

GUIDELINES FOR PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
OFFICE FOR CATECHETICAL FORMATION



Revised 2026

Prayer for Catechists

*Heavenly Father,
in your goodness bless all catechists
of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.*

*Send your Spirit upon them
to be living witnesses
to Your message of love
and salvation.*

*Deepen their understanding
of Your Holy Word
so they may faithfully teach
the truth revealed
by your son, Jesus Christ.*

*Strengthen their resolve
to be true sons and daughters
of Your holy Catholic Church.*

*We ask this in the name
of Jesus, the Master teacher.
Amen.*

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The Catechetical Ministry

“GO AND TEACH ALL NATIONS”*
THE CHURCH’S MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS

All baptized Catholics are called to missionary discipleship and share in the Church’s mission of evangelization, but before we can go out, we must first be prepared in heart, mind, and body to be sent. This preparation is catechesis. We must first encounter Christ Jesus and be formed in our relationship with him in order to bear him to others. His love transforms us and spurs us to share that love with others. Through personal witness to Christ’s saving message of faith, hope and love, we faithfully proclaim the word of God and the presence and actions of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the Church.

WHAT IS CATECHESIS?

Catechesis is derived from a Greek word that means “to echo or resound,” expressing the idea that the faith is received and faithfully handed on. It “is an ecclesial act, arising from the missionary mandate of the Lord (cf. Mt 28:19-20) and aimed, as its very name indicates, at making the proclamation of [Jesus’] passion, death, and resurrection continually resound in the heart of every person, so that his life may be transformed (*Directory for Catechesis*, §55).” We must echo the teaching of Christian doctrine “in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life (*Catechesi Tradendae* §18).”

Catechesis is the process by which the Church transmits the Gospel and forms disciples of Jesus Christ. “Catechesis participates according to its own nature in the effort of evangelization, in order that the faith may be supported by an ongoing maturation and express itself in a way of life that must characterize the very being of the disciple of Christ” (*Directory for Catechesis*, §1).

The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ.

(*Catechesi Tradendae* #5)

These words of St. John Paul II must remain at the heart of all we do in catechetical ministry, so that catechesis occurs in such a way that a person comes to not only know about and believe in God, but encounters God’s inexhaustible love in such a way that the individual responds to God’s invitation to enter into a personal relationship, which leads to transformation and holiness.

The *Directory for Catechesis* promotes a profound vision for catechesis that must guide our catechetical efforts, including the development of programs, resources, and formation of those in catechetical ministry:

- “Catechesis is accompaniment, education, and formation in the faith and for the faith.
- Catechesis fosters communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ at the center of all catechetical action.
- Catechesis is a living encounter with Jesus Christ that transforms a person’s whole life – mind, heart, and body.
- Catechesis is centered on the kerygma – the life, message, death, and resurrection of Jesus – which is the heart of catechesis with all ages.
- Catechesis fosters ongoing maturation in faith.

- Catechesis is pedagogical action at the service of the dialogue of salvation between God and humanity and is inspired by the features of the divine pedagogy: God's gratuitous love, salvation, conversion, the word of God, centrality of Jesus Christ, community experience of faith, and pedagogy of signs.
- Catechesis is carried out in fidelity to the word of God and in attention to and interaction with the educational practices of the culture."¹

Thus, all forms of catechesis must strive to:

- be formational as well as instructional in nature;
- Catechesis is pedagogical action at the service of the dialogue of salvation between God and humanity and is inspired by the features of the divine pedagogy: God's gratuitous love, salvation, conversion, the word of God, centrality of Jesus Christ, community experience of faith, and pedagogy of signs.
- Catechesis is carried out in fidelity to the word of God and in attention to and interaction with the educational practices of the culture."¹
- provide opportunities for and lead individuals to a personal encounter with Christ Jesus;
- focus on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
- present the doctrines of the Catholic faith in an attractive and systematic fashion;
- relate those doctrines to God's inexhaustible love for us and his plan for our salvation;
- make disciples of Jesus Christ through the reception of the sacraments of initiation;
- invite and encourage believers to ongoing faith formation;
- include liturgical, communal and personal prayer experiences;
- recognize the influences of family, culture and society so as to present the Gospel in meaningful and significant ways;
- provide opportunities for individuals to be drawn into the life and mission of the Church and to live and give witness to their faith in word and deed.

Catechesis should lead to the formation of missionary disciples who have been transformed by their encounter with Christ Jesus and are prepared to allow God to use them as an instrument of his love, as they bear to the world their witness to him in both word and deed. It seeks to form disciples through its four essential pillars, inspired by the Church's great catechetical tradition, while integrating active participation in the ecclesial community and mission:

- Knowledge of the faith (baptismal profession of faith / the Creed): Imparting the fundamental truths of salvation history and Trinitarian mystery.
- Celebration of the Christian mystery (sacraments of faith): Initiating into the sacred rites, especially Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Reconciliation, as encounters with Christ's Paschal Mystery.
- Life in Christ (life of faith / the Commandments): Fostering moral formation, virtues, and discipleship to live conformed to Christ's Gospel.
- Prayer in Christ (prayer of the believer / the Lord's Prayer): Teaching contemplative union with God through personal, liturgical, and communal prayer.

These pillars ensure catechesis educates organically and systematically, building on initial proclamation to mature faith into communion with Christ and witness in the Church and world.

¹ *Guided by the Directory for Catechesis*, Twenty-Third Publications, Waterford, CT, © 2020.

CHRISTOCENTRIC CORE OF CATECHESIS

At the heart of all catechesis lies a Person: Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father— “the only Son from the Father...full of grace and truth”²—who reveals God’s eternal design through Him. Catechesis is intrinsically Christocentric, for its primary and essential object is the mystery of Christ, leading persons to comprehend His love surpassing knowledge and to be filled with the fullness of God. Through catechesis, learners are drawn not merely to know about Christ, but to encounter Him personally, entering into an intimate communion with Jesus, with the Father in the Holy Spirit. The catechist acts as humble witness and guide, proclaiming Christ’s words and deeds to foster a living faith that unites knowledge, heart, and action, maturing believers into the Body of Christ for Trinitarian life and missionary witness.

As catechists, we wield a profound influence on our students, shaping them through the culture of our classrooms and the witness of our own behavior. Yet our paramount mission transcends the temporal: to touch their lives eternally by leading them to Christ, mindful that our influence carries eternal consequences.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* develops this vision by insisting that Christ is both the content and the model of catechesis. Jesus does not merely teach about God; He reveals the Father through His words, actions, and very life. Catechesis, therefore, must present Christ in the totality of His mystery—His incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and abiding presence in the Church—so that learners may encounter Him as living Lord and Savior. “Jesus Christ not only transmits the word of God: he is the Word of God. Its “Christocentricity, moreover, means that the Gospel message does not come from man, but is the Word of God.”³ “Catechesis is therefore completely tied to him.”⁴

KERIGMA AND TRANSFORMATIVE RESPONSE IN CATECHESIS

Building on catechesis’s Christocentric core and its four pillars, the kerygma— “the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith (*Catechesi Tradendae*, §25),” serves as the vital spark that ignites personal response, deepening faith into lived discipleship. The kerygma proclaims that God loves us, that sin wounds this relationship, that Jesus Christ saves us through His death and resurrection, that He is alive and present today, and that He calls each person to conversion and new life. This proclamation is not merely informative; it is inherently performative, inviting a response from those who hear it. This must be presented in our catechesis. Pope Francis beautifully stated that “on the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, and free you (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §164).”

The kerygma announces: Christ has died and risen for you, for me, for all, offering us a merciful love that calls for entrustment, conversion, and action—uniting the profession of faith with sacramental celebration, moral life, prayer, and mission. Our catechesis does not replace this proclamation but deepens it systematically. Without response—faith enlivened by hope, charity, and works—it remains incomplete; the kerygma thus fosters transformative communion with the Blessed Trinity.

CALLED TO BE A CATECHIST

The catechist's primary role is to "echo" the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ Himself. This echo is not merely instructional but profoundly personal and missionary. To echo Christ effectively, catechists must bear authentic witness to their love for Him in both word and deed, living the faith with integrity and striving to conform their lives to His example. In this way, those they teach may encounter Christ not only through instruction but through the credible witness/testimony of the catechist's life.

The ministry of catechist is a vocation, an interior call of the Holy Spirit. It springs from the Sacrament of Baptism and is strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation and sustained by the sacrament of the Eucharist. Commissioned by the Church, catechists participate in a divine calling to teach as Jesus did. For catechists to effectively and convincingly pass on the Gospel message and lead others to a transformative encounter with Christ, they need to be practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the Church, for one cannot give what one does not possess. Catechists are prepared by the Church for their apostolate through appropriate catechetical training and ongoing formation.

WHO IS A CATECHIST?

The Church has identified specific catechetical roles. The bishop has primary responsibility for catechesis in his diocese and oversees the catechetical mission of the local church. The pastor collaborates with the bishop in ensuring that the catechetical mission of the diocese is achieved and also has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the particular catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met.

The parish catechetical leader, typically referred to as a Director or Coordinator of Religious Education, is a trained professional who assists the pastor in fulfilling the mission of catechesis in the parish. The catechetical leader is first and foremost a catechist and not merely an administrator. Working closely with the catechetical leader are catechists from the parish community who assist in bringing the vision and work of catechesis to the local parish community.

Catechists include: deacons, catechists of the parish religious education program and Catholic school, youth ministers and campus ministers. Parents and guardians are the first teachers of the faith. When a child reaches catechetical age, catechists assist them in their role. Therefore, the spiritual life of a catechist should be characterized by:

- love of God and the Catholic Church
- faithful practice of the Catholic faith
- personal prayer and dedication to the evangelizing mission of the Church
- missionary zeal by which they are fully convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith
- enthusiastic proclamation of the faith
- active participation in their local parish community
- faithful attendance at Sunday Eucharist, and regular participation in Penance
- devotion to Mary, the first disciple and model of catechists
- devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist, the source of nourishment for catechists.

To help the catechist gain a fuller understanding of the catechetical ministry, the Director/Coordinator for Religious Education is to review the following appendices with him/her:

- Appendix 1, Qualifications and Responsibilities for a Parish Religious Education Catechist which is to be signed and dated by the Director/Coordinator for Religious Education.
- Appendix 2, Sample Catechist Information Form
- Appendix 3, Sample Catechist Evaluation Form.

CATECHIST FORMATION

Because catechists serve as witnesses as well as teachers, the Church insists on comprehensive formation. Catechetical formation is not limited to doctrinal knowledge but involves four integrated dimensions:

- Human formation, which fosters maturity, relational skills, and authenticity
- Spiritual formation, which deepens prayer, sacramental life, and personal conversion
- Intellectual formation, which ensures fidelity to Sacred Scripture and Church's teaching
- Pastoral formation, which equips catechists to accompany others effectively

Such formation enables catechists to understand the nature and goals of catechesis, grow in their knowledge of the faith, develop appropriate pedagogical skills, and remain attentive to the cultural and spiritual realities of those they serve. Ongoing study, unity with the Church, and collaboration with pastors are essential elements of this process. Such formation promotes:

- a personal encounter with Christ Jesus
- the study of scripture and theology
- a familiarity with catechetical resources and teaching methodologies
- unity with pastors and the Church where all authentic religious education occurs.

CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has developed two levels of catechetical certification:

⇒ Master Catechetical Certification:

Directors/Coordinators of Parish Religious Education Programs (D/CREs) must attain Master Catechetical Certification, which is to be completed by the 8th year of employment in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Those under this policy are to earn twelve (12) catechetical credits. Courses are offered through the Office for Catechetical Formation and the Catechetical Institute of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary.

Theology or religious studies credits from a Catholic university or college may qualify toward the fulfillment of the Master Catechetical Certification requirements.

⇒ Basic Catechetical Certification:

Parish Catechists who serve in a Parish Religious Education Program are to hold a Basic Catechetical Certification. PREP catechists earn a Basic Catechetical Certification by completing the Loyola Press Catechetical Formation Series and have two years from the start date of their teaching to earn basic certification.

PREP catechists who hold a Basic Catechetical Certification may desire to further their studies of the catechetical ministry by pursuing a Master Catechetical Certification. In this case, the basic certification will be applied as one credit towards the Master Catechetical Certification.

For complete information regarding Catechetical Certification, go to: <https://phillyocf.org/certification/>

***NOTE TO THE DIRECTOR:**

The Catechetical Ministry section should be reviewed annually with all catechists.

The Spirituality of the Catechist

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE CATECHIST

At the heart of every effective catechetical ministry lies the spiritual life of the catechist. The Church consistently teaches that catechesis is not simply the transmission of knowledge, but the communication of a living faith rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis begins his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* with a universal invitation: “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.” If the goal of all catechesis is to lead others into an encounter with Christ, catechists themselves must be continually encountering Him in an ongoing relationship of love. The principle is simple yet foundational: we cannot give what we do not possess. To educate in the faith—to “echo” the Gospel—catechesis must first begin within the heart of the catechist.

For this reason, the effectiveness of catechesis depends less on techniques, curriculum, or creativity than on the catechist’s communion with God. Methods and resources are important, but they remain secondary. As Thomas Aquinas teaches, “the soul animates the body.” Applied to catechesis, the spiritual life animates methodology. Without a living relationship with Christ, even excellent teaching strategies remain lifeless.

LEARNING THE FAITH BY HEART: A PASTORAL IMPERATIVE

In a culture marked by constant distraction and information overload, religious knowledge often remains external, fragmented, and easily forgotten. For this reason, catechists must intentionally employ strategies that help participants learn the faith by heart, that is, in a way that engages memory, imagination, and personal commitment. Catechists play a vital role in forming young hearts and minds, and the Church strongly endorses learning the Faith by heart through judicious memorization, not as rote repetition, but as a pathway to deep assimilation, personal encounter with Christ, and lifelong spiritual vitality. This approach, rooted in Tradition and renewed by the Magisterium, equips students to internalize doctrine, Sacred Scripture, and prayer, transforming knowledge into a source of Christian life on personal and communal levels.

Our catechesis encourages a return to genuine balance: we don’t simply repeat words by rote, but let memory work hand-in-hand with real understanding and a living relationship with the Lord. The value of carefully learning certain passages of Sacred Scripture so that the mysteries of faith can take root in a person’s life. When we teach, we help the story of salvation feel vivid and personal, inviting each learner to recognize how their own life fits within God’s unfolding work.

COMPELLING BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS’ ETERNAL FORMATION

- Deepens Encounter: Memorized truths become “blossoms of faith and piety (*Catechesi Tradendae*, §55),” fueling prayer, liturgy, and witness, like disciples on the Road to Emmaus, whose hearts burned as Christ talked to them (Luke 24:32).
- Builds resilience: In a digital age marked by fleeting information, a well-formed memory nurtures interior depth, resists shallowness, and supports wise discernment.
- Forms Virtue: It mirrors the rhythm of salvation history, leading students to Christ and eternal life, as catechists discern and draw forth God-given gifts.

METHODS IN CATECHESIS: NO SINGLE METHOD CAN CONTAIN THE MYSTERY

Catechesis must lead people to meet Jesus Christ, to converse with Him, and to immerse themselves in Him, because without that living encounter, Christianity can become lifeless adherence to religious tradition. Such an encounter is not generated by instructional content alone; rather, it is assimilated through the transformative power of authentic witness.

That truth shapes catechetical methodology. The Church does not reduce catechesis to a single technique, but calls for prudent, prayerful adaptation to the concrete persons being served. Accordingly, catechetical formation must account for individuals' circumstances, availability, and life situations so that its formative purpose may be fully realized, while the proclamation of the faith is expressed in ways that are accessible and appropriately adapted, especially for those most distant from ecclesial life, so that the message may be truly received and understood.

- Methods are instruments, not ends
- Every method must serve the person and the Gospel
- The catechist must discern what best opens hearts to Christ in that particular context

The Church offers a rich diversity of catechetical methods, each with its own strengths, insights, and practical applications. Each method can bear great fruit, and yet, no method, no matter how effective, is sufficient on its own. A method can organize content. A method can structure a lesson. A method can engage the mind. But no method by itself can win a heart. That depends on something deeper: the spirit, presence, and love of the catechist. Without this, even the best method becomes mechanical. With it, even simple teaching becomes transformative. For this reason, before choosing how we teach, we must consider who we are as catechists. What is the heart we bring into the classroom? How do we relate to those entrusted to us? What kind of presence do we embody?

The catechist's role is far more than teaching doctrine; it is a spiritual responsibility rooted in genuine care for the young. Effective formation grows not from fear or control, but from love, presence, and patient guidance. This approach sees each young person with reverence, shaping them through relationship, trust, and a faith-filled environment. It is a way of educating grounded in charity, reason, and a deep sense of God's nearness, a spirit meant to animate every method we use.

The catechist's heart should be trained to think and act like a shepherd: present, attentive, kind, clear, and spiritually purposeful.

Considering that you are not simply organizing lessons; you are helping form Christian lives. Catechesis is meant to lead learners into a living relationship with Jesus Christ, so that faith becomes prayer, worship, and daily conversion, not just knowledge. The Church, therefore, calls catechesis to form "an active, conscious, genuine participation in the liturgy... not merely by explaining the meaning of the ceremonies, but also by forming the minds of the faithful for prayer, [including] thanksgiving, repentance, and praying with confidence (*General Catechetical Directory*, §55)." And because prayer and growth in faith are personal and interior, catechesis must also lead people toward meditation that truly engages the heart: "Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire... [it] prompt[s] the conversion of our heart, and strengthen[s] our will to follow Christ (*CCC §2708*)."

For that reason, your ministry, whatever methods you use, is entrusted to you as a real pastoral responsibility within the Church.

The Classroom

INTRODUCTION

To teach the faith effectively to children, catechists must be persons of prayer who communicate the beliefs of the Church through a systematic and thoughtful approach. In order to accomplish this goal, they must be aware of basic educational policies, concepts, and strategies.

RELIGION GUIDELINES FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia provides Religion Guidelines from Early Childhood to Level 12. These guidelines present the truths of the Catholic faith in an age appropriate and systematic manner.

The Scope and Sequence Charts for the Parish Religious Education Program (Levels 1-6) present an organized schedule for the teaching of the core or essential curriculum over one academic year. The Guidelines and Scope and Sequence Charts can be found at: <http://phillyocf.org/prep-resources/>

TEXTBOOKS

Parish Religious Education Programs of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia may only use the religion series and sacramental textbooks which are approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB list includes only those texts which are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Director of Religious Education in consultation with the pastor selects these textbooks from this list.

BASIC VOCABULARY FOR CATECHISTS

Catechists may be unfamiliar with words, terms, and acronyms used in Church documents, religion textbooks and catechist manuals. Appendix 5 is a list of basic vocabulary to assist the catechist.

PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN

Basic prayers which reflect the teachings and language of the Catholic faith are part of the religious education curriculum. Appendix 6 is a synopsis of these prayers and is to be reviewed by the catechist. For a tri-fold format, go to: <http://phillyocf.org/prep-resources/>

LESSON PLANS

Planning and preparation are key factors for good classroom organization and management. An effective lesson plan communicates the objective of the instruction and outlines the teaching strategies and learning activities which lead to this outcome.

The Director/ Coordinator of Religious Education assists the catechist in the task of lesson planning by:

- reviewing the section on lesson plans in the catechist manual
- assigning a mentor to assist in the writings of lesson plans
- providing sample lesson plans or web resources.

LEARNING STYLES OF CHILDREN

Children learn in many different ways. Needs vary and creative approaches help children to learn effectively. The catechist should review the section on this topic in the teacher manual.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Catechesis, according to the *Directory for Catechesis*, is one of the most important ecclesial activities. The catechetical program must reflect the broader meaning of the mission of the Church. In accord with Canon 777, all the baptized, because they are called by God to maturity of faith, have the right to adequate catechesis. It is the responsibility of the Church community to respond in a fitting and satisfactory manner. This vision prompted the United States Catholic Bishops to write a ***Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities*** and the ***Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities***. Both documents state that catechetical and sacramental programs need to be inclusive of parishioners with disabilities. As far as possible, individuals with disabilities should be integrated in the ordinary catechetical activities of the parish community. When this integration is not possible, the Director of Religious Education must work with the parents to provide appropriate access and inclusion that best meets the needs of the child.

The Director of Religious Education, therefore, invites, welcomes and makes accommodations for the religious education and faith formation of parish children with physical, sensory, mental and behavioral disabilities who do not attend the Catholic elementary school. In order to provide for their full inclusion, the Parish Director of Religious Education and catechists seek out and utilize the resources of families, parishioners and diocesan personal to support the religious education of children with special needs. As Parish Religious Education prepares a child for the reception of sacraments, the Director of Religious Education is to be familiar with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document on the celebration of sacraments with persons with disabilities which can be found at:

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities>

To assist the Parish Religious Education Programs, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia provides:

- a model of Access and Inclusion for the Parish Religious Education Program (Appendix 8) which is to be reviewed by the catechist
- a sample registration form designed to identify children with medical conditions and/or who are in need of learning support (Appendix 9)
- resources on inclusion, accommodations and modifications which can be found at:
<https://phillyocf.org/access-inclusion/>

CONFIDENTIALITY

Matters of a confidential nature are often disclosed to a catechist for the purpose and only for the purpose of his/her work in the parish religious education program. This information may not be disclosed beyond the purpose of his/her work in the parish religious education program and as required as a Mandated Reporter of suspected child abuse. See <https://childyouthprotection.org/index.php/mandated-reporter>

It is very important for catechists to be informed of medical conditions, individual education plans and/or custody arrangements. This information should be captured on the annual registration form. In matters of custody, it is incumbent upon the Director to obtain the most recent legal custody agreement. See Appendix 9 for a sample registration form which captures this information.

CATECHIST WHO TRANSPORT STUDENTS TO AND FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A parent/guardian (s) who permits a catechist to transport his/her child(ren) to and/or from the parish religious education program must complete a permission and release form. The catechist must also sign this form. Refer to Appendix 10 for a sample form.

TRIP PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

No student is permitted to participate in any trip sponsored by the Parish Religious Education Program without a completed, signed and returned trip permission and release form. For a sample trip permission and release form, refer to Appendix 11.

ACT 175 RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The concept of “released time” is based on the constitutional right of parents of children enrolled in a public school to direct the religious education of their children. In Pennsylvania, the child may be released for such religious instruction no more than thirty-six hours per school year. Upon the written request of a parent, the superintendent of the school district shall excuse the parent's child in order to attend religious instruction (section 15-1546). The parent's request must identify and describe the religious instruction and the dates and hours for which the absence is requested. Following each absence, the parent/guardian must also furnish in writing to the district school superintendent attesting to the fact that the child did indeed attend the religious instruction that day.

Often Parish Religious Education Programs use released time for religious education instruction, activities or trips. The Director of Religious Education oversees this process.

Refer to Appendix 12 for a step by step procedure regarding Act 175 as it pertains to the Parish Religious Education Program. For a sample letter for released time, refer to Appendix 13.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Religious Education Programs are required to take attendance for each session. Catechists should take attendance in a timely manner and submit to the Director according to parish policy. The Director should keep a cumulative electronic or hard copy annual record of attendance. Files (electronic or paper) of all students (active or inactive) who have registered in a Parish Religious Education Program are to be kept on file at the parish until the child completes 9th grade. If the student's record transfers to another Parish Religious Education Program or Catholic school in or outside of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the record need not be retained.

HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

Home-based Catechesis is permitted by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, however, the parish sets the local policy. For guidelines for home-based catechesis guidelines, see Appendix 14.

Safety Policies and Plans

SAFETY

The Parish Religious Education Programs of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are committed to the safety and well being of their students. Safety policies and plans help to ensure this protection. These policies and plans must be approved by the pastor, implemented by the Director of Religious Education, and always include considerations for students with special needs. The Director of Religious Education is to review these policies and plans with the catechist.

Contact 911 immediately if a serious emergency or threatening behavior by a student or an adult occurs on campus.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

During the religious education session, the Director of Religious Education must have easy access to the contact information for: Police, Fire, Ambulance, Poison Control and Toxic Chemical Spill centers. The Director of Religious Education should carry a cell phone at all times and include these numbers in his/her contact list.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Director of Religious Education is encouraged to send an annual calendar to the police and fire departments which includes the dates, times and location (s) of the religious education program. This information assists these agencies in the case of an emergency.

INCIDENT REPORT

In the case of an accident, unusual event, injury and/or illness, an incident report is completed and kept on file as a record for the calendar year. The Director of Religious Education, a catechist, a witness, or a staff person completes this report. For a sample incident report, see to Appendix 16.

MASTER AND CLASS LISTS OF STUDENTS

In the case of an emergency and/or evacuation of the building:

- the Director of Religious Education must have easy access to a master list of all classes with student's names, home and emergency phone number and attendance lists
- the catechist must have easy access to a class attendance list and a list of student's names with home and emergency phone numbers.

EVACUATION OF BUILDING DUE TO AN EMERGENCY

It is a proven statistic that emergency evacuation plans save lives. Catechists must become familiar with and practice classroom evacuation route(s). These plans should include an outside location/destination and if necessary, another location for supervised parent/guardian pick up.

In the case of an evacuation of the building for an emergency or fire drills:

- the Director of Religious Education carries out a master list of all classes with student's names, home and emergency phone number
- the catechist carries out a class list with student's names, home and emergency phone number and session attendance report if separate from the class list.

FIRE DRILLS

Parish Religious Education Programs are required to conduct at least one fire drill annually. The Director of Religious Education should notify the local fire department of this date. Often local fire companies will lend assistance with this safety exercise.

The catechist must become familiar with the following:

- evacuation routes for class
- location/activation system of fire alarms in the building
- procedure for contacting the fire department in the case of a real emergency.

FIRST AID AND UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

First aid refers to the initial and reasonable care given in response to an illness, accident or injury.

Universal precautions refers to the avoidance of contact with another's bodily fluids.

Refer to Appendix 16 for more detailed information.

LOCK DOWN AND LOCK OUT PLANS AND PROCEDURES

“Lockdown” procedures are used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building (e.g. student threat or an intruder) or external threats that may enter the building.

A “Lock Down with Warning” occurs when there is a threat or danger outside the building (e.g., fugitive on the run and in area; a medical emergency outside the building)

A “Lock Down with Intruder” occurs when there is a threat or intruder inside the building.

“Lock Out” procedures are used when the danger is in the building and conditions are safer outside the building.

The Parish Religious Education Program should consult with local or state law enforcement for the development of “Lock Down” and “Lock Out” plans and procedures for their location. It is the responsibility of the Director of Religious Education to in-service the catechetical staff regarding these plans and procedures. The Director of Religious Education should schedule practice drills throughout the academic year.

SHELTER IN PLACE

Some emergencies call for all to take shelter immediately. Examples are (but not limited to) a hurricane, tornado or hazardous waste release in the general area. If the Parish Religious Education Program meets in a school building, the Director of Religious Education is encouraged to coordinate the Shelter in Place plan with the school principal.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, hazardous waste is defined as waste that is dangerous or potentially harmful to one's health or the environment and can be liquids, solids, gases, or sludges.

The catechist must be aware of the following:

- disposal of hazardous waste on the parish site
- parish staff person responsible for the safe removal of hazardous waste.

Safe Environment Requirements

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is committed to creating a network of prevention and protection for the children entrusted to the care of the Archdiocese. Through the Safe Environment Program, the Office for Child and Youth Protection assists parishes, schools and Youth Ministry programs to comply with Policies for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Safe Environment Program is a comprehensive child safety and child sexual abuse prevention and education program which includes but is not limited to the following requirements:

- providing training to clergy, parish personnel, school personnel, catechists, teachers and volunteers regarding their responsibility, under civil law, as mandated reporters. This training also pertains to Archdiocesan personnel who are working in social services and educational ministry.
- obtaining the background checks of all archdiocesan personnel, including clergy, religious and laity, as well as volunteers who have any possible contact with children
- providing abuse prevention educational programs for students who attend Archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools and parish religious education programs.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

The Safe Environment training is a required awareness program for adults who are Archdiocese of Philadelphia clergy, employees or volunteers who have regular contact with children. Trainees learn the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, steps to prevent or avoid sexual abuse and Pennsylvania law and Archdiocesan policy for reporting suspected child abuse. Catechists may not begin their ministry until all training is completed. For more information, go to ww.childyouthprotection.org to the staff and volunteer link.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All clearances must be obtained and updated according to Archdiocesan policy. It is the responsibility of parish administration to keep the records of each employee and volunteer, and to renew these background checks accordingly. Catechists may not begin their ministry until all clearances are obtained. For more information, go to: www.childyouthprotection.org

YOUTH LEADER VOLUNTEERS

Minors who volunteer (under 18) with students must be supervised at all times while working with children. If the minors are unpaid they are not required to obtain clearances. Minors 14-17 in a paid position responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children are required to obtain background checks and clearances.

THE STANDARDS OF MINISTERIAL BEHAVIOR AND BOUNDARIES

The Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are intended to provide clear standards of behavior and boundaries of appropriate behavior regarding all interactions with children and young people by priests, deacons, religious, pastoral ministers, administrators, staff and volunteers in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. These standards are reviewed during the safe environment training. Trainees are required to sign an acknowledgment form and return to the place of service.

<https://archphila.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/AOPVA-Standards-of-Minst-Behvrl-0511.pdf>

For a Safe Environment Checklist for clearances and training, refer to Appendix 17.

MANDATED REPORTING LAWS

As defined by Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, a mandated reporter is any individual, including both paid (staff) and unpaid (volunteer), who are an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity, or service and accept responsibility for a child. Additionally, anyone who is supervised or managed by a mandated reporter is also a mandated reporter. A child is defined as an individual under the age of eighteen.

CATECHIST AS MANDATED REPORTER

The state of Pennsylvania defines child abuse as an act or failure to act which is committed intentionally, knowingly or recklessly. Child abuse includes bodily injury, serious mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, serious physical neglect, fabricating, feigning or inducing medical symptom or disease. Any person who comes into contact with children in the course of their employment or volunteer service must report suspected child abuse.

A catechist, therefore, is a mandated reporter. A catechist may view the role of a mandated reporter as difficult and challenging. The catechist may equate a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse with breaking a confidence or invading another's privacy. It is a proven fact, however, that students usually disclose abuse to a trusted adult because they want the adult to take action on his or her behalf.

In the case of a disclosure or a suspicion of abuse, the catechist must report directly and immediately to Child Line, the PA Statewide hotline, via phone or online,. He/she must also complete the CY-47 form and submit to the county children and youth agency if reported by phone. The form can be submitted electronically or via hard copy (see the OCYP website for further information). The catechist must also immediately notify the person in charge of the institution.

For a brochure for responding to a student's disclosure, see Appendix 18.

“KID TALK”: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION LESSONS

The Parish Religious Education Program is required to teach one personal safety lesson annually. The Parish Religious Education personal safety lessons are entitled “Kid Talk”: Child Abuse Prevention lesson, Archdiocese of Philadelphia Religious Education Program and can be found at: <http://phillyocf.org/safe-environment> The Office for Catechetical Formation and the Office for Child and Youth Protection recommend that these lessons are taught in the second semester as a relationship between the catechist and students has been established.

PARENT /GUARDIAN OPT-OUT

Parents/guardians may opt out their child from the scheduled session for the teaching of the KidTalk lesson. Parents should receive ample notification either by snail or electronic mail of the date for the teaching the lesson and the link in order to review the lesson. If after the reviewing the lesson the parent/guardian does not wish for their child to receive the lesson, he/she is to contact the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. The Director/ Coordinator of Religious Education should, however, encourage parents who do not wish their child to receive a lesson to review this important lesson with their child at home.

The Director/Coordinator of Religious Education must obtain a written signed and dated opt out form from the parent or guardian.

For in-person instruction, the parent/guardian is to sign and date an opt-out letter/form which is provided by the parish. Opt-out letters are to be submitted with the annual religious education audit report. See Appendix 19 for a template.

For virtual, distance learning and home base catechesis instruction, the parent/guardian is to send a signed and dated acknowledgement form to Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. Only those acknowledgement forms which indicate that the parent/guardian has opted out are to be submitted with the annual religious education audit report, however, all acknowledgement forms should be kept on file for one year. See Appendix 24 for the acknowledgement form.

These forms are also posted at: <https://phillyocf.org/safe-environment-2/>

PHOTO AND VIDEO POLICY

Parental permission is necessary for the photographing or filming of Parish Religious Education students. Without this permission, photos and/or videos may not be taken of a child in a classroom or parish group setting such as the reception of sacraments.

The Director of Religious Education is to obtain an **annual** written permission for each student and retain on file for the entire school year. Before taking pictures or videotaping students, the catechist must check that parental permission has been granted.

The Photo and Video Permission may be included as a line item on the Parish Religious Education Program Registration Form (Appendix 9), or refer to Appendix 21 for a sample form.

LIMITED CONTROLLED ACCESS TO THE PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR PARENTS IDENTIFIED AS SEXUAL OFFENDERS

Parishes are to follow the guidelines developed by the Office for Child and Youth Protection regarding the presence of parents/guardians identified as sexual offenders.

Refer to Appendix 21 for these parish guidelines.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained, in writing, in order for an adult to communicate with minors via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, social networks, or other electronic means. See Appendix 22 for a “Consent Form for Electronic Communications with Minors” form.

The Parish Religious Education Program

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOKS

An essential component of Parish Religious Education Programs (PREP) are handbooks. PREP handbooks clearly outline the catechetical mission of the Catholic Church but also the policies and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the local parish community. Therefore, the Parish Religious Education Program should provide a handbook for catechists and a handbook for families which is updated and issued annually. The handbook may be in an electronic or paper format.

The FAMILY HANDBOOK should include but not limited to the following topics:

- An introduction to the catechetical ministry of the Catholic Church/parish
- Annual Parish Religious Education Program calendar
- Program or class cancellation due to emergencies or inclement weather
- Home-based catechesis policies
- Discipline policies
- Curriculum overview
- Access and Inclusion of students
- Arrival and dismissal times and procedures for students
- Family drop off and pick up of students with parental permissions
- Student attendance
- Student homework & assessments
- Student progress reports
- Illness and/or injury of students
- Custody issues
- Safety policies
- Safe Environment policies
- Food in classrooms/students with food allergies
- Virtual distance learning (synchronous and/or asynchronous)

CATECHIST HANDBOOK: elements of the Family Handbook should be included in the Catechist Handbook as well as but not limited to the following:

- Prayer environment and prayer at beginning or end of session (classroom or communal)
- Relationship with day school teacher (if applicable); use of classroom resources and equipment
- Relationship with the classroom aide (s)
- Acceptable attire for catechists and students
- Lesson plans
- Classroom management (include arrival and departure time for catechist)
- Confidentiality
- Attendance records
- Learning/medical data of student
- Parish resources/personnel for children with disabilities
- Incident reports
- Approval of guest speakers
- Use of parish resources and buildings
- Approval for catechist use of outside resources in the classroom which includes multi-media, technology, social media, websites as well as virtual distance learning (synchronous and asynchronous)
- guidance regarding the catechist's use of internet sources for personal theological background
- Use of bathroom facilities during the religious education session
- Use of hall monitors
- The teaching of personal safety lessons
- Electronic Communication with minors
- communication with other staff, parents/children (written or electronic)
- trips
- reimbursement for supplies

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MODELS

TRADITIONAL WEEKLY PROGRAM

Traditional Program meets weekly for faith formation and sacramental preparation during the academic year (Sept-April/May) for students in grades K-7/8.

HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

Home-based Catechesis is understood as the work of Catholic parents/guardians who undertake the formal religious education of their child (children) in their own home. The pastor in collaboration with his Director of Religious Education determines the parish policy in accordance with Archdiocesan guidelines.

CAMP CARITAS

Camp Caritas is a one-week regional Confirmation preparation program which offers instruction and formational experiences at approved Archdiocesan sites. Student participation is incumbent upon the pastor's permission and agreement to fulfill other parish preparation components such as retreats, practices, interviews.

FAMILY CATECHESIS

Family Catechesis recognizes parents/guardians as the first teachers of the faith by gathering them (and typically their children) at the parish on a monthly basis for instruction and formational opportunities. The pastor, Director of Religious Education or a qualified catechist supports them in this role by presenting the upcoming, at-home lessons to be taught. If children are included, they meet with a grade level catechist during this time.

PARISH CONFIRMATION CAMP

Parish Confirmation Camp is a one-week preparation program sponsored by the parish which follows the Archdiocesan framework for curriculum and includes formational opportunities as determined by the parish.

SUMMER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Summer Religious Education Program meets for one to two weeks and follows the Archdiocesan grade-level guidelines for instruction. During the academic year, 4-5 sessions are typically scheduled for family catechesis which may include further instruction, liturgical experiences and works of mercy opportunities.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Programs for Children with Disabilities provides faith formation to help the child grow in his/her faith while determining the best educational setting, learning strategies and emotional support that a parish is able to offer.

- A traditional classroom setting
- A smaller, self-contained special education classroom with a skilled catechist
- One on one learning at the parish and in a safe environment
- At-home learning with parish support.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MODELS

HIGH SCHOOL TEEN PROGRAM

High School Teen Program is a faith-formation sacramental program in which the students are prepared to receive the sacraments of initiation.

STUDENTS OUT OF SEQUENCE

Many children enter religious education (R.E.) programs at various ages after having missed multiple years of formation. These students may not have received First Penance, First Holy Communion, or Confirmation at the customary times. The reasons for this vary—family transitions, lack of prior enrollment in a parish program, or limited faith practice at home. Many of these children lack foundational knowledge of the faith and require intentional pastoral care. Consider a Sacramental Catch-Up Program, separate from standard grade-level classes, for focused preparation. You may want to offer a Family Catechesis Model to engaging parents in the process.

Key Characteristics of Students Out of Sequence

- Children may range from elementary to high school age and have gaps in their catechetical formation.
- Some may have received Baptism but missed subsequent sacraments, while others may be unbaptized.
- Many of these children lack foundational knowledge of the faith and require intentional pastoral care.

Pastoral Approach to Students Out of Sequence

1. Assessment & Personalized Plan

- Conduct an initial conversation with families to understand the child's sacramental history and catechetical background.
- Use diagnostic tools to determine gaps in faith formation.

2. Flexible Catechesis & Integration

- Enroll students in an age-appropriate religious education setting while addressing their specific sacramental needs.
- Consider a **Sacramental Catch-Up Program**, separate from standard grade-level classes, for focused preparation.
- Some parishes offer a **Family Catechesis Model**, engaging parents in the process.

3. Sacramental Preparation & Reception

- Tailor preparation timelines so that children receive proper instruction before receiving sacraments.
- Collaborate with the pastor to schedule reception of sacraments in a way that is meaningful yet pastorally appropriate.

4. Ongoing Support & Evangelization

- Encourage continued participation in parish life beyond sacramental reception.
- Connect students to youth ministry, post-Confirmation groups, or mentorship opportunities.

Appendices

QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CATECHIST

NAME OF CATECHIST: _____

1. This catechist meets the following personal qualifications and abilities:
 - ☐ a fully initiated, practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church
 - ☐ eighteen years of age or older
 - ☐ an exemplary follower of Christ with unquestioned personal integrity and moral character
 - ☐ committed to presenting the authentic teachings of the Church
 - ☐ committed to developing a greater personal understanding of Catholicism
 - ☐ a person of prayer who has carefully discerned the ministry of catechesis
 - ☐ a disciple of Christ who can share his/her faith with students in an age appropriate manner
 - ☐ an effective communicator with adults and children
 - ☐ capable of relating to people in general and children in particular
 - ☐ capable of working collaboratively.

2. This catechist has completed all Safe Environment Training and submitted all clearances and forms as required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

3. This catechist understands and agrees to the Archdiocesan Basic Catechetical Certification Policy.

4. This catechist understands and agrees to his/her parish responsibilities:
 - ☐ completion of a personal information record (Appendix II)
 - ☐ adherence to the Archdiocesan Religion Guidelines
 - ☐ adherence to the policies/calendar of the Parish Religious Education Program
 - ☐ adherence to the directives of the Director/Coordinator of Parish Religious Education
 - ☐ attendance at catechist meetings
 - ☐ preparation of lesson plans in a thorough and faithful manner
 - ☐ submission of lesson plans if requested by the Director/Coordinator of Rel. Ed.
 - ☐ punctuality for class
 - ☐ responsibility for his/her classroom or meeting space
 - ☐ proper attire
 - ☐ evaluation by the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education.

This qualifications and responsibilities of a catechist have been reviewed.

Signature of the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education Date

Signature of the Catechist Date

CATECHIST INFORMATION					
Last name	First	Maiden	☐ Mr. ☐ Mrs.	☐ Miss ☐ Ms.	Marital status (circle one) ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated ☐ Widowed
Street address/Apt		Home phone no. ()		Cell phone no. ()	
City		State/Zip Code		Date of Birth	
Email Address:		Ethnicity: ☐ Non-Hispanic or Latino ☐ Hispanic or Latino		Race: ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ Black or African American ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ☐ White ☐ Two or more races ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to answer	
Social Security last 4-digits:					
Are you a registered, baptized Catholic of this parish? ☐ yes ☐ no <i>If "no", please indicate the name and address of the parish where you are registered in space below.</i>					
Parish Name		Parish Address			
Archdiocesan Catechetical Certification Have you attained Archdiocesan Basic Catechetical Certification? ☐ yes ☐ no Have you attained Archdiocesan Master Catechetical Certification? ☐ yes ☐ no Are you familiar with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Master Catechetical Certification policy? ☐ yes ☐ no					
Safe Environment/Clearances State Police/Criminal History _____ Child Abuse _____ Safe Environment _____ Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries _____ Have you reviewed and understand the Catechist as Mandated Reporter Brochure? ☐ yes ☐ no					
Number of years teaching Religious Education		Other Parishes Served			
Are you a recipient of the following Archdiocesan catechetical awards for years of service: ____ St. John Neumann (5) ____ Pius X (10) ____ Our Lady of Guadalupe (15) ____ St. Martin DePorres (20) ____ St. Charles Borromeo (25) ____ St. John Paul II (30) ____ St. Catherine of Siena (35) ____ St. Teresa of Avila (40) ____ St. Teresa of Calcutta (45) ____ St. Augustine (50)					
Why do you feel called to the Catechetical Ministry?					
Catechist Signature:			Date:		
					
Grade Level Assigned:		☐ Parish Catechist ☐ Aide ☐ Other			
Director/Coordinator of Religious Education Signature:			Date:		

Catechist Evaluation Form

Evaluation is an important element in quality catechist formation. Separate copies of the following form can be completed by the catechist, the Director of Religious Education, or both. Each

can use it to assess particular areas of strength and areas where growth is needed. This form can serve as an important springboard to a constructive evaluative discussion.

Name _____ Grade Level _____ Date _____

	CONSISTENTLY	ADEQUATELY	RARELY	NEVER		CONSISTENTLY	ADEQUATELY	RARELY	NEVER
Promoting Knowledge of the Faith					Moral Formation				
Teaches Catholic beliefs and traditions appropriate to the age level of the children	☐	☐	☐	☐	Fosters children's understanding of Christian morality and good decision-making skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exhibits an enthusiasm for the Catholic faith and a desire to continue to learn about it	☐	☐	☐	☐	Helps children apply Catholic, Christian values to their everyday lives	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participates in various workshops and courses to further knowledge about the Catholic faith	☐	☐	☐	☐	Models Catholic values for the children	☐	☐	☐	☐
Liturgical Education					Teaching to Pray				
Helps the children learn about and celebrate the Church's liturgical year	☐	☐	☐	☐	Assists children in understanding the importance of prayer	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encourages the children to fully participate in worship and the sacraments	☐	☐	☐	☐	Incorporates a variety of prayer forms into lessons	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regularly participates in the liturgical life of the parish	☐	☐	☐	☐	Prepares and utilizes a prayer area for the classroom	☐	☐	☐	☐
					Takes time for personal spiritual renewal and has a regular practice of prayer	☐	☐	☐	☐

**Education for
Community Life**

Makes the classroom a loving Christian community so that children can experience and understand its importance

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Communicates well with parents and includes them from time to time in class sessions; encourages the children to share what they have learned with their families

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Recognizes and affirms the unique gifts of each child in the class

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Makes an effort to spend time sharing ideas with other catechists

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Attends catechist gatherings in the parish

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Missionary Initiation

Encourages the children to participate in service activities offered either through the class or through the larger parish

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Helps the children make faith connections to events and people in their families, communities, and around the world

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Challenges the children to think of the many different ways they can make a difference in the world

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Classroom Management

Arrives in a timely fashion in order to appropriately prepare for the session

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Prepares an overall lesson plan in advance of the catechetical session

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Is flexible when lesson plans need to be adjusted for effectiveness

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Includes a variety of methods and incorporates media in lesson plans to keep students interested and involved

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Shows a familiarity with and utilizes the various components of the textbook series

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Is attentive to different learning styles and intelligences

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Demonstrates effective and appropriate discipline and management strategies

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Shows an understanding of the impact of environment on the learner

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Comments: _____

Catechist

Program Director

Date



**Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office for Catechetical Formation
Parish Religious Education Program Catechists
Basic Catechetical Certification Credit Form**

To the Director/Coordinator of Parish Religious Education: Please complete the form below for a catechist who has completed the Loyola Press Catechetical Formation Series and therefore, has earned Basic Catechetical Certification.

Give a copy to the catechist, retain one for your files and send the original to:

*Office for Catechetical Formation
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299*

Once received and recorded the catechist will receive a certificate via email.

N.B.: two credits towards master certification will be credited if a catechist pursues a Master Catechetical Certification.

Catechist Name:

Last 4 digits of Social Security # (required):

Home Address:

Phone:

Email:

Parish Religious Education Program of service/City:

The above named catechist has served as the lead classroom catechist and has been faithful to his/her duties for this academic year.

Director/Coordinator, Parish Religious Education

Date completed

BASIC VOCABULARY FOR CATECHISTS

The following is a compilation of basic vocabulary for the catechists.

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
GCD	General Catechetical Directory (1971)
GDC	General Directory for Catechesis (1997)
DC	Directory for Catechesis (2020)
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal
LG	Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)
NDC	National Directory for Catechesis (2005)
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
OCIA	Order of Christian Initiation for Adults
NAB	New American Bible (translation used in Lectionary)
USCCA	United States Catholic Catechism for Adults
OCF	Office of Catechetical Formation (Archdiocese of Philadelphia)
PD/C/ARE	Parish Directors/Coordinators/Administrators of Religious Education (Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

Angel – A spiritual, personal, and immortal creature, with intelligence and free will, who glorifies God without ceasing and who serves God as a messenger of His saving plan.

Annunciation – The visit of the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary to inform her that she was to be the mother of the Savior. After giving her consent to God's word, Mary became the mother of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Solemnity is celebrated on March 25.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – The dogma which recognizes Mary's being taken, at the end of her earthly life, body and soul, into Heaven. This Solemnity is celebrated on August 15 and is normally a Holy Day of Obligation.

Canon law – The Church's rules (canons or laws) that provide the norms for good order in the visible Church.

Catechesis - the act of handing on the Word of God intended to inform the faith community and candidates for initiation into the Church about the teachings of Christ.

Church – The assembly of the People God has called together from “the ends of the earth.” The Church draws her life from the Word of God and from the Body of Christ, and so herself becomes Christ’s Body.

Concupiscence – An inclination to actual sin, due to the effects of original sin. Even though Baptism removes sin itself, concupiscence remains even after Baptism

Conscience – Interior voice implanted by God in every person; discerns right from wrong.

Covenant – A sacred oath between human persons, or between God and man which involves mutual commitments or guarantees.

Deposit of Faith – The heritage of faith contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, handed on in the Church from the time of the Apostles, from which the Magisterium draws all that it proposes as being divinely revealed.

Doctrine/Dogma– The name given to divinely revealed truths proclaimed or taught by the Church’s Magisterium; the faithful are obliged to believe these truths.

Ecclesial/Ecclesiastical – Pertaining to, or of, the Church.

Evangelization – The ministry and mission of proclaiming and witnessing Christ and his Gospel with the intention of deepening the faith of believers and inviting others to be baptized and initiated into the Church.

Evangelist – One of the four authors of the Gospel : Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Grace – The free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children.

- Sanctifying grace – a habitual gift of God’s own life, a stable supernatural disposition that enables us to live with God and to act by his love.
- Actual grace – God’s interventions in our lives to help us conform our lives to his will.
- Sacramental grace and charisms – gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation

Heaven – Eternal life with God; communion of life and love with the Trinity and all the blessed; the state of supreme and definitive happiness, the goal of the deepest longings of humanity.

Hell – State of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed; reserved for those who refuse by their own free choice to believe and be converted from sin, even to the end of their lives.

Image of God – Human persons are like God in that they possess powers of intellect (thinking, judging, understanding, self reflection) and will (power to choose freely), and also in that they are made to share by knowledge and love in His divine life.

Immaculate Conception – The dogma proclaimed in 1854 that Mary from the moment of her conception, and through the anticipated merits won by Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection, was immune from original sin. Patroness of the United States and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, thus, always a holy day of obligation (December 8th).

Incarnation – Jesus, the Son of God, assumed human nature and became man in order to accomplish our salvation in that same human nature. Jesus is both true God and true man.

Indulgence – The remission of temporal punishment due to sin, granted to the faithful who recite specified prayers, visit a specified place of pilgrimage, or engage in a specified act of charity; punishment is remitted through the power of the Church and in the mutual exchange of spiritual goods, particularly the merits of Christ and the saints.

Infallibility – Gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church whereby the pastors of the Church, the pope and bishops in union with him, can definitively proclaim a doctrine of faith or morals for the belief of the faithful. This gift is related to the inability of the whole body to err in matters of faith and morals.

Jesus – Second Person of the Holy Trinity; the only-begotten Son of God; one divine Person with two complete natures—divine and human; fully God and fully man, not part God and part man.

Lectionary - order of readings, which lists texts for Sundays and feasts, for weekdays throughout the year, for Masses of the saints and for other special occasions.

Magisterium – The living, teaching office of the Church, composed of the Pope and the bishops in union with him, which ensures the Church's fidelity to the teachings of the Apostles in matters of faith and morals. St. Peter was the first Pope.

Marks of the Church – Four attributes of the Church of Christ mentioned in the Nicene Creed: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

Mary, Mother of God – Mary is the only physical parent of Jesus. Since Mary conceived and gave birth to Him Who is the Second Person of the Trinity Incarnate, she is rightly called the Mother of God. This solemnity is celebrated on January 1 and is normally a Holy Day of Obligation.

Mass – The Eucharist or principal sacramental celebration of the Church, established by Jesus at the Last Supper. Through the ministry of the ordained priest, the Holy Spirit makes present at Mass Christ's Paschal Mystery. The two primary parts of the Mass are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Mortal sin – Grave infraction of the law of God that destroys divine life (sanctifying grace) in the soul of the sinner. For a sin to be mortal, it must involve grave matter, full knowledge of the evil of the act, and deliberate consent of the will.

Natural law – The rational apprehension of the created moral order, an ability we have due to our being made in God's image. It expresses the dignity of the human person and forms the basis of our fundamental rights.

Original sin – The sin by which the first humans disobeyed God, resulting in the loss of original innocence and holiness. It also describes the fallen state of human nature that affects every person who is born into this world.

Paschal Mystery – Christ’s work of redemption accomplished principally by His Passion, Death Resurrection and Ascension whereby “dying he destroyed our death, rising you restored our life”. It is celebrated and made present in the Church’s liturgy and its effects are communicated most especially through the sacraments, and above all in the Holy Eucharist.

Perpetual Virginity of Mary – Mary is ever-virgin (before, during and after the birth of Jesus).

Purgatory – Temporary state, after death, whereby souls who are destined for heaven (those who die in a state of sanctifying grace), but who are still not perfectly purified of sin and its effects, are purified from sin and its effects and are made ready for eternal life with God.

Revelation – God’s disclosure of Himself by which He reveals His divine plan. The fullness of God’s revelation of Himself is found in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Sacramentary or Roman Missal - a recollection of presidential prayers for the celebration of the Eucharist. The Sacramentary does not contain Scripture readings, responsorial psalms, or verses for the gospel acclamation.

Sacrament - An efficacious sign of grace instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sacraments of Initiation - lay the foundations of every Christian life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life.

Sacramentals – Sacred signs instituted by the Church. They signify effects, especially of a spiritual nature, that are obtained through the intercession of the Church. Some examples of sacramentals are blessings and exorcisms, as well as forms of popular piety such as pilgrimages, processions, devotions, novenas, wearing Marian medals and recitation of the rosary.

Sin – Any intentional thought, word, deed or omission that violates God’s law.

Trinity – The mystery of the three Divine Persons in the one God. The three Divine Persons are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus explicitly revealed that the one God is a Trinity of Persons. (in addition Mt. 28: 19)

Transubstantiation – Term used to indicate that through the consecration of the bread and wine there occurs the entire change of the substances of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ—even though the appearances or “species” of bread and wine remain.

Venial sin – Sin that does not destroy the divine life (sanctifying grace) in the soul of the sinner, though it diminishes and wounds it.

PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

THE HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GRACE BEFORE MEALS

Bless us O Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

GRACE AFTER MEALS

We give you thanks for all your benefits, Almighty God who live and reign for ever. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

MORNING OFFERING

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.

PRAYER TO MY GUARDIAN ANGEL

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts me here. Ever this day be at my side to light, to guard to rule and guide. Amen.

ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in Three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your Divine Son became Man, and die for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living

and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because You have revealed them, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

ACT OF HOPE

O my God, relying on Your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

ACT OF LOVE

O my God, I love You above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because You are all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of You. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy punishments, but most of all because they offend thee, my God, Who are all-good and worthy of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

THE ANGELUS

Leader: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary:

All: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary....

Leader: Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

All: Be it done unto me according to Thy word. Hail Mary . . .

Leader: And the Word was made Flesh:

All: And dwelt among us. Hail Mary . . .

Leader: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven and *by the power of the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope. To Thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To Thee do we send up our sighs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, Thine Eyes of Mercy toward us, and after this our exile show us the Blessed Fruit of thy Womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us O Holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

THE MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come; before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The Five Joyful Mysteries are:

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Birth of Our Lord
4. The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple
5. The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries are:

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord

The Five Glorious Mysteries are:

1. The Resurrection of Our Lord
2. The Ascension of Our Lord into Heaven
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles
4. The Assumption of Our Blessed Mother to Heaven
5. The Coronation of Our Blessed Mother in Heaven

The Five Luminous Mysteries are:

1. The Baptism of Our Lord in the River Jordan
2. The Wedding at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
4. The Transfiguration of Our Lord
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

FATIMA PRAYER

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls into Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER THE ROSARY

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that, meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

LESSON PLAN FOR 90 MINUTE SESSION

Lesson Plan for _____ Chapter # _____ Page _____
 Date _____

Lesson Objective/Focus:

Key Ideas/ Study Words

Supplies:

TIME BREAKDOWN

- **Icebreaker/Review of Previous Lesson (10 min.)** Time from _____ to _____
 Action Plan:

- **Opening Prayer/Gospel Gathering (approx. 10 min.)** Time from _____ to _____
 Action Plan:

- **Lesson Opening Activity (5 min.)** Time: from _____ to _____
 Materials needed:

- Action Plan:

- Teach/Apply (30 min.)** Time: from _____ to _____
 Action Plan:

Time: (30 min.)

Buddy Activity/Service Project/Liturgical Event/Creative Enrichment: Time: _____ to _____

Materials:

Action Plan:

Closing Prayer and Dismissal (5 min.)

Evaluation of Lesson:

I rate this lesson plan: ____ Very Good ____ Average ____ Disappointing

The activity the children enjoyed most was:

Something I would do differently to improve this lesson:

Ideas for educational approaches:

Reading Aloud	Church Trip	Puppets
CD	Flannel Board	Question/answer
Chalkboard	Guest Speaker	Quiz
Charts/Posters	Lecture	Reports
Conversation	Making things	Review Games
Creative Writing	Maps	Singing
DVD	Memorization	Role Play
Discussion	Problem Solving	Story Telling
Drama/skits	Projects	Technology

Other: _____

Sample Inclusion Models

Parish Religious Education Programs

(Office for Persons with Disabilities, Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

Be creative. Inclusive faith formation programs are only limited by your imagination.

Integration with Accommodations

The student participates in classroom with the support of a catechist assistant, peer tutor or therapeutic support staff. Supplemental materials could be used.

Integration in Parish Program

The student participates in the religious education classroom with peers.

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Program Integration in Learning Support Classroom

The student participates in small group learning support classroom using an adapted curriculum and materials.

Integration with Individualized Instruction

The student participates in classroom opening prayer, program liturgies and special classroom activities. Student receives individualized instruction.



INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS: A CHURCH PERSPECTIVE

Catechesis, according to the General Directory of Catechesis (GDC 29), is one of the most important ecclesial activities. The catechetical program reflects the broader meaning of the mission of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church points out that the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion with Jesus Christ (CCC 426). Further the General Directory of Catechesis states that good and faithful catechesis accommodates the proclamation of the revealed word to *meet each person*, taking into account the full spectrum of diverse circumstances and situations, including age, intellectual development, psychological condition, and spiritual maturity (GDC, 170). In accord with canon 777(# 4) and the GDC (#167) all the baptized, because they are called by God to maturity of faith, need and have therefor the right to adequate catechesis. It is then the responsibility of pastor and the Church community to respond to this in a fitting and satisfactory manner. This vision prompted the United States Catholic Bishops in their 1978 *Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities* (#25) and the 2017 *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities Revised Edition* (#5) to state that catechetical and sacramental programs need to be inclusive of parishioners with disabilities and catechetical formation programs may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities.

Keeping in mind that all the baptized have a right to catechesis and that every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness (GDC 189). It is incumbent on those responsible for the catechetical program to invite, welcome and provide for those with physical, sensory, mental and behavioral disabilities (NDC 61:B.1). Present documents of the Church encourage that as far as possible persons with disabilities should be integrated within the ordinary catechetical activities of the parish (NDC 49). It is the responsibility of the parish community to accommodate for individuals with disabilities by providing generous, competent and realistic programing, seeking dialogue with families, and proposing appropriate forms of education proportionate to the concrete possibilities and needs of the individuals. For individuals with disabilities meaningful and appropriate integration will necessitate different forms of accommodation and varying forms of programing from inclusion in the parish religious education classroom, to smaller group or individualized instruction (NDC 61:B.1). In order to provide this full inclusion Directors of Religious Education, coordinators and catechists need to seek out and utilize the resources of families, parishioners and diocesan personal to support a program that can be accessible and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) & the Deaf Apostolate

Archdiocese of Philadelphia
222 N. 17th Street—8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: 215-587-3530, VP: 267-507-1215
E-Mail: namorales@archphila.org
www.opdarchphilly.org

For Office Use:
Family Name _____
School Year: _____
Fee: _____ Check #: _____

**NAME OF PARISH
CITY/TOWN**

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

FAMILY NAME:		
ADDRESS:		
CITY/ZIP CODE:		
E-MAIL:		
HOME PHONE:		
FATHER'S NAME:		
WORK OR CELL #:		RELIGION: _____
MOTHER'S NAME:		
WORK OR CELL #:		RELIGION: _____

Custody: Are there any custody/legal issues? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(If yes, please provide a complete copy of the latest court order.)

***Name of person responsible for Religious Education if not a Parent or Legal Guardian**

*Parent/guardian must provide a signed, dated letter of permission to the DRE, which is to be kept on file and updated annually.

_____	Relationship: _____
-------	----------------------------

☐ I have read the Family Handbook and agree to the requirements and expectations of the _____ (Parish NAME) Religious Education Program.

☐ I give permission for my child's name and/or image to appear on the parish website, bulletin boards, newspaper articles, parish bulletin, synchronous remote learning which may be recorded and posted on the parish website, and live-streamed and/or recorded liturgies and events associated with the parish religious education program.

Signature	_____	Date	_____
Relationship to Child(ren):	_____		

Emergency Contact Information: If we are unable to reach you, whom should we contact?

Name:	_____	Relationship:	_____
Phone Number (home):	_____	(Cell):	_____

Consent For Medical Care:

I give permission that, in my absence, my children whose names appear on this registration form, may receive emergency medical care for injuries and all situations that should occur while participating in the Religious Education Program programs and activities at (PARISH NAME) Parish.

Signed (Parent or Legal Guardian):	_____	Date:	_____
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P.#2 must be completed for each child separately.

Complete Form. Print clearly. For first time registrations, please bring an original and one copy of each child's Baptismal Certificate.

Family Name:		
Child's Full Name (First, Middle, & Last):		
Date of Birth:		
Sex:	☐ Male	☐ Female
Grade Level:		
Name of Day School:		
Baptism Date:	Parish/Town:	
First Penance Date:		
First Communion Date:		
Ethnicity:	☐ Hispanic/Latino	☐ Non- Hispanic/Latino

Race: (Please choose only one)	☐ American Indian/Native Alaskan	☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
	☐ Asian	☐ White
	☐ Black/African America	☐ Two or more races
	☐ Other	☐ Prefer not to answer

Medical/Learning Data

If any of the following apply to your child, please list his/her name and give details in the appropriate spaces.

Medical Conditions or Allergies (please describe below if yes)	☐ Yes	☐ No
Prescribed Medications	☐ Yes	☐ No
Learning Support Services or *Disability (see IDEA definitions below)	☐ Yes	☐ No
IEP Individualized Education Program	☐ Yes	☐ No
**Immunization Are your child's vaccinations up to date?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If no, has he/ she received an exemption from your current school district?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Please complete information here or add any other information about your child that should be communicated?

**** IDEA:** As defined by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the term "child with a disability" means a child with: an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

****Immunization:** Even if your child is exempt from immunizations, he/ she may be excluded from school during an outbreak of the vaccine preventable disease.

Name of Parish _____

Permission and Release Form
For Transportation by a Catechist

I (we) as parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of _____
Student's Name(s)

give permission for _____ to drive my child to and from the
Catechist's Name

_____ Parish Religious Education Program.
Name of Parish

I understand that _____ is not working in the role of a
Catechist's Name

catechist while driving my child to and from the Parish Religious Education Program. I therefore
release _____ and the Archdiocese of
Name of Parish

Philadelphia from liability.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Catechist Signature

Date

Trip Permission and Release Form
Name of Parish

I (we) as parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of _____ give permission to
Student's Name

participate in the _____ at _____ on _____. Parents/Guardians must
Trip/event Location Date

transportation to and from _____ or I understand that my (our) child will travel to and from
Location

_____ by _____. This permission includes all related programs or
Location Name of Transportation Provider

events associated with the _____. In consideration for my (our) child's participation
Trip

I (we) and my (our) child agree and understand that we assume the risks inherent with this _____,
Trip/event

and with full knowledge of the risks, I (we) agree to release and hold harmless _____
Name of Parish

and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and their employees and representatives, from claims arising or related
to my (our) child's participation. My (our) child understands and agrees to abide by all rules and regulations

established by the _____pertaining to this _____.
Name of Parish Trip/event

I (We) have spoken with my (our) child about his/her responsibility to act appropriately at all times.

I (We) consent to and give permission for emergency medical care for my (our) child that may be needed as
a result of my (our) child's participation.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Emergency Contact

Phone #

Student must return this signed permission form by _____.

Date

* The Director /Coordinator of Religious Education may also add a section for medical information such as
the name and contact information for the family medical doctor and the family's medical insurance
information.

Act 175 Released Time

1. Prior to the religious education instruction/event, the Parish Director of Religious Education:
 - identifies school district (s) to be notified
 - contacts the superintendent's office for each district regarding its protocol regarding Act 175. If possible, this contact should be prior to the beginning of the school year.
 - determines if the letter of permission is addressed to the superintendent, local school principal or another school district official
 - avoids scheduling conflicts by checking the public school district's calendar against the Parish Religious Education date (s) for the instruction/event(s)
 - requests the school district to add the Parish Religious Program instruction/event to its calendars and if possible, notify school principal (s) and teacher (s)
 - creates a letter for parents which is addressed to the proper school district official (superintendent or principal), refers to Act 175 and describes the date, hours, and purpose of the religious education instruction/event (Appendix XI)
 - distributes this letter to parents/guardians with the following instructions:
 - parent/guardian completes information and signs letter
 - parent/guardian returns completed letter to the Parish Religious Education Director by due date
 - parent/guardian understands that this letter will be forwarded to the designated school official by the Director of Religious Education on his/her behalf
 - parent/guardian should inform their child's day school teacher of the religious education instruction/event
 - parent/guardian should contact the Parish Director of Religious Education on the day of the event if his/her child will be absent
 - includes a trip release form (Appendix IX) if the religious instruction/event is not held on parish property
 - sends parent/guardian letters of permission to the designated school district official.

2. On the day of the religious education instruction/event, the Director of Religious Education:
 - keeps a list of participating students' names, home and emergency phone numbers as well as the student's school name and school phone number
 - checks voicemail or emails for absentees
 - contacts parents and/or school immediately and before departure regarding absentees who are scheduled for event and are not present.

3. After religious education instruction/event, the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education sends an official list of students' names who participated in the religious education event to the school district.

Parent Address _____

Dear (School Official's Name):

Under Section 1546 of the "Public School code", as amended by Act 175 of 1982, I hereby request that my child _____, be excused from attendance at

_____, on _____ in order to attend a religious education program
 Name of School Date

conducted by _____. I understand that my child will not return in time
 Name of Parish
 for regular dismissal from this activity and that I will provide transportation.

I appreciate the excused release of my child from public school attendance for participation in this religious instruction program, which I deem to be important to his or her total educational growth and development as a person. I understand my child will be given ample opportunity to make up the missed public school class work or assignments.

I will see to it that my child attends the religious instruction program for which he or she is being released from school. I hereby authorize the religious education administrator who is responsible for the religious instruction program to serve in loco parentis for me and to attest to my child's attendance at the religious instruction program session.

Respectfully yours,

Parent/Guardian's Signature_____
Date

This form must be completed and signed by parent/legal guardian and returned to
 _____ for registration to be completed for _____ on _____.
 Name of Parish Instruction/Event Date

Deadline for return is _____.
 Date

Name of Director/Coordinator of Religious Education
 Parish Name/ Office
 Address

GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED CATECHESIS OF CHILDREN ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

HOME-BASED CATECHESIS

“Catechesis describes the essential ministry of the Church through which the teachings of Christ have been passed on to believers throughout the ages.... Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no.1) Home-based catechesis is understood as the work of Catholic parents/guardians who undertake the formal religious education of **their own** child(ren) for any length of time and in **their** home.

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia recognizes that the Church’s teaching consistently affirms that parents are called to be the primary educators of **their own** children.

- “Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children.” (Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Christian Education*, no. 3)
- “Parents have the first responsibility of the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2223)
- “Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children.” (John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 16)
- “Parents have the right and the duty to choose the kind of educational environment that they determine best suits their children’s educational need. Therefore, home schooling is a viable option for the general education of children.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no.61)

PASTORAL APPLICATION

Although home-based catechesis is a viable option, the words of Pope John Paul II must also be considered: “Catechesis can be given anywhere, but I wish to stress ... that the parish community must continue to be the prime mover.” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no.67)

Parents who choose to provide the religious instruction of **their own** child(ren) in **their** home must recognize that “Catechesis must be complete and authentic. The bishop of the diocese, the pastor of the parish, the parents, and the children all have God-given responsibilities that must be respected in considering home-based catechesis.... **Parents who choose...to be the primary catechist of their children must adhere to the guidelines for catechists as outlined by the diocesan bishop.**” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no.61)

Home-based catechesis is a cooperative and collaborative effort between the parents and parish leadership. This relationship helps parents who choose home-based catechesis to be a part of the total catechetical effort of the parish and they “should not feel alone in this task.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no. 61)

Categories of a Catholic family who chooses home-based catechesis are:

1. Parents who choose to have **their own** child(ren) home-schooled for all academic subjects and choose to provide formal religious education in **their own** home, assuming the role of catechist for only **their own** child(ren).
2. Parents who send their child(ren) to public or private non-Catholic school and provide formal religious education in **their own** home, assuming the role of catechist for only their own child(ren).

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia does not recognize home-based catechesis of children in a home other than **their own**, and therefore, does not permit groups of children gathering for catechesis other than at the parish.

PARISH GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are provided to assist parishes in ministering to families who choose home-based catechesis:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will register in their parish and declare their option for home-based catechesis for **their own** child(ren). The names of the children under instruction must be clearly identified in the Parish's Registration system/form.
2. Before the home-based catechesis begins, the parent(s)/guardian(s) are to meet with the pastor and/or his delegate to discuss the reasons for this decision and to ensure that the catechesis provided in the home is the catechesis of the Church. This dialogue is essential to the complete and authentic catechesis of **their own** children in **their** homes.
3. The pastor or his delegate will provide the parents with a copy of the Scope & Sequence Chart and Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guidelines for the grade level(s), approved textbooks, and a set of expectations which include:
 - Conduct a minimum of three meetings annually with the pastor or designated representative to review the child's progress.
 - Liturgies, prayer services, Catechist Night Out, activities, retreats, programs, meetings, or other parish opportunities in which the child and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) attendance is expected.
4. Parish Religious Education Programs of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia may only use the religion series and sacramental textbooks which are approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The USCCB list includes only those texts which are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Parents/guardians are required to use the textbooks and supplemental catechetical materials which have been approved by the pastor for use in the Parish Religious Education Program.
5. Families providing home-based catechesis should be included in any informational mailings pertaining to the parish religious education program and/or the preparation and celebration of the sacraments. They are to be welcomed in all parish catechetical program activities.
6. Since their children are being initiated into the Catholic Church, parent(s)/guardian(s) have an obligation to involve their children in the life and mission of the Church. They should participate in:
 - the spiritual life of the parish, particularly in the Sunday Eucharist.
 - the charitable works of the parish.
 - the catechetical and faith formation opportunities on the parish and archdiocesan levels.
7. The Basic Catechetical Certification Policy (Formation Series from Loyola Press) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia fosters practical applications rooted in theological teaching. To support the role of volunteer catechists and PREP parents in the spiritual formation of children, the parish may choose from the following options for fulfilling the formation requirements by pastors and the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education (D/CRE):
 - **Strongly recommend to achieve the Basic Catechetical Certification:** Complete the Basic Catechetical Certification Program provided by the Office for the Catechetical Formation. This certification involves a structured curriculum designed to deepen theological understanding and enhance practical catechetical skills. To access the formation series from Loyola Press, D/CREs should share the following information with parents:
Go to <https://digitallibrary.loyolapress.com/> and Enter Access Code: **CFSPHILHOME**

- **Attend Formation Sessions:** Participate in formation sessions organized by the pastor and/or D/CRE. These sessions are designed to provide ongoing support and guidance. Among these sessions, one must be an initial meeting where expectations, requirements, and resources are reviewed to ensure all participants are well-prepared for their roles.

Pastors and/or D/CREs should provide access to the Catechetical Formation Series of Loyola Press in order for them to achieve the Basic Catechetical Certification Policy to parents/guardians who serve as catechists for their child(ren) and recommend their adherence to this policy.

Approved February 3, 2025
by Archbishop Nelson Pérez

Parish Religious Education Incident Report		
Date & time of incident	Name of person making report	Position
Names of person(s) involved in the incident:		
Did the incident take place in the classroom? State location if not in classroom. ☐ Yes ☐ No		
If incident happened outdoors, describe the weather conditions.		
Was the catechist present? If no, please supply name (s) of responsible personnel. ☐ Yes ☐ No		
Name(s) of witnesses and contact information:		
Describe the incident in full detail (use reverse side if necessary):		
Describe actions taken before (preventive) and after the incident. Use reverse side if necessary.		
Were treatments given on site? (If yes, please describe.) ☐ Yes ☐ No		
Was hospitalization necessary? If yes, please explain and include name/location of hospital.		
Please describe how the parent/guardian (s) was notified:		
Signature of Person completing report:		Date submitted:
Director/Coordinator of Religious Education Signature:		Date:

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Office First Aid Supplies

(Store in a milk crate)

- First Aid/CPR book or chart
- Blank Incident Reports (see Appendix XII)
- Copies of Hand washing Instructions
(see Column II)
- Box of disposable, latex free disposable gloves (medium/large)
- Spray bottle for chlorine spray to sanitize area (Mix 1 part chlorox to 10 parts water when needed; do not keep as mixture breaks down)
- Bottle of chlorox
- Large zip lock bags (for soiled clothes)
- Small garbage bags
- Sandwich bags
- Red bags for hazardous waste (check with pastor or school principal)
- Ammonia inhalant capsules
- 4x4 gauze bandages
- Box of band-aids
- Alcohol swaps or antiseptic towelettes
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Roll of gauze bandages
- Adhesive tape
- Scissors
- Hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Tweezers
- Neosporin

Individual Classroom First Aid Packet*

(Store in a large zip lock bag)

- 2 large zip lock bags
- 2 pair gloves
- 2 snack size zip lock bags
(especially for Tooth Fairy!)
- 2 gauze pads (3" or 4")
- Assorted band-aids
- Tissues
- Purell packet B or give each room its own bottle
- 1copy — Hand washing technique and laundry instructions
- 1copy — Incident Report

*if possible, the parish should supply for each catechist.

Hand washing

Proper hand washing is important..

Use soap & warm water.

Wash hands vigorously under running water for 1 full minute.

Rinse and dry hands thorough with paper towels or blow dryer. Do not use cloth towel.

Hand washing technique for medical asepsis

Stand away from the sink so as not to have clothing in contact with sink.

Turn water on; adjust to warm temperature & keep water running during entire procedure.

Wet hands; apply soap thoroughly, under nails and between fingers.

Hold hands with fingers pointing downward.

Wash palms and backs of hands with strong friction motion.

Wash fingers & spaces between them, interlacing fingers, rubbing them up and down for 1 full minute with special attention to problem areas.

Rinse well, run water from wrists to fingers.

Dry thoroughly with paper towel from fingertips to wrists.

Turn off water with paper towel and discard in waste basket.

Laundry Instructions for Clothing Soiled with Body Fluids

The most important factor in laundering clothing soiled in a school setting is the elimination of potentially infectious agents by soap and water.

Use disposable gloves of impenetrable material when handling soiled clothing.

Apply a disinfectant spray (comparable to Lysol) thoroughly to the soiled clothing.

Wash clothing soaked with bodily fluids separately from other items.

Pre-soak heavily soiled clothing; then wash and dry as usual.

Add one-half cup of household bleach to the wash cycle if the material is bleachable.

Dispose gloves according to the hazardous waste policy of parish.

Contact parent or guardian immediately if student's soiled clothes are sent home for laundering and convey the above instructions for laundering.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CHECK LIST

A-17

Clearances must be obtained prior to the start date of employment or volunteer service.

BACKGROUND CHECKS AND TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

All catechists and program volunteers, who are 18 and older, and lived in PA for less than 10 years must provide the following:

- ___ PA State Police Criminal background check*
- ___ PA Dept. of Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance*
- ___ Federal Bureau of Investigation Fingerprint (FBI) Clearance (DHS)*
- ___ Attend a Protecting God's Children Awareness Session and submit:
 - ___ Signed form for the Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries
 - ___ Technology Addendum
 - ___ Mandated Reporter Training certificate of completion.
 - ___ Mandated Reporter acknowledgement form (if trained prior to Nov. 2014)

**Must be renewed every five years.*

All catechists and program volunteers, who are 18 and older, and **lived continuously in PA for 10 years** must provide the following:

- ___ PA State Police Criminal background check*
- ___ PA Dept. of Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance*
- ___ Disclosure Statement Application for volunteers to be filed at the place of service*
- ___ Attend a Protecting God's Children Awareness Session and submit:
 - ___ Signed acknowledgment form for the Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries
 - ___ Technology Addendum
 - ___ Mandated Reporter Training certificate of completion.
 - ___ Mandated Reporter acknowledgement form (if trained prior to Nov. 2014)

**Must be renewed every five years.*

BACKGROUND CHECKS AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

The following clearances must be obtained by employees and renewed every *five years*:

- ___ Federal Bureau of Investigation Fingerprint Clearance (DHS)
- ___ Pennsylvania State Police Clearance
- ___ Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance

SUPERVISION

___ All volunteers who are under the age of 18 are supervised at all times by an adult who is in full compliance with the Safe Environment requirements.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

___ All catechists and program volunteers understand their responsibilities as a “mandated reporter” in the state of Pennsylvania.

___ The Director of Religious Education Program has reviewed the reporting procedure with all catechists and program volunteers.

LESSONS FOR STUDENTS

___ All catechists have received and reviewed the “Kid Talk” lesson plan for their level.

<http://phillyocf.org/safe-environment-2/>

___ Parent/guardians have received notice of date (s) on which the personal safety lesson will be presented and informed of their right to opt out after review of this lesson.

___ If (after reviewing the lesson) a parent/guardian (s) chooses to “opt out” their child(ren) from this instruction, the parish provides the “Opt Out” letter (see appendix XVI.) The parent/guardian(s) must sign, date and return to the Director of Religious Education who will retain on file. A copy of this letter must be included with the annual audit.

___ Directors of Religious Education are encouraged to have additional support staff available on the day of instruction.

Please contact the Office for Child and Youth Protection at 215-587-2466 if you have any questions.

Promise TO Protect

Safe Environment Program



Mandated Reporters

Under Pennsylvania law, any person, paid or unpaid, who works, volunteers and/or comes into direct contact with children in a program, activity or service is a mandated reporter and must immediately report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Within the Archdiocese, this includes all members of clergy, parish and school staff, and volunteers who are likely to come into direct contact with children.

*"The prevention of child abuse
and protection of young people are two
of our greatest shared responsibilities."*

— Archbishop Charles Chaput



MANDATED REPORTING

Over the last decade the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has become a leader in developing safe environments for children. Through education and awareness, the Office of Child and Youth Protection assist parish families, Catholic school families and their communities with resources and services.

Please remember the Office for Child and Youth Protection is available to help survivors of sexual abuse and their families.

Victim Services can be reached at (888) 800-8780 or (215) 587-3880 or email at philavac@archphila.org



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www.childyouthprotection.org | www.archphila.org

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Promise TO Protect

Safe Environment Program

What must be reported?

The Standard for reporting suspected abuse/neglect in Pennsylvania is a "reasonable cause to believe" that a child is the victim of abuse/neglect. First hand observation of abuse is not required.

Indicators of Abuse (Source: PA Family Support Alliance)

As mandated reporters, it is important that you are able to recognize indicators of abuse.

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, welts, human bite marks, bald spots
- Numerous bruises in various stages of healing
- Marks on many surfaces of the body
- Unexplained burns, especially cigarette or immersion burns
- Withdrawal or aggression—behavioral extremes
- Uncomfortable with physical contact
- Afraid to go home
- Dressed inappropriately for the weather
- Cringes when approached by an adult (fears getting hit)
- Overreacts to accidents such as spilling milk
- Does not want to talk about home life
- Extreme attachment to parents
- Extreme attentiveness to needs of parents

Signs of Neglect or Psychological Abuse

- Unattended medical needs
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Persistent hunger, poor hygiene or inappropriate dress
- Distended stomach or emaciated body
- Delayed physical development
- Substance abuse
- Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness
- Steals food or begs
- Habit disorders (sucking, rocking, etc.)
- Passive or aggressive behavior extremes
- Neurotic traits such as sleep disorders or inhibition of play

Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- A child's report or self-disclosure
- Sexual knowledge beyond what is natural for a child
- Preoccupation with their body
- Acting out sexual behavior
- Withdrawal, chronic depression
- Self devaluation and lack of confidence
- Problems with bedtime or afraid to go to bed
- Bedwetting — especially if it begins in a child who has been dry



How do I make a report if I suspect abuse?

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, the following three steps must be followed:

1. Call ChildLine at **800-932-0313**.
2. Within 48-hours of your report, submit a written CY-47 report with the county Children & Youth services where the alleged abuse took place. The CY-47 may be completed electronically on the Department of Human Services website at compass.state.pa.us/CWIS or downloaded from OCP's website at childyouthprotection.org.
3. Notify the person in charge of the institution immediately.



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Note to Director/Coordinator of Religious Education (D/CRE):

For in-person instruction, the dates for the teaching of the KidTalk lessons must be communicated to parents/guardians with a link to the lessons for parent/guardian review. The parent/guardian may opt-out his/her child from the lesson, however, must contact the D/CRE to obtain and sign an opt out letter. IT IS NOT RECOMMENDED that the opt-out letter be sent to all parents/guardians with the initial notification to avoid unwarranted absences. The following is a sample opt-out letter.

On Parish letterhead

Date

Dear (Parent/Guardian name),

Article 12 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People calls for all dioceses to establish safe environment programs at all grade levels, both in the Parish Religious Education Program and Parish Elementary School. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia provides a personal safety lesson for each level of the Parish Religious Education Program and mandates that this lesson is taught during one session of the instructional year. The Parish Religious Education personal safety lessons known as “KidTalk Safe” are posted at Lessons – phillyocf.org

After reviewing these lessons, you have expressed your desire for your child (ren) not to be present during the teaching of the personal safety lesson scheduled for (date). You therefore are required by the Office for Child and Youth Protection of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to complete and return this form to the Director/Coordinator of Parish Religious Education. Your signature on this form indicates your request to remove your child (ren) from this instruction.

The “KidTalk” lesson is intended to supplement the conversations that a parent/guardian is having with his/her child regarding personal safety. It is recommended that a parent/guardian review this lesson at home for children who are not present for the religious education program instructional session.

Sincerely,

Name of Pastor

Name of Director/Coordinator of Religious Education

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Name of Child (ren)/ Level (s)

Name of Parish Religious Education Program
Photo/Video/Social Media/Virtual Learning Release Form
School Year

I, _____, hereby give the Archdiocese of Philadelphia/
_____, its successors and assigns and those acting with authority,
Name of Parish

_____ permission to reproduce, copyright and circulate pictures and/or video of my child
produced and filmed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia/ _____
Name of Parish

I also grant:

_____ permission for my child to participate in virtual learning using the platform
provided by the program.

_____ permission for my child to be filmed/livestreamed during parish liturgical
celebrations or PREP activities.

I hereby warrant that I am free to give this permission. I further warrant that the information I
have provided is to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Student's Name

Date of Birth

Home Address

City, State, Zip

**LIMITED, CONTROLLED ACCESS OF ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY,
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS. PREP AND YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS
FOR PARENTS IDENTIFIED AS SEXUAL OFFENDERS**

- Purpose:** This policy is written as a guideline to assist pastors in providing a safe environment for children as well as to protect the reputation of all parties involved when a parent or guardian is a sexual offender.
- Simply Defined:** These guidelines are to assist in the development of a safety plan which utilizes controlled and limited access to the elementary school, Parish Religious Education Preparation (PREP) or youth ministry.
- For purposes of this policy a sexual offender is defined as someone who has been officially accused of sexual misconduct with a minor. This includes but is not limited to: those who have been arrested; pending trial or sentencing; convicted and serving a court ordered sentence; or are registered in the Pennsylvania State Police Megan's Law registry.
- Applicable to:** This policy is applicable to elementary schools, PREP and youth ministry.
- Safety Plan:** Once the identification of a sexual offender whose own children are attending the elementary school, PREP or Youth Ministry comes of the attention of the pastor, principal, director of PREP, or the youth minister the following guidelines should be considered for the development of a safety plan.
1. Protection of all children should be the first and foremost focus of the safety plan.
 2. Due consideration should be given to the sexual offender and their interest to participate in the activities of their children.
 3. If the victim of the sexual offender attends the elementary school, PREP or youth ministry and in anyway would come into contact with the sexual offender, then access to the school should be denied.
 4. The pastor must meet with the sexual offender to acknowledge an awareness of the situation and this policy to begin development of a safety plan. The pastor may have other present, as he deems necessary.
 5. Should it be determined that this parent or guardian should have limited, controlled access to the elementary school, PREP or youth ministry, the pastor may inform other employees of the situation and the safety plan on an "need to know basis".
 6. Should it be determined that the parent or guardian have no access to the elementary school, PREP or youth ministry, the pastor must inform the parent or guardian in writing.

**LIMITED, CONTROLLED ACCESS OF ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY,
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS. PREP AND YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS
FOR PARENTS IDENTIFIED AS SEXUAL OFFENDERS**

7. If there is a situation that requires the parent or guardian to come to the parish, elementary school, PREP or youth ministry to pick-up their children, the safety plan should include the identification of someone who will meet the parent or guardian at the door and escort them to the appropriate office. Once the children are in the office the parent or guardian and the children must also be escorted from the building. A determination should be made as to whether or not this exchange of custody of children should be in the school office, in the parking lot or another safe and appropriate venue.

8. At no time should the parent or guardian come to the elementary school, PREP or youth ministry without advanced notice to the pastor.

9. This parent or guardian is never permitted to pick-up or transport children not their own.

10. If there is a need for this parent or guardian to attend a parent teacher conference, it is recommended that this conference is scheduled at the end of the day or at a time when there will be fewer children in the school. At a parent teacher conference, the pastor or principal needs to identify an appropriate escort. If the parent or guardian wishes to attend a school sponsored event, the pastor should determine if this is a suitable venue for the parent or guardian. If the pastor determines that limited controlled access should be granted, the pastor must assign an escort to remain with the parent or guardian for the entire event. It is recommended that the escort be introduced to the parent or guardian prior to the event. The escort should be someone who is discreet, of great kindness and willing to serve in this role.

Notifications:

To the Office for Catechetical Formation if the parent or guardian has a child in the Parish Religious Education Program or a Youth Ministry Program.

To the Office of Catholic Education if the parent or guardian has a child in the elementary schools.

All situations also require notification to the Director, Office of Child and Youth Protection.



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Consent Form for Electronic Communication with Minors

Permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained, in writing, in order for an adult leader to communicate with minors via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, social networks, or other electronic means.

Parish: _____

Parish Organization: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Address: _____

City/Town, State and Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Parent/guardian cell phone: _____

Parent/guardian E-mail: _____

Please note: By providing the email address and cell phone number of a minor, the parent or guardian grants permission for electronic communication from the group leader to this young person in regards to all group related activities.

Optional information:

Participant's e-mail: _____

Participant's cell phone: _____

Sharing of a minor's contact information: (If the following statement is not checked, the information will not be shared.)

_____ I give my permission for my child's email and cell phone number to be shared with other minors and adult leaders who are associated with the activity of this parish organization.

Name of Parent or Guardian _____
(please print)

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Date: _____



Annual Catechist Checklist

The D/CRE should review the following annually with ALL catechists individually or in a group setting.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ The Catechetical Ministry (see p. 1) ☐ Catechist Qualifications Responsibilities (see A-1) ☐ Basic Catechetical Certification (see p. 4 A-4) ☐ Access and Inclusion (see p. 8 and A-8) ☐ Confidentiality (see p. 8) ☐ Arrival/Dismissal policies ☐ Attendance and Homework (see p. 9) ☐ Classroom management ☐ Lesson plans (see p. 7 and A-7) ☐ Learning styles of children (see p. 8) ☐ Core Curriculum/Scope and Sequence (see p. 7) ☐ KidTalk personal safety lessons (see p. 18 and A-19) ☐ Food in classroom/Food Allergies ☐ Unattended classrooms ☐ Fire, Lock Down and Shelter-in-place Drills (see p. 8, 14) ☐ Illness/Injury during a religious education session (see p. 13) ☐ Bathroom policy ☐ Discipline procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Virtual Distance Learning Policies (if applicable) ☐ Use of Parish Resources & equipment which includes classroom resources belonging to the school (multi-media, technology, supplies, books, web accounts, etc.) ☐ Approval for use of outside Resources (DVDs, technology, social media, websites, virtual lessons, etc.) ☐ Approval for guest speakers ☐ Permission forms (if applicable) (see p. 9 and A-11) ☐ Hall Monitors: duties and responsibilities ☐ Incident Reports (see p. 13 and A-15) ☐ Catechist and Family Handbooks ☐ Carpooling and/or walker policies ☐ Catechists who drive student waiver (see p. 9 and A-10) ☐ Field Trips (if applicable) ☐ Relationship/Collaboration with Day School teacher (if applicable) ☐ Reimbursement for supplies ☐ (optional) Student Evaluations/Progress Reports ☐ Communication with parents/guardians and students (see p. 14 and A-22) |
|---|---|

The D/CRE shares the following on a **one- to- one basis** and *only* with the catechist of the student.

- ☐ Custody issues
- ☐ IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or 504 Plan.



OFFICE FOR CHILD AND
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SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSONS
HOME BASED-CATECHESIS
PARENT/GUARDIAN FORM

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia requires students in all Religious Education programs to participate annually in the “KidTalk” Safe Environment Child abuse prevention personal safety lesson. Home Based-Catechesis parents/guardians are expected to teach these lessons unless he/she chooses to excuse the child(ren) from these lessons. The lessons can be viewed at <http://phillyocf.org/safe-environment/> This form must be returned to your parish religious education director/coordinator. Please check the appropriate box.

I, _____ acknowledge that I have received the information regarding the Safe Environment child abuse prevention lessons.

___ By signing this form I am confirming that I have taught the KidTalk lesson (s) to my child (ren).

___ By signing this form I am confirming that I am choosing **not** to present the KidTalk lesson to my child(ren).

Name of Child/Children

Level

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date



222 North Seventeenth St • Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299 •
www.childyouthprotection.org Victim Assistance: (888) 800-8780 •
Safe Environment: (215) 587-2466 • Fax (215) 587-3711