



# Training Tips For

Department of Religious Education, Diocese of Erie

#2

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# PDS Formation

## What is a database?

A database is a collection of data arranged for ease and speed of search and retrieval.  
(The American Heritage® Dictionary)

## Why a database?

It can be the most efficient way to manage all the data in your religious education program.

Two principles should guide you as you begin to think about what information should be included:

Duplicate information wastes space and increases the likelihood of errors and inconsistencies.

Correctness and completeness of information is important.

## Why are you collecting all this stuff?

The first step in developing an effective database is to determine the purpose of the database and how it will be used. Make lists of the answers to these questions (yes!!! – in your notebook or binder)

You need to know what information you want to get out of the database. It's important to talk to people who will use the database and brainstorm about the questions you'd like the database to answer. Sketch out the reports you'd like to be produced (the more precise and detailed your sketch the better your chance of actually getting what you need). Gather the forms you currently use to record your data. The database will only give back the information that is put in - "garbage-in, garbage-out".

If your program includes students from more than one parish, how are you going to signify that? Do you need an ID # for each parish?

Reminder 1: If you have technical problems with PDS such as it won't let you add new people or it won't work with your printer – then you need to talk with PDS directly – you are paying for their service – don't hesitate to use it.

Reminder 2: If you let us know what areas in the program are difficult for you when we actually get you into the program itself – there are other training options with PDS that can be done together which would be informative and cost effective.