.

- > Catechist certification and training

- 321.10 Religious education leaders will keep records of catechist progress toward certification on the Diocesan form *Diocese of Erie - Catechist Certification Record*.
- > Catechist Certification Record Form
- 322.00 All catechists who have achieved full diocesan certification will participate in at least four hours of continuing education (classes/workshops) per year.
- > Continuing Education Record Form
- 323.00 All catechists will be in-serviced on the current *Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children* as approved by Bishop Trautman.
- > Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth
- 324.00 All catechists will be in-serviced on the diocesan *Blood Pathogens Policy* for Religious Educators.
- > Diocesan Policy for Blood Pathogens

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.
- > Class Planning Schedule Form
- 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*.
- > Catechist Observation Forms
- 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.
- > Catechist Effectiveness Checklist

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)

- > Introduction to program structures
- > Keys to a successful program
- > Religious Education Boards explained

- 401.10 Parishes will have a religious education program for every child/youth beginning in Preschool and ending in twelfth grade.
- > Registration Form sample
 - > 8 Key program details (esp. for new leaders)
 - > Legal issues to consider
 - > Understanding the legal term: negligence
 - > Understanding copyright responsibilities
- 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 demonstrated how the curriculum is covered.
- 401.20 All children/youth will have a minimum of 42 hours of religious education per year including instructional time, liturgical celebration (excluding Sunday Worship unless it is a specific class responsibility), community building activities and service activities.
- > Developing an Annual Calendar
 - > Number of hours required in an RE Program

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.

- > Adult Religious Education: an introduction
- > Adult Learning Characteristics (Think - parent meetings)
- > Adult Religious Education: how to
- > Small Christian Communities
- > Adult Religious Education Checklist

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

- > Parish Handbooks: an introduction

411.00 Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given a copy of the Parish Religious Education Handbook

- > Parent / Student Handbook sample

412.00 Catechists will have a Catechist's Handbook which explains their rights and responsibilities in accordance with diocesan guidelines and parish procedures.

- > Catechist Handbook sample

420. When, due to a diminishing population¹, a religious education program finds it difficult to maintain a traditional schooling model program the following must be observed: The program must be combined with a neighboring parish religious education program² or an alternative model³ must be initiated in the parish. If the program is to be transferred to another parish, policies 421-423 must be followed.

1. Policy 420.00 is activated when the following standard is not met: there must be six (6) or more students in at least nine (9) of the grades to continue using the school model program in the parish. This standard is applied to students in grades 1 through 11 only.

2. If it is not possible to merge with a neighboring religious education program because of prohibitive distance or geographical obstacle, an alternative model must be used in the parish.

3. Homeschooling is not an appropriate alternative model.
(Amended by Bishop Lawrence T. Persico, August 8, 2014.)

- > Combining RE programs: the policy and its rationale

- 421.00 Prior to the discontinuation of transfer of the program approval of the regional Episcopal 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 of 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 detail of these arrangements will be in writing and sign 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.

500 Curriculum

The Value Sought

Whole persons knowledgeably live Gospel values and catholic traditions

501.00 Religious education programs will teach the specific grade level requirements defined in the current diocesan Religious Education Curriculum as found on the Department of Religious Education website.

> Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum

501.10 Parishes are to use textbooks that meet the following criteria: 1) the entire series must have both an Imprimatur and a Nihil Obstat 2) the series must have been found in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the Subcommittee on the Catechism, USCCB 3) the series must be on an approved Diocesan list maintained and updated by the Religious Education Office 4) the curriculum type must be “spiral” in nature 5) one series must be used for all grades at least until Jr. High 6) the school and religious education program within a parish are encouraged to use the same religion text series but are not required to do so 7) it is also encouraged that “consumable” student texts be used as designed

> List of approved religious education texts
> Process to review and select a text series

510.00 Student assessment is an important element which helps to determine that program goals are actually being accomplished. Written assessment of student progress is to be communicated with parents.

> Student Assessment Considered

510.10 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

> Diocesan Report Card

600 Sacramental Preparation

The Value Sought

A joyous relationship between Creator and creature.

> Sacramental Preparation consideration

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

> First Penance Checklist

611.00 Administrative Policies

- 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 baptized before reaching the age of discretion will celebrate first Reconciliation in second grade.
- 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, 2005 quoted at #36, B-2, p. 135)

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, p. 136)
- 615.34 Children must "understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation." (NDC, 2005 #36, B-2, p. 136)

- 615.40 A very simple Act of Contrition is to be used, one which is easily understood by the child (see the example in the diocesan *Religious Education Handbook* Section 610, page 6)).

616.00 Liturgical Policies for first Reconciliation

- 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*.

- > Download First Reconciliation Color Certificate
- > Download First Reconciliation Black and White Certificate

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.

- > First Eucharist checklist

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 Catholic before reaching the age of discretion will normally celebrate first Eucharist in third grade.
- 621.40 First Eucharist will be celebrated only with children who have previously been sacramentally reconciled.(Canon 914) (NDC, 2005 #36 A-3A, p. 127)
- 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, 2005 #36, B-2, p. 135)

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.
- 625.30 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.
- 625.33 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, 2005 #36 A-3A, page 127)
- 625.40 Children should be taught that from “first Communion 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, 2005 #36 A-3A, page 127)
- 625.41 The child should understand that the appropriate commitment to word and sacrament is the altering of their life so that their entire life is a response to Jesus.
- 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, 2005 #36 A-3A, Page 127)

626.00 Liturgical policies for first Eucharist

- 626.10 First Eucharist will normally be celebrated within the Easter season.
- 626.20 First Eucharist is not to be celebrated on Holy Thursday.
- 626.30 The liturgy will be kept simple in order to prevent the appearance of a “performance.”
- 626.40 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 <i>Sacrament of Confirmation Preparation Policies and Guidelines</i> approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on September 1, 1995.
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> Confirmation Checklist

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 freely choose to be confirmed.
- 631.11 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).
- 631.12 Confirmation preparation, as a distinct catechetical experience, must adhere to Policy 401.20 which requires 42 hours of contact time. Five hours of service requirements may be applied toward this 42 hour requirement. Those parishes which extend Confirmation preparation across two or three years are to plan 42 hours of contact time in each of these years.
- 631.13 The appropriate period for the celebration of Confirmation is to be no earlier than the eleventh grade. This policy is to be understood with the following clarifications:
 - Three (3) full years of high school catechesis is intended by the policy
 - Confirmation will typically be celebrated in the spring of the 11th grade
 - The celebration of Confirmation may be requested for the fall but only for those in the 12th grade
 - The combining of multiple grades into a single Confirmation class so that Confirmation may be held in a parish is not permitted.
- 631.14 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.
- 631.15 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.

> Confirmation Letter Requirements

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

632.00 Parent Policies

- 632.10 As the primary educators of their children, parent(s)/guardian(s) are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for Confirmation. This helps them renew and strengthen their own faith and serve as a positive faith example for their children.

633.00 Retreat Policies

- 633.10 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.)
- 633.11 The retreat before Confirmation is a valuable opportunity for the students to build community, receive catechesis and experience conversion. The full text of Bishop Trautman's *Expectations for a Confirmation Retreat*
- > Bishop Persico's expectations for a Confirmation retreat

634.00 Service policies

- 634.10 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.

635.00 Educational/formational content for Confirmation

- 635.10 Candidates should be taught that "Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, *imprinting an indelible character on the soul*" (NDC, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)
- 635.11 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, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)
- 635.12 Candidates should be taught "about the role of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit." (NDC, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)
- 635.13 The preparation process must respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of the candidates.

- 635.14 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, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)

636.00 Liturgical policies

- 636.10 Specific liturgical requirements for Confirmation are promulgated each year by the Diocesan Chancellor at the time of the distribution of the Confirmation schedule. These instructions should be reviewed carefully to ensure that Confirmation is well celebrated. Questions about these directions can be directed to the diocesan Office of Worship or to the Chancellor.

- 636.20 Preparation of a liturgy with the Bishop requires the completion of the *Liturgy Preparation Sheet*.

> Liturgy Preparation Sheet

637.00 Sponsor policies

- 637.10 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.

640.00 Parishes will follow the Rite of Christian Initiation Guidelines approved by Bishop Donald W. Trautman on September 15, 1993 when planning for its adaption for children.

Christian Initiation guidelines

Interpreting this Section

The information contained here is taken from the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* which is mandatory for the initiation of adults, children of catechetical age (also referred to as the “age of discretion;” typically understood as age seven and beyond), and teenagers, according to the general law of the Church. This Rite became mandatory for the dioceses of the United States on September 1, 1988.

This section is to be implemented in all parishes of the diocese without exception.

With the promulgation of the Rite in 1988 and the new Code of Canon Law in 1983, the norm for the reception of unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age into the Church is through their enrollment into the CATECHUMENATE, in which they will be led through various stages of preparation to sacramental initiation and then mystagogy. This order of initiation is **MANDATORY**, and *must replace any contrary custom or practice*. The optimal time for the celebration of Initiation is the Vigil of Easter.



Christian Initiation guidelines

Confirmation Guidelines

Adults, children of catechetical age, and teenagers subject to the norms of the Rite of Christian Initiation *do not follow the ordinary diocesan policies for Eucharist and Confirmation*, but, as noted above, are prepared *in the catechumenal process for the reception of the three Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist simultaneously*, according to the ancient tradition of the church.

Although the Diocesan Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, Canon Law provides priests with the faculty to confirm. This faculty *must* be exercised regarding candidates for Confirmation according to the Rite of Christian Initiation.

Priests may confirm in the following cases

- a. Necessity involving the danger of death.
- b. The priest who by virtue of his office or by a mandate from the diocesan bishop baptizes an adult or admits a baptized adult into full communion with the Catholic Church. (Canon 883:2) This also includes children of catechetical age.
- c. Priests who do not exercise a pastoral office must obtain a mandate from the diocesan bishop to baptize and confirm. This is necessary for validity.

The table on the following page is provided to indicate what persons the priest is to confirm according to the Rite of Initiation, and what permissions may be necessary. Note that this also applies to children of catechetical age and older.

Christian Initiation guidelines
Summary of Confirmation Regulations
 (for adults, children & teenagers of catechetical age in RCIA)

Candidate	Minister	How permitted
Person baptized Catholic in infancy	Bishop/priest	from the law (candidate is subject to Diocesan Confirmation Policy)
Baptized Catholic but uncatechized	priest	with Bishop's permission for validity
Baptized Catholic but apostate (totally repudiated the Catholic faith)	priest	from the law (RCIA: NS #28)
Baptized Catholic but <u>formally</u> joins another religion	priest	from the law (RCIA: NS #28)
Baptized Catholic but without fault adheres to a non-Catholic religion (as a child baptized Catholic but raised by grandparents in Methodist church)	priest	from the law (RCIA: NS #28)
Baptized Catholic but without fault never practices Catholic faith (e.g., a person prevented from practicing the faith by persons or circumstances: child of lax parents; mentally impaired; elderly in nursing home; or special military circumstances)	priest	with permission of the Bishop for validity
Validly baptized non-Catholic entering the full communion of the Catholic church	priest	from the law (Canon 883 #2)
Eastern Rite (Orthodox) seeking full communion in Latin Rite.		special circumstances; no formal reception; already validly confirmed

Christian Initiation guidelines

First Penance Guidelines

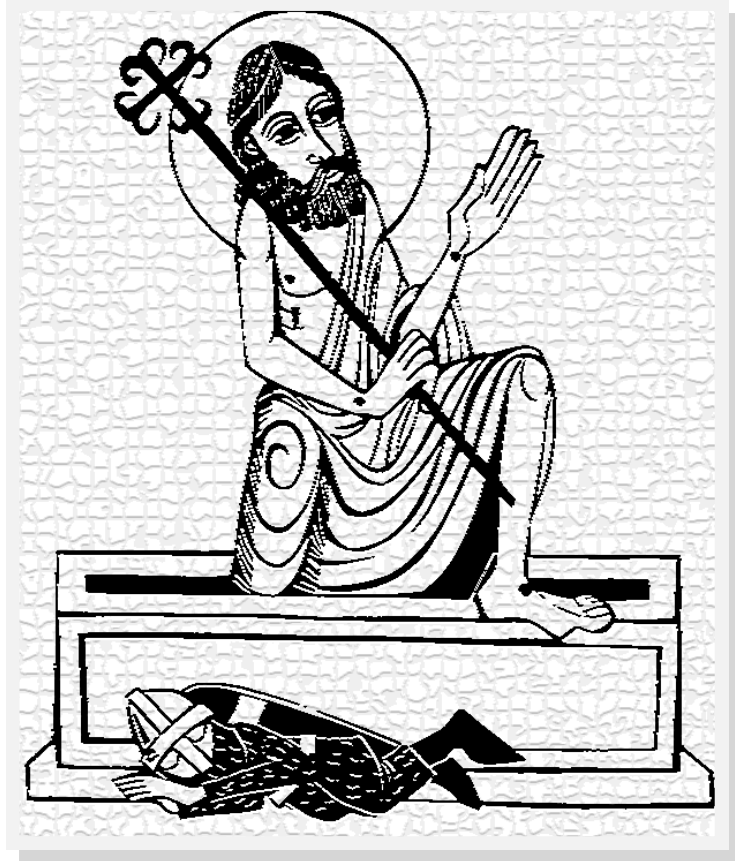
The preparation of children and teenagers within the Rite of Christian Initiation will differ from the usual Diocesan policy and will follow the process indicated in the Rite of Initiation itself.

The Church's requirement for the usual sequence of first Penance then Eucharist is a way of celebrating Reconciliation as a reminder and renewal of the "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins" with which Christian initiation first began, so that the Eucharist may be received with "heart renewed."

Adults and children entering full communion with the Catholic Church are to observe the above order in the Diocese of Erie. Adult and children catechumens will receive the sacrament after an appropriate interval following their Baptism, Confirmation, and First Eucharist.

Adults, teenagers and children entering full communion will usually experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance at the time of the celebration of the Rite of Continuing Conversion during the season of Lent prior to their reception. These directives are given in the Rite of Christian Initiation text.

In the case of children, it would be ideal if their peers in religious education could also be prepared to celebrate the sacrament during Lent, so that all the children could take part in the same ritual.



Christian Initiation guidelines

Overview of the Catechumenate adapted for Children

The Order of Christian Initiation is adapted for use with children (and younger teenagers) [decisions about the grouping of teens with children or other teens must be done with attention to their individual maturity] according to the norms given in the Rite itself (see RCIA: no. 255 ff.)

How and when should children be admitted to the catechumenate? The following guidelines will be helpful in making this determination:

1. Children under the age of discretion (usually considered to be about the age of seven) may be baptized according to the Church's Rite for Infant Baptism, according to the wishes of their parents in this matter. The parents may also decide to have their children baptized at the time of their own baptism or entrance into full communion.
2. Unbaptized children who have reached the age of discretion are to be admitted to the children's catechumenate and are to be initiated in the same manner as adults who are enrolled in the catechumenate: they are to receive Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (in this sequence) within the same liturgical celebration.
3. Children baptized in infancy as non-Catholics who have reached the age of discretion are to be enrolled in the catechumenate for children. They will celebrate First Penance and later be received into full communion. They will be received into full communion in the same manner as adults, i.e., reception, Confirmation, First Eucharist, in the same celebration and in this sequence.
4. Depending upon the degree of their maturity, older teenagers might be admitted to the adult catechumenate. If ages in a particular gathering range from seven to nearly eighteen, for example, obviously the participants will need to be grouped so as to meet their particular needs, even if several catechumenal groups must be formed to accomplish this.
5. Children generally require a longer period of formation than adults. For this reason, children being prepared for baptism or full communion should ordinarily not be admitted to the sacraments of initiation until they have completed a two-year catechumenate.
6. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, children in the catechumenate take part in the program of religious education along with their peer group. This peer group in turn becomes a support for the catechumens as they in turn become acquainted with the workings of the catechumenal process.

Christian Initiation guidelines

Overview of the Catechumenate adapted for Children, cont'd

7. The peer companions referred to in number 5 (or any pre-teen Catholic children who accompany unbaptized children during their catechumenal formation period) are not to be confirmed at the same time as their companions in the catechumenate, but are to follow the norms of the Diocesan Confirmation Policy.
8. In the diocese of Erie, all who were baptized Catholics as infants (before reaching the age of discretion) are subject to the Diocesan Confirmation Policy.



For further information about the Rite of Christian Initiation or its implementation please call the Office of Initiation.

700 Curriculum

Resources and Environment

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
- > Diocesan Media Center
 - > Catechist material request form
- 703.00 Parish religious education will have access to secretarial support services.
- 703.10 Every parish religious education leader is to have direct access to a computer with Internet access whose use is for religious education. Each of these computers will have PDS *Faith Formation Module* installed. Every religious education leader is also to have access to additional business machines (copiers, etc.) necessary to run the religious education program.
- > Tips for using PDS Formation
- 704.00 Parish educational facilities will have essential educational equipment including such items as TV/VCRs/DVD players, 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
- 705.00 Religious education programs will plan for the continuing integration of current 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*.

- > Budgeting: an introduction
- > Instructions to use the accounting forms
- > Accounting Forms
- > Petty Cash Form

- 710.10 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.

- 720.10 The physical plant is to meet reasonable standards for the health and safety of all who use the building, including but not limited to adequate, marked and accessible fire exits, adequate restroom facilities, etc.
- 720.20 Each religious education program will have one safety drill (fire, tornado, etc.) annually. All catechists must be instructed regarding safety procedures and receive a copy of the procedures for their reference
- 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.

> The Home is also Church

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 Homeschooling in circumstances concerning the home schooling of children in religion.

> Homeschooling Guidelines

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

> Privacy / Confidentiality Explained

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.