



Training Tips For

Department of Religious Education, Diocese of Erie

#4

May 10, 2011

A rose by any other name.....

How you name things determines/controls what you can get back/out of a database.

So.....

Let's think about what to name things:

What type of religious education program is your parish running?

(Please read all the examples)

**Below are a few examples of different types in our diocese:
Which do you resemble?**

1. *St. Joseph, Force—one parish—one program—one class per grade—one PDS*
2. *St. Jude, Erie—one parish—one program—multiple classes per grade— one PDS*
3. *St. Teresa, Union City—2 parishes—two separate programs—one PDS*
4. *East Side Catholic Faith Formation Ministry— multiple parishes—one program—one PDS*

(This list is not meant to identify every type)

Parish #1 is very straight forward since everyone belongs to the same parish and the same program and there is typically only one class per grade. When you need a list of grade 3 students you will get all the students that have been keyed into grade 3. Please note: to the computer GR3 is different than GR.3 is different than Grade 3. Being consistent is essential. Consider a coding format that makes sense to all the people using the database.

Parish #2 is little more complex because you have to think about how you will distinguish one first grade class from another. Is it 1A and 1B, Grade 1A and Grade 1B? Once you decide, it is very important to be consistent with all grades, i.e. 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, etc. How will you deal with pre-school; kindergarten; Liturgy of the Word for Children?

Parish #3: With two separate parishes and two separate programs on one PDS system, there may be times you will want to send the same letter to 3rd graders from both parishes and other times to send separate letters to each parish. You will need to be able to specify those students/families from each parish/program and also each grade in each parish/program. So you need to consider something like ST Grade 3 (St. Teresa Grade 3); OLF Grade 3 (Our Lady of Fatima Grade 3) and All Grade 3.

Parish #4: For parishes in this situation it is important to know what you need to send out. You may need as many as five or more variations for each grade. Once you identify what "type" program you are running, please to refer back to Tip #2 where you were asked to begin to think about what kinds of information you want to get out of the database: lists, letters, labels, envelopes etc. What kinds of codes do you think you will need to get your information.

You almost need to work backwards when setting up a database. First, what do you need to get out of the program, and then take that apart to figure out what needs to be put in.

Coming next: Program Installation

Coming up: Diocesan suggestions about what to call these codes/sort fields/keywords

PDS
F
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