

Diocesan Policies for Evangelization and Catechesis

POLICY 100

Programs which Respect Language, Culture and Disabilities

Each parish shall provide educational ministry programs of catechesis, youth ministry, and evangelization, which respect language and cultural diversity, as well as the unique abilities and disabilities of every parishioner.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Each parish should establish a single board, commission or committee for educational ministry advisory to the pastor and having responsibility for the total educational mission of the parish. All educational programs—including the parochial school where applicable—should fall within its scope (cf. National Catechetical Directory, Section 224).
2. This commission or committee should have a representative on the parish pastoral council.

POLICY 110

Insurance Coverage for Children and Youth

All children and youth participating in parish educational ministry activities must be covered under the blanket accident/medical insurance program currently in effect through Myers Stevens.

**Note: This coverage is for accidents which occur during parish sponsored and supervised educational activities of up to 72 hours duration. Beyond 72 hours, an additional fee is required for extended coverage.

Guidelines for Implementation:

Proof of liability insurance or a Certificate of Insurance should be provided upon request to any retreat facility, camp or other conference center used for children or youth activities or meetings. Note: Contact Catholic Mutual (858-490-8285) for an appropriate insurance certificate.

POLICY 111

Notification for Off-site Events

When taking a group of children or youth off parish premises and beyond or out of the county of the parish, the diocesan insurance agent must be notified by the person responsible for the group outing.

Note: Our diocesan agent is

Robert Lang, Catholic Mutual Group,
P.O. Box 85728
San Diego, CA 92186-5728
(858) 490-8285.

When taking children or youth off the parish premises, parishes shall require that each child or youth present a completed Parental/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver for the activity. Children or youth without this form shall not be allowed to participate in the activity.

POLICY 112

Requirements for Drivers Transporting Minors

All drivers transporting minors for parish educational ministry activities must be 21 years of age or older, have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that could in any way impair their ability to drive the vehicle safely.

The vehicle of any driver who transports minors to and/or from any event must be insured to the minimum limits of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence. The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and valid and current license plates.

When using a passenger van that seats more than ten persons, the driver must have a Class B driver's license.

A signed Driver Information Sheet [See Guideline 19] for Events Off Parish Premises on each vehicle must be submitted, prior to the trip, to the parish staff person responsible for the activity.

POLICY 113

Reporting Accidents

When a child or youth is injured, either on or off the parish premises, an Accident Reporting Form shall be filled out immediately, in triplicate. One copy shall be retained for parish files, one copy given to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the injured youth and one copy shall be sent to the Diocesan Insurance Agent.

POLICY 120

Child Abuse Reporting

All diocesan and parish personnel, identified as "child care custodians" by Law (cf. PC 11166), must be made aware of the California Child Abuse Reporting Law PC 11166 and shall sign a Certification of Awareness verifying that he or she has knowledge of the provisions of the law and will comply with its provisions.

Certification of Awareness forms shall be provided to employees and volunteers by immediate supervisors (e.g. Pastor, DCM, Coordinator, etc.). Current personnel identified as "child care custodians" must complete this form immediately. New personnel shall complete this form at initiation of service. A copy of the Certification of Awareness form should be given to the personnel member who has signed it.

Signed forms are to be kept on file by the immediate supervisor for all personnel during the term of service and for five years thereafter.

POLICY 121

Manner of Reporting Child Abuse

Child abuse reporting shall be handled in the following manner:

1. All educational ministry volunteers who suspect that the physical or mental health or welfare of a child or youth may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report it to the DCM, who shall then call the Child Protective Services.
2. A DCM or Coordinator of Youth Ministry who suspects that the physical or mental health or welfare of a child or youth may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report it directly to Child Protective Services.

Note: Forms for reporting are available through Child Protective Services (San Diego County, 858-560-2191; Imperial County, 1-800-344-6000).

3. The Pastor should be promptly informed that a report is being filed; to the extent possible, before it is filed.

POLICY 200

Need for Systematic Catechetical Formation

Parishes shall provide for the catechetical formation of adults, young people and children (see Code of Canon Law, Canons 773, 776,777), through systematic formal catechesis of sufficient length and intensity to ensure effective faith and sacramental formation at each level. Parish catechetical programs should include the formation of persons of particular or cultural groups and persons with disabilities.

POLICY 201

Home Schooling in Religion

Since the pastor has the obligation to know of the parents' intention to home school their children, parents must notify the pastor early in the process. Parents are required to follow the guidelines set by the pastor and must register their child/young person with the parish Director of Catechetical Ministry or Coordinator.

Guidelines for Implementation

1. *The religious education of children and youth is the responsibility of parents, pastors and the local parish community. Canon Law (773, 774 §1 and 2) supports this direction. Therefore it is the obligation of parish leadership to provide religious education programming for children/young people. In situations where some families choose to "home school" their children, it must be understood that these efforts cannot be done independently of the parish.*
2. *The primary responsibility of parents for the education and formation of their children in the Faith cannot be interpreted in an isolated way, since the family is an integral part of the larger ecclesial community. All religious education must be carried out in a way that builds unity within the Church. No home schooling can be tolerated which does not promote the understanding that being a Christian is not a private matter of individual choice but rather of a personal vocation within the context of the Church lived out in the experience of the parish community.*
3. *Home schooling parents are responsible for the participation of their children/young person in the immediate sacramental preparation as required or approved by the parish, through interviews for sacramental readiness, practice for sacramental celebrations, appropriate initiation rites and retreats.*
4. *Home schooling parents must participate in parish parent meetings and parent preparation programs for the sacraments.*
5. *Parents have the responsibility to participate in catechetical formation so that they will be able to prepare their child/young person for the sacraments, in collaboration with the parish community. This is supported by Canon Law (780).*
6. *With regard to the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation parents must ensure that their children/young people are correctly prepared and connected to the local parish.*
7. *The pastor and DCM will require a periodic progress report to be made by home school parents. A form should be developed by the parish to assist in this reporting. Children/young people must be interviewed by the Pastor, DCM or designated representative to determine their understanding of and readiness for the reception of the Sacraments.*
8. *Since the passing on of the faith tradition is the responsibility of the whole parish community; pastors, parents and DCM's must collaborate to insure that the children/young people are appropriately catechized and prepared for the reception of the sacraments. As parishioners, families are expected to participate in the parish Sunday liturgy.*
9. *The rights of children and young people to catechetical formation can best be served when pastors, parents and catechists offer formation appropriate to the level, development and disposition of the young person.*
10. *The parish DCM should serve as a resource to parents. Recommended textbooks and other appropriate materials must be used in all sessions. The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the General Directory for Catechesis are excellent resources for parents and catechists.*

POLICY 210

Right of Children to Receive Penance/Eucharist

Children who have reached the age of reason have the right to receive First Penance/Reconciliation and First Communion as stated in Canon 913.1: "For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity, and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion."

Guidelines for Implementation:

Those responsible for parish sacramental preparation programs should arrange for parents to be involved in the preparation of children.

POLICY 211

Norm for Reception of Sacrament of Penance

Catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation. This is to be done so that the specific identity of each sacrament is apparent and so that, before receiving First Communion, the child will be familiar with the revised Rite of Reconciliation and will be at ease with its celebration. The Sacrament of Penance normally should be celebrated prior to the reception of First Communion.

Canon 914 clearly expresses that First Penance/Reconciliation, in a normative way, is to precede First Communion:

“It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents and those who take the place of parents as well as of the pastor to see that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and are nourished by the divine food as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession; it is also for the pastor to be vigilant lest any children come to the Holy Banquet who have not reached the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed.”

POLICY 212

Catechesis for Sacrament of Reconciliation

Catechesis of children for Reconciliation must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances of individuals. (See NCD,126) It should seek:

1. to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life;
2. to help the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrong doing and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church;
3. to encourage the child to see that, in this sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving;
4. to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly.

Guidelines for Implementation:

•*The rights of children to the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist can best be served when pastors, parents and catechists offer formation for these sacraments appropriate to the level and development of the child. The preparation for and celebration of these sacraments should be suited to the level, development and disposition of the young person.*

•*Parents have the responsibility to participate in their own catechetical formation so that they will be able to prepare their child for these sacraments in collaboration with the parish community.*

•*It is the responsibility of the parish community to provide catechetical formation and support for parents in the preparation of their children for these sacraments.*

•*The preparation for Reconciliation and Eucharist is an ongoing process which begins long before the celebration of the sacraments. The preparation for the sacrament of Penance is separated from and precedes the preparation for the sacrament of Eucharist.*

•*Parents, in consultation with the catechetical staff, discern the readiness of their child for the sacraments. While the celebration of first Penance before first Eucharist is the norm, it is acknowledged that there may be individual exceptions.*

•*It is recommended that a communal celebration (Rite 2), that includes the family, be used for first Penance. A family celebration at a Sunday liturgy is recommended for first Eucharist.*

•*Home-schoolers are required to participate in the immediate preparation for the sacraments in which all parish children participate, e.g., interviews for sacramental readiness, practice for sacramental celebrations, retreats, etc.*

•*Since children are celebrating these sacraments for the first time, it is imperative that they have a positive experience. Priests, especially in the sacrament of Penance, need to be gentle and compassionate realizing the sensitivity of the child and/or the person with special needs.*

•*A fuller catechesis for the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist should be provided each year. As part of their on-going catechetical formation, celebrations of Liturgies with Children and communal Penance celebrations should be provided annually. For those who have postponed the sacraments of Penance, an appropriate opportunity is provided in these communal celebrations.*

•*Because continuing, lifelong conversion is part of what it means to grow in faith, catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance is ongoing. Children have a right to a fuller catechesis each year. Adults also have a right to continuing catechesis concerning the sacrament. Lent is an especially appropriate season for this.*

POLICY 213

Reception of Penance by Persons with Developmental Disabilities

No age or grade is set for reception of the sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation by persons who are developmentally disabled.

POLICY 214

Reception of Eucharist by Persons with Developmental Disabilities

No age or grade is set for the reception of Eucharist by persons who are developmentally disabled. Any person with developmental disabilities may be admitted to the Eucharist if, after sufficient preparation, he or she:

1. has some understanding of the person of Jesus, his life, death and resurrection;
2. is able to distinguish between the Eucharist and ordinary bread;
3. shows some desire to receive the Eucharist.

Such a person may need the help of others to demonstrate the above. If following catechesis, there is a question whether the above conditions are met, the person with developmental disabilities may be admitted to the Eucharist with the consent of the pastor, parent and catechist.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Judgement of readiness should balance reverence for the sacraments with each person's need and right to the benefits of the sacraments.

2. In case of doubt whether the conditions for reception are met, the presumption of readiness should be in favor of the recipient of the sacraments in question, with pastor, parents and catechist consenting.

3. Persons with disabilities should be provided the necessary adaptations and supports from others regarding preparation for the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, and so that they may actively and meaningfully participate in sacramental celebrations.

POLICY 220

Employment of Professional Ministers

Each parish shall engage sufficiently trained ministers (hired and/or volunteer) to ensure that parish catechetical needs are met.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Parishes with less than 300 supporting families should hire or appoint a competent coordinator, responsible, under supervision of the pastor, for organizing and implementing parish catechetical programs.
2. Parishes of 300 or more supporting families should hire a qualified Director of Catechetical Ministry and in parishes of 500 or more families, this person should be full time.
3. The parish Director of Catechetical Ministry should ordinarily be the professional staff person responsible for the coordination and administration of the total religious education program of the parish under the supervision of the pastor. This person may be assisted by other staff persons responsible for one or more specific areas of parish catechesis.

POLICY 230

Certification for All Catechists

All active catechists and teachers of religion shall be certified or in the process of certification through the California Catechist Certification programs offered by the diocese. All certification is issued for three years, renewable.

1. Parish catechists and parochial school catechists, including all catechists of adolescents and catechists for Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical age, shall obtain California Catechist Certification by completing one of the following:
 - a.) the Basic Catechist Formation Course offered through the diocese;
or
 - b.) the certification courses (totaling 45 hours) offered through the San Diego Diocesan Institute for Adult Education and Ministry Formation;
or
 - c.) those specific courses or workshops, identified by means of an individual catechist profile evaluation, which remain necessary for certification.
2. Parochial school teachers shall have two years from the commencement of their service as religion teachers to complete catechist certification.
3. Catechists for preschool, special religious education and infant baptism programs shall be certified by completing the appropriate diocesan specialization course.

POLICY 231

Renewal of Catechist Certification

All catechists and teachers of religion shall renew their certification every three years. They must obtain the required number of clock hours or units of credit before the expiration date of their certification.

1. Renewal of certification for parochial school teachers of religion is earned by completing one of the following:
 - a.) an approved 45 hour (3 units) course in Scripture or Theology;
or
 - b.) an approved 30 hours (2 units) course in Scripture or Theology and 15 hours (1 unit) of diocesan sponsored workshops, seminars or courses explicitly designated for certification renewal credit;
or
 - c.) two approved 15 hour (1 unit each) courses in Scripture or Theology and 15 hours (1 unit) of diocesan sponsored or approved Theology, Scripture or catechetical institutes, workshops, seminars or courses explicitly designated for certification renewal credit.
2. Renewal of certification for parish catechists is earned by completing 30 clock hours of diocesan

designated or approved courses.

Note: Inservice conducted at the local parish level, though valued for enriching catechists, does not ordinarily qualify for renewal credit. A description of courses offered at the local level may be submitted to the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry in order to be approved for renewal credit for parish catechists.

POLICY 232

Master Catechist Certification and Renewal

Master Catechist candidates shall obtain California Master Catechist Certification by completing the diocesan Master Catechist Certification Course. Master Catechist Certification is granted for three years and is renewed on the basis of the following components of ongoing formation:

1. participation in group opportunities for spiritual formation and community experience;
2. completion of 45 clock hours of course work and/or workshops in accord with individual need and approved by the Diocesan Office for Catechetical Ministry;
3. evaluation by the Diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry of their performance in teaching the Basic Catechist Formation Course.

POLICY 240

Permanent Records for Students and Staff

Permanent records of staffing and attendance for parish catechetical programs are to be maintained. They are the property of the parish.

Guidelines for Implementation:

Catechetical records should include records for

1. *Catechist certification and renewal*
2. *Student permanent records which include sacramental history and program participation*
3. *Budget items, such as receipts, disbursements, petty cash, budget projections, etc.*
4. *Child abuse reporting forms should be kept on file for five years.*
5. *Legal documents such as medical release forms, parent consent forms, child abuse reporting forms, etc. should be kept on file for two years.*
6. *Accident reports should be kept on file for two years.*

POLICY 310

Preparation for Confirmation

Note: For further information and supporting materials, contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

1. Preparation for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation should be seen as a component of the ongoing catechesis and faith development of the candidates.

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit...in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1309).

2. While there is no specified diocesan program of preparation for Confirmation, there are specific requirements which candidates must meet to qualify for receiving the sacrament.

3. All who meet the candidate requirements are eligible for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation regardless of whether they have completed a particular program.

Note:

- There is more to parish youth ministry than preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation and its celebration which is only **one** component or part of the total process of catechesis and faith development for adolescents.*
- Parishes should develop guidelines regarding preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation which implement diocesan policies.*

POLICY 311

Confirmation Candidate Requirements

1. BAPTISM AND THE STATE OF GRACE: One must be validly baptized to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation (Canon 889.1). In addition, if baptized persons have the use of reason, it is required that they be in the state of grace, properly instructed and able to renew their baptismal promises (*Rite of Confirmation*, 12).
2. MINIMUM AGE: Fifteen (15) is the minimum age for Confirmation in the Diocese of San Diego, except for the case of unbaptized children of catechetical age (catechumens) who should receive Confirmation when they are baptized and the case of baptized Christian children of catechetical age but not Catholic (candidates) who should receive Confirmation when they are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
3. FORMATION IN THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH: Candidates for confirmation are required to evidence an understanding of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age. This means that they should have integrated all their years of catechesis and acquired appreciation of what the Church teaches. As a minimum, candidates are expected to show competence in the following four areas of Christian catechesis found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:
 - a.) *The Creed* in which the Christian mystery is the object of faith;
 - b.) *The Sacred Liturgy* in which the Christian mystery is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions;
 - c.) *The Christian Way of Life* in which the Christian mystery is the basis for the proper formation of conscience and for living according to the moral and social teaching of the Church; and
 - d.) *Christian Prayer* in which the Christian mystery is the basis for prayer, the privileged expression of which is the Our Father.
4. EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING prior to Confirmation is demonstrated by:
 - a.) faithful participation in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist;
 - b.) a commitment to ongoing human and spiritual growth and development through prayer and good works;
 - c.) involvement in the parish community.
5. PROPER DISPOSITION as evidenced by:
 - a. a stated personal desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation;
 - b. willingness to witness more firmly to Christ by word and action;
 - c. acceptance of the responsibility to be an active adult member of the Church, to continue to mature in faith, and to put one's faith into practice.

Note:

- Parishes are responsible to provide opportunities which will assist young people to meet the candidate requirements for Confirmation.*

POLICY 312

Readiness of Candidates

Each parish is responsible for developing a process whereby, according to the candidate requirements, the readiness of individuals to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation is determined.

Note:

1. *Pastors, parents, sponsors, coordinators of youth ministry and others involved in ministry with youth*

should take part in this process.

2. *Candidate readiness is defined in terms of requirements which do not include participation in a program but are taken from the Rite of Confirmation and Canon Law.*

3. *The Sacrament of Confirmation should not be seen as a reward or something one can or must earn.*

4. *There are many ways to determine whether, according to the candidate requirements, an individual is ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, e.g. interviews and evaluations by those involved in ministry with the candidates - pastors, parents, sponsors, youth ministers.*

5. *Ultimately, the burden of responsibility for meeting the requirements for the reception of Confirmation belongs to the candidates and so they should be involved in discerning readiness.*

6. *Appropriate adaptations in candidate requirements should be made for persons with developmental disabilities who have the use of reason. Judgment of readiness for them to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation should be based on whether they demonstrate acceptance of the faith and a desire for greater participation in the life and mission of the Church.*

POLICY 313

Immediate Preparation for Confirmation

After determination of readiness, candidates are expected to participate in immediate short-term preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation which should include:

1. catechesis on the Holy Spirit based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 683-747.
2. catechesis on the Sacraments of Christian Initiation based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: Baptism (nos. 1213-1284); Confirmation (nos. 1285-1321); Eucharist (nos. 1322-1419).
3. a day or evening of prayer;
4. communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
5. review of the Rite of Confirmation;
6. rehearsal for the celebration of Confirmation.

Note: The components and length of time for immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is determined by the parish. Immediate preparation should be adapted to the needs of persons with developmental disabilities.

POLICY 314

Sponsors for Confirmation

1. As far as possible there should be a sponsor for each of those confirmed (Rite of Confirmation, 5). It is not recommended that two or more candidates share the same sponsor.
2. To be a Confirmation sponsor, a person must:
 - a.) be at least 16 years of age and sufficiently mature for this responsibility;
 - b.) be a Catholic who has been confirmed, has already received first Eucharist and is leading a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;
 - c.) not be a parent of the candidate; and
 - d.) not be prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor.

[See Canon 893 with reference to Canon 874; Rite of Confirmation, 6]

Note:

•Each candidate may have only one sponsor and the sponsor does not have to be of the same gender as the candidate.

•It is desirable that one of the baptismal godparents also be the sponsor at Confirmation. This expresses more clearly the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective. Nonetheless, the choice of a special sponsor for Confirmation is not excluded.

•Sponsors should be chosen because they will be able to be present for the scheduled celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation and available thereafter to help the newly confirmed fulfill their baptismal promises.

•If from the same parish or locality, it is recommended that sponsors, along with parents, join the candidates on their faith journey during the period of immediate preparation.

POLICY 315

Confirmation Name

The new rite says nothing about taking a new name at Confirmation. Therefore, candidates may retain their baptismal name rather than take a new one. This is desirable because it manifests an understanding of the fact that confirmation “completes the grace of Baptism.” Nonetheless, a special Confirmation name may be taken if desired. In this case it should be the name of a saint whose life-style or virtues the candidate wishes to emulate.

POLICY 316

Dress for the Sacrament of Confirmation

The dress encouraged for the candidates should not give the impression of a graduation. Regular dress attire is satisfactory. However, to emphasize the relationship between Confirmation and Baptism, a white garment or robe might be used at Confirmation, just as a white robe is used to clothe newly baptized.

The practice in some places of using stoles at Confirmation seems to have arisen out a desire to provide a symbol of Confirmation. However, the distinction between the universal priesthood of all the baptized and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained is blurred when the distinctive garb of ordained ministers is used in this manner. Therefore, stoles should not be used by the newly confirmed.

POLICY 317

Record of Conferral of Confirmation

The names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and the date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be noted in the Confirmation register of the parish.

Notation of the conferral of Confirmation is also to be made in the baptismal register or sent to the church of Baptism.

POLICY 400:

Promotion of Evangelization

Parishes should promote a process of evangelization which is sensitive to people of every race and nation, of every language and culture, rich and poor alike (See *General Plan: Unity in Communion and Mission*, pages 1-2). Evangelization “means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. Its essence is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, both being the work of the Spirit of God.” (*Go and Make Disciples*, Study Edition, page 10.)

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. An evangelizing parish recognizes the individual as well as groups and organizations and fosters their integration into the life and mission of the Church.
2. An evangelizing parish provides family oriented and intergenerational programs which will hand on the faith from one generation to another.

3. *An evangelizing parish has a structure and atmosphere that will draw new members into becoming involved, nurtured and strengthened, thus becoming evangelizers themselves.*

POLICY 401

Goals for Evangelization

Evangelization is understood as a life long commitment by all who claim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Goals for evangelization include:

- a.) To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others (*Go and Make Disciples*, page 17).
- b.) To invite all people...whatever their social or cultural background to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith (*Go and Make Disciples*, page 18).
- c.) To foster Gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society, so that [we] may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ (*Go and Make Disciples*, page 18).
- d.) To provide programs which are inclusive of persons with special needs and which respect the language, cultural diversity, popular piety, and spirituality of its members.

POLICY 402

Small Church Communities

Where it would serve the good of the Church, parishes should develop small church/Christian communities to empower people and provide opportunities for them to connect faith and life on a regular basis, to build up the parish community and to strengthen the life and mission of the Church. To be authentic, small communities must remain in union with the local and universal Church and not become isolated or self serving (See *General Directory for Catechesis*, #263).

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. *Small communities meet on a regular basis for prayer and support, for reflection on the Sunday Scriptures in light of their own life experience, and for ongoing catechesis leading to service and outreach.*
2. *Small communities are comprised of approximately 8-12 adults who mirror the diversity of the larger parish community. They build families of faith which foster a sense of belonging, nurturing, and ongoing conversion in a safe environment.*
3. *Facilitators of small communities should be chosen for their pastoral qualities and should participate in initial and ongoing formation. Facilitators meet regularly as a group with the pastor and/or pastoral staff to ensure unity with the vision and mission of the parish.*

POLICY 410

Process for Initiation of Adults

In accord with the 1972 Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship, every parish shall have a process for the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults and for Children of Catechetical Age, based on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (hereafter *RCIA*). This process is normative for the Christian Initiation of everyone including all cultural groups and persons with disabilities.

POLICY 411

Christian Initiation of Children

The Order of Christian Initiation **is to be used** for all unbaptized persons (Catechumens) and baptized Christians but not Catholics (Candidates) seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church who have reached the

age of reason.

Children of catechetical age, both Catechumens and Candidates, must follow in the complete adult process of initiation with adaptations to suit their age and level of understanding (See *RCIA*, Part II, Chapter 1).

The Order of Christian Initiation **may be used** for baptized uncatechized Catholic adults and children preparing for Confirmation and the Eucharist, preceded by First Penance. These, however, may be otherwise catechized for the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation (For adults, see *RCIA*, Part II, Chapter 4).

Modifications of the Order of Christian Initiation are used for persons in particular circumstances:

1. catechumens in exceptional circumstances (See *RCIA*, Part II, Chapter 2);
- and
2. persons who have reached the age of reason, whether catechumens or not, who are in danger of death but are not at the point of death (See *RCIA*, Part II, Chapter 3).

Note: The distinction must be made between the unbaptized who become catechumens and baptized Christians but not Catholics who become candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

POLICY 412

Length of the Catechumenate Period

The process for Christian Initiation, including the periods of Precatechumenate, Catechumenate, Purification and Enlightenment, and Mystagogy, should be situated within the life of the parish community. The period of the Catechumenate should extend for at least one year of formation and instruction and should include a thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life and a profound sense of the mystery of salvation (See *RCIA*, 75, *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 6 and 7).

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. *The parish may celebrate a Rite of Acceptance more than once in a liturgical year when the readiness of the inquirers is discerned, however, each catechumen should understand that the Catechumenate period is at least a year long, not counting the period of inquiry.*
2. *Lent is the proper time for the intense preparation of the elect.*

POLICY 413

Celebration of the Rites

The rites of the Order of Christian Initiation—to be celebrated in the context of the Sunday assembly except where the *RCIA* indicates otherwise — are the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome, the Scrutinies and the Sacraments of Initiation.

Guidelines for Implementation:

It is strongly recommended that the Rite of Sending be celebrated in the parish on a Sunday prior to or on the day of the Rite of Election, which is celebrated by the bishop in a diocesan liturgy.

POLICY 414

Team Implementation of the RCIA

The pastor is responsible for the formation of a parish team to implement the Christian Initiation process.

Guidelines for Implementation:

The Christian Initiation team should reflect the cultural and other diversity in the parish and respond to special catechetical needs.

POLICY 415

Celebration of Initiation at the Easter Vigil

The Easter Vigil is the proper time for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. Catechumens, including children of catechetical age, are to receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil (See *RCIA*, 8 and 17; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 14 and 18).

POLICY 416

Complete Initiation of Children Who Have Reached the Age of Reason

When a child who has reached the age of reason (seven years or older) is baptized, the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are to be conferred within the same celebration (See *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 18).

Canon 852.1 states that what is prescribed in the canons on the baptism of an adult applies to all who have attained the use of reason.

Canon 97.2 states that with the completion of the seventh year a person is presumed to have the use of reason.

Canon 866 states that unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, an adult who is baptized is to be confirmed immediately after baptism and participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, also receiving Communion.

Therefore, children seven years or older who are baptized are to be confirmed and receive Communion within the same liturgical celebration.

Furthermore, Canon 883.2 states that a priest who baptizes a child seven years or older has the faculty of administering confirmation by the law itself. Canon 885.2 states that a priest who has this faculty must use it for those in whose favor the faculty was granted. Therefore, neither the priest nor the parents have the option to delay confirmation for a child who is baptized at age seven years or older.

POLICY 417

Participation in Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

All parishes with catechumens who will be fully initiated and/or candidates who will be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church should participate in the Diocesan Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. *All catechumens and candidates (age seven and above) should participate in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion preceded by the Rite of Sending at the parish.*
2. *Catholic children, baptized as infants and celebrating only the sacrament of Eucharist for the first time, are not considered candidates and should not participate in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.*

POLICY 418

Resolution of Previous Marriages Cases

Every effort should be made to assist persons in situating the process of the annulment or declaration of freedom to marry in the context of their ongoing conversion to the Catholic Faith.

Persons who have broken marriages in their backgrounds may be enrolled and admitted as catechumens and candidates, but they should have already submitted their petitions to the Tribunal before taking these steps.

These persons may not participate in the Rite of Election unless their previous marital status has been resolved by the Tribunal.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Cases of persons in need of rectifying their marital situation and hoping to be initiated at the Easter Vigil should be submitted to the Tribunal in the early fall preceding the Vigil.
2. The Tribunal will attempt to indicate by Ash Wednesday if the case is headed toward a favorable completion before the Easter Celebration. This is not a guarantee since some cases experience unusual difficulties.
3. Persons should not be led along with false or unreasonable expectations.

POLICY 419

Reception into Full Communion

In accord with the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, it is preferable that reception into full communion be celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil. However, pastoral reasons may suggest the use of the combined rites at the Easter Vigil as found in Appendix I of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. A clear distinction should be made in the celebration between persons who are being initiated and those who are being received into full communion (See *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 33 and 34).

Guidelines for Ecumenical Sensitivity in the Catechumenal Process

Issued by Bishop Robert Brom, 6/2/97

1. Only if, after serious investigation, there is doubt whether someone was baptized, or whether Baptism was conferred validly, should Baptism be administered conditionally.
2. In their initiation process, Candidates, that is those who have already been baptized, particularly those who exhibit some degree of Christian formation, should not be placed in the same classification as Catechumens, that is, those who have not been baptized. However, for pastoral reasons, candidates may benefit from the same sessions offered to the catechumens in the initiation process.
3. Candidates are invited to participate in the Liturgy of the Word and may choose to stay for the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass, provided they do not receive Communion until they are fully initiated into the Roman Catholic Church. The choice to remain for the entire Mass belongs to the candidates. However, for pastoral reasons, pastors and catechists may wish to invite candidates, along with catechumens, to participate in dismissal after the Liturgy of the Word in order to continue breaking open the Word.
4. Candidates should not be referred to as "converts." Only catechumens, after their Baptism, are considered to be converts to the Faith.

POLICY 420

Preparation of Parents for the Baptism of an Infant

Pastors and/or clergy, with the assistance of a baptismal team, should prepare parents for the baptism of their child (See *Decree on Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, #13). In addition to the initial interview, at least one formal session of baptismal preparation should be provided by the parish community.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. The baptism of a child offers a key moment in the evangelization of parents. Every effort should be made to ensure that the initial contact with the parish, the interview process, and the baptismal preparation are occasions of welcome, invitation and hospitality. This process of preparation can begin even before the birth of the child.
2. The initial interview provides a time to discern the commitment of at least one parent or the person who lawfully takes the place of the parent to raise the child in the faith (Code of Canon Law, canon 868). It is also a time to guide parents in the selection of suitable godparents.

3. *The preparation process should assist parents in assuming their role as parents and primary catechists of their child (canon 851, §2). This occasion should be viewed as an opportunity for evangelization, helping parents to grow in their spiritual life from their current level of faith commitment.*

4. *The baptismal team should be comprised of catechists and other qualified lay persons.*

POLICY 421

Baptismal Catechesis

In preparing for the baptism of their infant, parents are expected to participate in the parish process of baptismal catechesis before their infant will be baptized (canon 851, §2). An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay (canon 867, §2).

Baptismal Catechesis (continued)

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. *Baptismal catechesis is to be based on the Rite itself and assists parents in understanding the meaning of the sacrament and the obligations which are attached to it (Rite of Baptism, Introduction #5.1).*

2. *Parents who have recently participated in baptismal catechesis (within 2-3 years) are not required to attend again, but could be encouraged to attend as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the sacrament.*

POLICY 422

Delay of Baptism

Following the long standing tradition, infants are baptized into the faith of the Church and should not be deprived of the Sacrament of Baptism (*Rite of Baptism*, Introduction, #2).

- a.) Infants are considered those who have not yet reached the age of reason, i.e. seven years of age and those who are not responsible for themselves (canon 852).
- b.) Baptism of infants should be celebrated within a few weeks of birth (canon 867, §1).
- c.) While it is not customary to refuse baptism, the sacrament is to be delayed if there is not a founded hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic religion. Parents should be advised of the reason for the delay (canon 868, §1, 2°).
- d.) In the case of single parents or parents in irregular marriages, baptism should not be delayed if there is a founded hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic religion.
- e.) In cases of pending adoption, baptism should be delayed until the adoption is finalized.

POLICY 423

Requirements of Godparents

Godparents, together with parents, present the infant to the Church for baptism. The selection of two godparents is customary, but only one, either male or female, is required for baptism. If two godparents are chosen, one should be male and one female (canon 873).

- a.) A godparent must be a fully initiated Catholic (have received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and should have completed his/her sixteenth year unless the pastor makes an exception for a just cause (canon 874, §1, 2° and 3°).
- b.) A godparent must be a practicing Catholic leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and the role of godparent (canon 874, §1, 3° and 4°).
- c.) A godparent cannot be the parent of the infant (canon 874, §1, 5°).
- d.) Godparents are to be encouraged to participate in a parish baptismal preparation process.

A Christian, baptized in another faith tradition, may not serve as godparent, but may serve as a witness along with the Catholic godparent and should be recorded accordingly (canon 874, §2).

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. *Parents take responsibility for choosing a godparent or godparents who will serve as good examples for living the Catholic way of life. As a mark of the continuity between baptism and confirmation, a godparent may later serve as the sponsor of the child when he or she is confirmed (canon 893, §2). A Christian witness may not serve as a sponsor for confirmation.*
2. *Where there is a cultural practice of multiple godparents, pastors may allow the family to involve a number of people in the celebration. However, only one set of godparents is recorded (canon 873).*

POLICY 424

Responsibility of Parents to Insure Religious Education

Following baptism, it is the responsibility of the parents to raise the child in the faith and ensure the child's formal religious education. It is the responsibility of the parish to provide support and assistance to parents in raising their children in the faith (*Rite of Baptism*, Introduction, #5.5).

