



Section V. Parish Resources

It is true that being a Christian means saying "yes" to Jesus Christ, but let us remember that this "yes" has two levels: It consists in surrendering to the word of God and relying on it, but it also means, at a later stage, endeavoring to know better-and better the profound meaning of this word.

(Pope John Paul II, *On Catechesis In Our Time*,

Purpose of Section V Catechesis in a Parish Setting

The following section is neither policy nor guidelines. The intention is to provide resources that will be helpful to developing and implementing catechetical programs in a parish setting.

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities in Catechesis

Catechesis is one form of the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis which works at making the faith of the believer more living, conscious and active through the light of religious instruction. This role is carried out by various people on different levels. The responsibility of each person will vary, but all are important to the fulfillment of the Church's mission to teach the Good News.

1. **The Diocesan Bishop:** The Bishop is the chief catechist in the Diocese, responsible for providing sound catechesis to all the people under his care. He does this by means of his own preaching and teaching, and by seeing that the necessary structures and programs exist to carry out the catechetical ministry. The Bishop does this through the Office for Catholic Education and Formation and the Diocesan Catholic School system. The Bishop is to insure that catechists are adequately prepared for their work through instruction in the Church's teaching, that continuing formation is provided for them, and that they receive instruction in the teaching disciplines.
2. **Director for the Office of Catholic Evangelization and Catechesis:** The Diocesan Bishop administers the Office for Catholic Evangelization and Catechesis through the Diocesan Director appointed by him and in conjunction with the Director for Catholic Education and Formation. By this delegation, the Diocesan Director is responsible for implementing the religious education programs within the Diocese that are listed above.
3. **Pastor:** The Pastor is, by virtue of his ordination, an instructor in the Faith. All the faithful have a right to religious instruction, and Pastors have a duty to provide it. The Pastor is personally responsible for the administration of the religious education programs in his parish, insuring that the diocesan directives are implemented. The Pastor is responsible for financing the program, providing space, equipment and supplies, recruiting catechists, visiting the classrooms, participating in religious instruction and formation of students, and handling difficult discipline problems.
4. **Parish Director of Catechesis or Religious Education (DOC or DRE):** The Pastor may serve as the Director of the parish catechetical program. The Pastor may also ask another person to serve in this capacity. The role of Director is extremely important to the smooth and effective organization of a catechetical program. One person should have an overall view of the program in order to implement an organic and systematic catechesis. The Director also provides leadership to the catechists serving in the program. This requires, then, that the Director have a working knowledge of the materials used at each grade level of the parish program and of the special needs presented by each grade.

If the Director is not the Pastor, he or she keeps in close contact with the Pastor, informing him of activities and the progress of the students. Throughout the program the wishes of the Pastor should be respected, especially with regard to sacramental preparation.

The Director serves as liaison between the parish program and the Diocesan Office, keeping the parish catechists informed of the directives and programs provided by the Chancery.

The Director encourages the catechists to develop personal holiness through daily prayer, reading of Scripture, and frequent Reconciliation and reception of Holy Eucharist at Mass. Also, the Director encourages the catechists to pray for and with their students.

The Director maintains good morale among the catechists by keeping them informed of their duties, schedules, special activities, by expressing appreciation, and by encouraging them to attend various Diocesan sponsored trainings and events.

The Director's specific duties include: to help recruit and train catechists; to assign them a classroom of students (a good teacher-pupil ratio is one teacher for every 15 students); to make sure rooms are in order and equipment is working; to meet with the faculty at least two weeks before the opening of school to explain the program; to provide the materials needed for teaching (textbooks, catechist's manuals, other); to put into effect the guidelines outlined in the *Curriculum Guidelines*; to supervise the training of new catechists; to plan regular faculty meetings; to keep an accurate file of all records (registration, sacraments, grades, etc.)

5. **Catechists:** "Parish catechists, many of whom are volunteers, may be engaged in catechizing adults, young people, children, or those with special needs. Theirs is a particular way of carrying out the promise the Church makes at every Baptism: to support, pray for, and instruct the baptized and foster their growth in faith. The fundamental tasks of catechists are to proclaim Christ's message, to participate in efforts to develop community, to lead people to worship and prayer, and to motivate them to serve others" (*Sharing the Light of Faith* 213).

The aim of the catechist is to bring about understanding so to help others to think, judge, act and hope like Jesus Christ. Definitively, not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy with Him. Only He can lead us to the love and the Father and make us be members of His Mystical Body, His Family, the Church, the Holy Trinity. To do this, the catechist must put on the mind of Christ and see others as He sees them (CT 5).

Catechists must be practicing Catholics, baptized and confirmed, taking part in the worship and apostolate of the Church. They must realize that their vocations as Catholics call them to worship God in the liturgy and their personal prayer and to serve God through service of His people. The example of their prayer and service is a powerful teaching tool.

Catechists should have a general knowledge of the Creed, the Commandments, the Mass and Sacraments, the Liturgical Year, the prayer life of a Christian, and the life of Christ. They should be familiar with Sacred Scripture, Church History, knowledge of the human person to facilitate communication, and a working knowledge of teaching methodology. Therefore, catechists are strongly encouraged to complete the courses in doctrine and methods offered through the Office for Catholic Education and Formation. They may also participate in any workshops and training sessions provided by the Office.

Some specific duties of catechists are: to be conscientious in the preparation of class work; to utilize every minute of class time effectively; to maintain classroom order in an atmosphere of Christian discipline; to provide an attractive learning environment; to keep records and make reports of student progress; to carry out Diocesan and parish policies; and to refer any serious moral, educational and disciplinary problems to the Director or Pastor.

6. **Parents:** "The family's catechetical activity has a special character, which is in a sense irreplaceable... Education in the faith by parents, which should begin from the child's tenderest age, is already being given when the members of a family help each other to grow in faith through the witness of their Christian lives... Family catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis" (CT68). There is no question that parents are the first and best catechists of their children. Even though parents may have received little or no formal training in religion themselves, they are still the most effective catechists for their own children, especially by their example. God gives them the grace needed to fulfill the duty they assumed when they presented their children for baptism: training their children in the practice of the Catholic Faith.

Qualities, Competencies and Skills of the Catechist

Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:16)

You will receive power when the Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses --- even to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Catechesis, which is growth in faith and the maturing of the Christian life toward its fullness, is consequently a work of the Spirit, a work that the Spirit alone can initiate and sustain in the Church. (On Catechesis in Our Time, 72)

Helping others to encounter and accept Jesus, that is to turn from sin and to begin to live one's life as His Children, depends **not** so much on subject matter, **nor** on our methodology, but on Jesus' message itself as it is witnessed in the people who teach and minister to youth. The effectiveness and extent to which the basic Christian message is transmitted through ordered, systematic catechesis depends a great deal on catechists and leaders... The decisive task to which catechetical personnel are called demands that in following in the life and footsteps of Jesus, the Teacher, they reveal His "Good News" not only by every word but also by every deed and gesture, their very lives. This constitutes the difference between a parish or school catechetical program which is permeated by the Holy Spirit and one whose religious education is merely regarded as a kind of academic subject like any other (*The Catholic School*, 43).

Here we shall describe ideal qualities, for which all catechists should strive:

Persons listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and when people do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses (Pope Paul VI, Evangelization in the Modern World, 41).

Skills and Competencies of the Catechist

1. *Responding to a Call*

As important as it is that a catechist have a clear understanding of the teaching of Christ and His Church, this is not enough. He or she must also respond to a ministerial call, which comes from the Lord and is articulated in the local church by the Bishop. The response to this call includes willingness to give time and talent, not only to catechizing others, but to one's own continued growth in faith (NCD 206).

2. *Witness to the Gospel*

For catechesis to be effective, the catechist must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. Faith must be shared with conviction, joy, love, enthusiasm, and hope. The catechist must be a) a person of prayer, especially their participation in Sunday Mass and regular Reconciliation; b) a person who frequently reflects on the Scriptures; and c) a person whose Christ-like living testifies to deep faith. Only men and women of faith can share with others, to prepare the setting within which people can respond in faith to God's grace (NCD 207).

3. *Commitment to the Church*

One who exercises a ministry of Word represents the Church, the Family of God, which subsists in the Catholic Church. It is to her that Jesus entrusted the mission of evangelization and catechesis. The catechist believes in the Church and strives to be an instrument of the Lord's power and a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence (NCD 208).

4. *Sharer in Community*

The catechist is called to foster community as one who has “learned the meaning of community by experiencing it.” The experience, of all the various people in a Catholic community, leads to awareness of many other communities in the world which stand in need of service. This is especially fostered by the Eucharist. For this reason, whenever possible every catechist should seek to participate in daily Mass and to spend an hour each week in eucharistic adoration. The catechist seeks to cooperate with other leaders in making the parish the focal point for Catholic community (NCD 209).

5. *Servant of the Community*

Authentic experience of Catholic community leads one to the service of others. The catechist is committed to serving the Catholic community, particularly in the parish, school, and community-at-large. Such service means not only responding to needs when asked, but also taking the initiative in seeking out the needs of individuals and communities, and encouraging students to do the same (NCD 210).

Catechesis is a complex form of communication where many elements are skillfully planned and ordered so that learning may take place. While never losing sight of the centrality of Jesus’ message, the catechist uses the insights of sound education psychology, and other human sciences, in presenting the Christian message according to the age, needs, circumstances, and capabilities of the learner. The catechist must also utilize various communication, creative activity, and group skills which help comprise the art of teaching.

Unless a catechist is adequately prepared, the teaching ministry will be of little effect, and in limited cases, may even be harmful to the faith-development of the young learner. Those entrusted with leadership in the catechetical ministry should recognize the necessity for adequate preparation and training of their teachers of religion. The responsibility for this training resides with parish leaders or in Catholic schools with the principal. The Office for Catholic Education and Formation assists the parishes and schools by establishing the objects and standards for the training of religious educators, by offering in service programs for the formation of catechists.

Therefore, the skilled catechist must strive to:

1. have a firm grasp of Catholic doctrine, liturgy/sacraments, morality, and prayer;
2. be familiar with Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and able to use it for teaching, prayer and reflection;
3. be an effective communicator, aware that relationships can be built only through good communication;
4. have the ability to use proven methodologies, styles and media, thus finding those approaches and techniques that best meet the needs of those with whom one is sharing the Faith;
5. have the ability to discern and avoid harmful methods and materials;
6. understand the developmental nature of the person, employing the basic elements of the psychology of learning, or organizing a learning environment appropriate to the age(s) of the learner(s), and of the implications of these for the faith-development of young people and adults (CT 35ff, GCD 77ff, NCD 173-175);
7. the catechist is always a practicing Catholic, in good standing with the Church, who is a visible witness to Jesus Christ in the parish community (e.g. Sunday Mass, frequent Reconciliation, daily prayer, holy morals, etc.)

Substitute Catechists

In the most perfect of all worlds, catechists would never get sick, have an emergency, a personal problem, a family event, a bout with the flu or a dental appointment. But until that happens, schools and catechetical programs have the problem of preparing for substitutes.

A catechist's absence is a problem for students. Some students are used to having substitutes give them a free period or study time. Some see substitutes as glorified babysitters. Classes that frequently need substitute catechists often have an increased number of discipline problems and show a drop in attendance. Problems often occur with lesson continuity, catechist-student rapport, and the student's sense of community. A catechist missing several class periods has a disrupting effect on the whole teaching/learning process.

Some guidelines for catechists preparing for substitutes include:

- Give as much advance notice of an absence as possible.
- Leave a list of students' names and a seating chart.
- Prepare a lesson plan if time permits.
- Avoid leaving an abundance of unrelated, busy-work handouts.
- Leave the catechist's manual and a student text with lesson theme identified and the page numbers given.
- Have the class routine written out in advance.
- Include procedures for attendance, homework check, bathroom visit, dismissal, fire drill, opening and closing activities.
- Inform the substitute of any planned activities that need special directions or equipment, such as a party, play, liturgy, visit to church, film, or an art project. Decide, with the person substituting, what must be postponed and what can be done that day.
- Make known any special student needs that may require the catechist's attention, such as a disability, an illness, a particular discipline problem, or a special dismissal arrangement.

In Emergencies, the procedure for arranging for a substitute should be kept simple, but must include the following information:

- your name
- the grade you teach
- the room number
- time of your class
- lesson to be taught
- book to be used.

Imagining Out-of-the-Ordinary Catechists

Bus-Catechists, Office-Lunch-Break Catechists, Grain-Elevator Catechists

In order to meet the catechetical needs of a parish, we need to be creative. Typically, catechists are thought to be those people who volunteer once a week to teach in a classroom setting: books, pencils, lecture, tests, worksheets, etc. Is this the best way to go about catechesis? Are there other possibilities? What?

Parishes need to imagine out-of-the-ordinary catechists and catechetical situations. Consider the following questions in preparing for your parish. Space is provided below each question for your ideas.

Who?

1. Who needs catechesis?

Asking who needs catechesis is asking who needs to be more intimately united with Jesus and His Family, the Church? Everyone. Old and young. Working and retired. Moms and dads. Single and married. Sinners and saints. College students and infants.

2. Who is your parish already providing catechesis for?

3. Who in your parish does not have opportunities for catechesis or are not coming? Why?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those in the nursing home | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are working (even by profession) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those in assisted living situations | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are sick |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are homebound | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are retired | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are widowed | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are preparing for college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are divorced or separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are unemployed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who have young children | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are in prison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who have elementary children | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who have changing schedules |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who have teenagers | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who cannot have children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who have lost a loved one | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who stay-at-home with their children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

What? Where? When?

4. Considering those mentioned in #3, what type of catechesis could be provided? where could it happen? when could it be scheduled?

EXAMPLE: Students in sports travel to and from sporting events on buses several times a week. What kind of catechesis could occur at this time? Volunteer catechists could be prepared to be bus-catechists. Parents could be car-catechists. A lot of time is also spent driving.

EXAMPLE: Many work places offer a one hour break for lunch. What kind of catechesis could occur at this time? Volunteer catechists could be prepared to be office-lunch-break-catechists.

EXAMPLE: Farmers have to repair their machinery in town. Many times they need to wait. What kind of catechesis could occur at this time? Grain-elevator catechists?

Catechist Formation and Certification

The Necessity of Catechist Formation

“Absolute priority” must be given to training and keeping qualified catechists (who are the soul of every method) in order to effectively pass on the Deposit of Faith (GDC 137, 156, 216, 219, 234). Catechists play a decisive role in missionary activity. Many times, it is the catechists who reach out from the parish in so many ways to touch the so called “real world,” take their hand, and walk them to the fullness of life with Jesus. Throughout history, Cardinal Jozef Tomko notes, “often, catechists are called to witness to their faith by harsh trials and painful privations...even to the giving of life itself.”

Pope John Paul II affirms:

During my apostolic journeys I have been able to observe personally what the catechists offer, especially in mission territories, and outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church (*Address to Plenary Assembly, April 1992, cit. 3*).

So many times it has fallen to you to strengthen and build up the Christian community ...even to found new ones through the first proclamation of the gospel. Give thanks to the Lord for the gift of your vocation, through which Christ has called you from among other men and women to be instruments of his salvation. Respond with generosity to your vocation and your names will be written in heaven (cf. Lk 10:20)(*Address to catechists of Angola*)

For this reason, there has been an emphasis by the Church on the need for catechist training. Again, Pope John Paul II states,

To set high standards (for catechist training) means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church’s mission, with good training programs and adequate structures, providing for all aspects of formation— human, spiritual, doctrinal, apostolic and professional (*Address to Plenary Assembly, April 1992, cit. 3*).

Basics of Catechist Formation/Certification

Currently, the Diocese of Fargo does not have a certification program in place. If catechist formation is conducted, it is handled at the parish level. Due to the many requests that have been received for catechist training, efforts are being made towards establishing a unified diocesan wide catechist formation/certification process.

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The current proposal consists of multiple levels beginning with a Basic Catechist level (which many parishes have already held) and continuing with Full Catechist, Senior Catechist, Associate Catechist and Master Catechist levels. This process will assume that participants already have a basic adult understanding of the Catholic faith and have already begun their conversion, that is, to change their lives in order to think, judge, act and hope like Jesus Christ in all things (CT 20). This catechist formation/certification process will also assume that all catechists are in need of the same basic knowledge both in content and methodology. Specialization tracks may be provided for those needs that differ from ministry to ministry.

Anyone assisting/planning to assist in ministries should plan to participate in catechist formation by contacting their pastor and/or DRE. These ministries include, but are not limited to, the following: Adult Formation (senior citizens to young adults), Family Catechesis, Children's Liturgy of the Word Team, Pre-K through Senior High Formation, Sacrament Preparation, Special Needs Catechists, Youth Ministry, Evangelization Teams (non-Christian/unchurched, other Christian, inactive Catholics), RCIA Team and RCIC Team, Liturgical Ministers (lectors, eucharistic, musicians), Catholic school personnel, Hospital/Shut-in Visitation Teams, and Funeral Preparation Teams.

Remuneration Salaries, Stipends...A Living Wage

The “remuneration of catechists must be considered a matter of justice and not of benevolence” (*Guide for Catechists*, 32). In other words, parishes should plan to pay their catechists.

Although the argument may be proposed that true catechists would not be motivated by monetary gains but rather be elated by eternal rewards, still the documents encourage the just remuneration of catechists even though it is difficult to do so.

When catechists are paid by the Church, especially when they have a family to support, their salary must be adequate and must take full account of the cost of living. If the salary is not high enough, there will be several negative consequences: on the choice of candidates, because capable persons will prefer better paid jobs; on commitment, because it might be necessary to take on other work to make up the deficit; on formation, because some might not be able to attend the training courses; on perseverance and on relations with the pastors. Also, in many cultures a job is respected only if it is a well-paid one, so if catechists are not well paid they risk being looked down upon (*Guide for Catechists*, 31).

The remuneration of catechists is particularly important during our rural crisis. Remuneration is one means to ensure commitment in passing on the Faith. Remuneration may even alleviate the need for families to obtain additional income sources. It is not uncommon in our diocese for a family to run a farm and both the wife and the husband hold part-time jobs just to make ends meet. Then, these people are asked to “help Father out” with religious education. Thus, parish catechetical efforts are handled sometime between family life, farm life and part-time jobs.

It is also understood that for some rural parishes, even including their missions, the paying of a person to coordinate efforts of evangelization and catechesis will be difficult, if not all together impossible. In these parishes, even the pastor is not taking a full salary and the parishioners, themselves have a difficult time paying for the needs of their families, much less the wants of their families. In these parishes, the people are giving to the church, but they simply do not have anything to give – 10% of nothing is nothing. In these cases, efforts could be made to compensate the pastor and the catechist(s) in ways other than money, e.g. providing a place to live, caring for their children, assisting with their farm work, planting and harvesting a garden, providing food, etc.

The following pages are intended to assist parishes in beginning to discuss the financial possibilities for their catechetical programs. These pages are not definitive.

Serious Questions and A Look At the Numbers Financial Possibilities

The following questions and chart provide a starting point for considering financial options for parish catechetical programs. These are not definitive.

1. By offering everything for free at our parishes are we providing a service or are we implying that what we do is worth nothing? _____

2. What do people, adults and students, spend their money on? Is this good stewardship? _____

3. Is it really possible to pay a parish director a living wage? Is it possible to pay catechists a stipend? Yes. Have adults consider seriously the above questions and parish leaders consider the amount of revenue that may be generated even by charging a small fee. (see chart below)

Number of Parishioners	Number of Catechesis Sessions/Year/Person	\$1.00/session (less than a 20oz soda)	\$2.00/session (the cost of a Sunday paper)	\$3.00/session (the same as video rental)	\$4.00/session (about the price of sports event)	\$5.00/session (less than a movie)
1	30	\$ 30.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 150.00
5	30	\$ 150.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 750.00
10	30	\$ 300.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 1200.00	\$ 1500.00
25	30	\$ 750.00	\$ 1500.00	\$ 2250.00	\$ 3000.00	\$ 3750.00
50	30	\$ 1500.00	\$ 3000.00	\$ 4500.00	\$ 6000.00	\$ 7500.00
75	30	\$ 2250.00	\$ 4500.00	\$ 6750.00	\$ 9000.00	\$ 11,250.00
100	30	\$ 3000.00	\$ 6000.00	\$ 9000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
125	30	\$ 3750.00	\$ 7500.00	\$ 11,250.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 18,750.00
150	30	\$ 4500.00	\$ 9000.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 22,500.00
175	30	\$ 5250.00	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 15,750.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 26,250.00
200	30	\$ 6000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
225	30	\$ 6750.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 20,250.00	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 33,750.00
250	30	\$ 7500.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 37,500.00
275	30	\$ 8250.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 24,750.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 41,250.00
300	30	\$ 9000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
325	30	\$ 9750.00	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 29,250.00	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 48,750.00
350	30	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 31,500.00	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 52,500.00
375	30	\$ 11,250.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 33,750.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 56,250.00
400	30	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
425	30	\$ 12,750.00	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 38,250.00	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 63,750.00
450	30	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 40,500.00	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 67,500.00
475	30	\$ 14,250.00	\$ 28,500.00	\$ 42,750.00	\$ 57,000.00	\$ 71,250.00
500	30	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 75,000.00

RURAL PARISH BUDGET PROPOSAL (UNDER 100 FAMILIES)

Following is a catechist remuneration and budget proposal for a rural Midwestern parish, approximately 100 families. Yearly enrollment in around 86 including adults. Every section has at least one catechist and parents are asked to help every week on a rotating schedule as designated by that catechist. Following is a synopsis of classes and catechists:

Group	Sections & #/Class	#/Grade	#/Catechists Needed
Preschool-K	1 section/8 students	8	1/section; total 1
Grades 1-2	1 section/8 students	8	1/section; total 1
Grades 3-4	1 section/8 students	8	1/section; total 1
Grades 5-6	1 section/8 students	8	1/section; total 1
Grades 7-8-9	1 section/12 students	8	2/section; total 1
Grades 10-11-12	1 section/12 students	8	2/section; total 1
Adults (all ages)	various (2 sections)	30	approximate total 2
Totals	8 sections/-----	86 students	10 catechists

*Budget on the next page.

Small PARISH BUDGET PROPOSAL

Following is a catechist remuneration and budget proposal for a rural Midwestern parish, approximately 300 families. Yearly enrollment is around 379 including adults. Every section has at least one catechist and parents are asked to help every week on a rotating schedule as designated by that catechist. Those grades in sacramental preparation have more than one catechist. Following is a synopsis of classes and catechists:

Group	Sections & #/Class	#/Grade	#/Catechists Needed
Preschool Age 4	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
Preschool Age 5	2 sections/7 students	14	1/section; total 2
Grade 1	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
Grade 2	2 sections/9 students	19	1/section; total 2
Grade 3	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
Grade 4	2 sections/7 students	14	1/section; total 2
Grade 5	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
Grade 6	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
Grade 7	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
Grade 8	2 sections/8 students	16	1/section; total 2
High School	1 section/20 students	20	2/section; total 2
Adults (all ages)	various (8 sections)	200	approximate total 10
Totals	20 sections/-----	379 students	33 catechists

*Budget on the next page.

Following is a budget proposal based on enrollment of 379 students and adults, 20 sections, 33 catechists, and 30 class sessions. The money could be used to pay catechists or the DOC/DRE.

ESTIMATED COSTS

Option 1: Pay DOC/DRE

pay salary of the following:	\$ 9900	\$ 14,850	\$ 26,400
	<u>Catechists</u>	<u>Sr. Catechists</u>	<u>Master Catechists</u>

Option 2: Catechist Stipends

w/33 Catechists (\$10 stipend)	\$ 9900		
w/33 Sr. Catechists (\$15)		\$ 14,850	
w/33 Master Catechists (\$25)			\$ 26,400

\$200/Classroom for Supplies

(copies, colors, paper, etc)	\$ 4000	\$ 4000	\$ 4000
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Catechist Training Costs

w/33 Catechists at \$100/person	\$ 3300	\$ 3300	\$ 3300
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--TOTALS:	\$ 17,200	\$ 22,150	\$ 32,050
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ESTIMATED COSTS PER STUDENT FOR 30 SESSIONS

Training Level of
Catechetical Staff

	<u>Cost/Student/Year</u>	<u>Cost/Student/Month</u>	<u>Cost/Student/Class</u>
Catechists paid \$10/session	\$ 45.38	\$ 6.04	\$ 1.51
Catechists paid \$15/session	\$ 58.44	\$ 7.79	\$ 1.95
Catechists paid \$25/session	\$ 84.56	\$ 11.27	\$ 2.82

CONCLUSION: Training catechists and paying them a \$25/session stipend would cost each student \$2.82 per week for religious education or \$11.28 for a family of four.

1000 families - PARISH BUDGET PROPOSAL

Following is a catechist remuneration and budget proposal for a mid-size parish, approximately 1000 families. Yearly enrollment is around 730 including adults. Every section has at least one catechist and parents are asked to help every week on a rotating schedule as designated by that catechist. Those grades in sacramental preparation have more than one catechist. Following is a synopsis of classes and catechists:

Group	Sections & #/Class	#/Grade	#/Catechists Needed #/Helpers NOT included
Preschool Age 4	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Preschool Age 5	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Grade 1	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Grade 2	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Grade 3	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Grade 4	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Grade 5	4 sections/15students	60	1/section; total 4
Grade 6	4 sections/12students	50	1/section; total 4
Grade 7	4 sections/12students	50	1/section; total 4
Grade 8	4 sections/12students	50	1/section; total 4
High School	3 section/17 students	50	2/section; total 6
Adults (all ages)	various (8 sections)	400	approximate total 10
Totals	51 sections/-----	730 students	56 catechists

*Budget on the next page.

Following is a budget proposal based on enrollment of 730 students and adults, 51 sections, 56 catechists, and 30 class sessions. The money could be used to pay catechists or the DOC/DRE.

ESTIMATED COSTS

Option 1: Pay DOC/DRE

pay salary of the following:	\$ 16,800	\$ 25,200	\$ 42,000
	<u>Catechists</u>	<u>Sr. Catechists</u>	<u>Master Catechists</u>

Option 2: Catechist Stipends

w/56 Catechists (\$10 stipend)	\$ 16,800		
w/56 Sr. Catechists (\$15)		\$ 25,200	
w/56 Master Catechists (\$25)			\$ 42,000

\$200/Classroom for Supplies

(copies, colors, paper, etc)	\$ 10,200	\$ 10,200	\$ 10,200
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Catechist Training Costs

w/56 Catechists at \$100/person	\$ 5600	\$ 5600	\$ 5600
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--TOTALS:	\$ 32,600	\$ 41,000	\$ 57,800
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ESTIMATED COSTS PER STUDENT FOR 30 SESSIONS

<u>Training Level of Catechetical Staff</u>	<u>Cost/Student/Year</u>	<u>Cost/Student/Month</u>	<u>Cost/Student/Class</u>
Catechists paid \$10/session	\$ 44.65	\$ 5.95	\$ 1.48
Catechists paid \$15/session	\$ 56.16	\$ 7.49	\$ 1.87
Catechists paid \$25/session	\$ 79.17	\$ 10.55	\$ 2.63

CONCLUSION: Training catechists and paying them a \$25/session stipend would cost each student \$2.63 per week for religious education or \$10.52 for a family of four.

Possible Parish Leadership Positions in Evangelization and Catechesis

There are a wide array of possible arrangements of parish staff dependent upon the needs of the parish and available resources. For this reason, there are many different possible titles and job descriptions within the field of catechetics. In addition, many of these positions efforts are best proceeded by evangelization efforts.

Possible parish evangelization and/or catechetical positions:

Director for Adult Catechesis (senior citizens to young adults)

Director for Family Catechesis

Director for Parish Life (eucharistic adoration, prayer meetings, neighborhood groups, etc.)

Liturgy Coordinator

Director for Pre-K through Senior High Catechesis

Director for Sacrament Preparation and Funerals

Coordinator of Special Needs Catechesis

Director for Youth Ministry

Director for Evangelization (non-Christian/unchurched, other Christian, inactive Catholics)

Director for RCIA Team and RCIC Team

Director for Institutional Catechesis (catechesis for institutions within parish boundaries such as hospitals, prisons, half-way houses, nursing homes, home-bound, juvenile centers, workplace)

The following pages provide a sample job description for a Parish Director of Catechesis/Youth Ministry, along with a sample contract.

SAMPLE

PARISH, _____
DIOCESE OF FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JOB DESCRIPTION (to be attached to the contract)

Title: Parish Catechetical Director/Youth Ministry

Employment Status: Full-Time, permanent

Resume Due Date: _____

Mail to/Contact: _____

Employment Start Date: _____

Salary: Negotiable depending on experience and education

I. Purpose of Position

The director/youth minister is responsible for organizing and developing the catechetical programs for the youth and adults of the parish.

II. General Qualifications

1. Be a faithful and practicing Catholic, outstanding for correct doctrine and integrity of life, possess personal and professional conviction and integrity.
2. Possess the necessary education (catechetics, education and theology) and administrative knowledge and experience appropriate to the position.
3. Possess / demonstrate effective verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills, including ability to effectively utilize mass media technologies
4. Possess / demonstrate a knowledge and application of administrative, organizational, and technological skills, processes, and procedures which are necessary in order to fulfill position requirements
5. Give public support to parish (diocesan) mission and goals; cooperate with other parish (diocesan) agencies and programs
6. Set priorities and organize work effectively and efficiently because of the number and variety of projects that have to be completed at the same time
7. Work as member of a team.

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III. Specific Responsibilities

- a. Recruit and train catechists for pre-K, elementary, junior high, high school and adults.
- b. Recruit and train coordinators as needed, e.g. elementary catechesis, senior citizens, parish outreach, etc. (you will need other coordinators)
- c. Conduct catechist meetings and workshops for catechists
- d. Establish young adult and adult programs that accommodate their schedules
- e. Organize and schedule sacramental preparation involving parents & children
- f. Organize enrollment and registration of students
- g. Develop retreat programs
- h. Draw up a budget for the program
- i. Research and evaluate present and newly published catechetical materials and AV aids.
- j. Purchase materials
- k. Set up a catechetical/youth ministry advisory committee
- l. Work with the diocesan office.
- m. Continue your own spiritual growth and professional development

*The normal week will consist of **four-five** days for a total of forty hours.

*The time and method of establishing a schedule may be mutually adjusted.

3. RESPONSIBLE TO:

The director/youth minister shall be responsible to the pastor of the parish for the fulfillment of those responsibilities and shall submit an annual projection of the total catechetical program under her/his responsibility with its budget.

4. EVALUATION: Director shall present a complete evaluation of the program each spring.

5. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARISH:

- a. Pastor: The director shall keep in mind that the pastor has the prime responsibility for the spiritual development of the people of the parish, and the director shall consult with the pastor regarding the progress of the programs. In turn, the pastor should be willing to listen to and implement the director's recommendations.
- b. Catechetical Committee and/or Parish Council: The director should consult the committee. They are an advisory committee.
- c. Other Coordinators: The director is a resource person to the other coordinators.

6. RELATIONSHIP OUTSIDE PARISH:

- a. Pope (Magisterium): The director is first and foremost responsible to uphold all teachings of the Catholic Faith.
- b. Diocesan Bishop: The director is responsible to implement the bishops' vision.
- c. Catholic Education and Formation Office: The director shall attend diocesan catechetical meetings and other workshops sponsored by the diocesan office.
- d. Community: the director needs to be aware of the community occurrences, keeping in mind the possibility of involving youth/parish in areas of need.

SAMPLE

PARISH, _____

DIOCESE OF FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

POSITION TITLE: _____

This contract is made by _____ Parish of _____, hereinafter designated as the Parish, and _____, hereinafter designated as the Director.

This contract shall commence on _____, 20____, and shall end on _____, 20_____.

THE DIRECTOR AGREES:

1. To conduct herself/himself as a practicing Catholic and moral person who would uphold the highest standards of God, the Church and State and to act accordingly at all times.
2. To perform the duties and fulfill the responsibilities contained in the attached job description.
3. To serve the parish in a professional manner, provide leadership to all members of the parish community and further his/her own professional growth.
4. To be an active member of the parish.
5. To establish, publish, and keep schedule of hours, which should average approximately _____ hours a week, and four to five days, including nighttime and weekend activities.

THE PARISH AGREES:

1. To provide the director with the necessary time, space, and resources to adequately perform his/her duties.
2. That the director shall not be discharged without good and sufficient cause. Continued unsatisfactory work or conduct, after written warning, shall be considered justifiable grounds for discharge.
3. To pay the director an annual salary of \$ _____, subject to deductions required by law or permitted by this contract. The salary shall be paid in the following installments:
4. To provide the director with medical insurance coverage under the following plan:
5. To provide the director with a normal holiday schedule and two weeks paid vacation annually for the first three years of employment, such vacation time to increase by one week for each three years of employment thereafter.
6. To allow the director sick leave with pay for personal illness or critical illness, death or funeral of a member of the director's immediate family.
7. To provide reimbursement of _____ per mile for the use of his/her personal car when used for parish business or to provide a parish car.
8. To provide a yearly cost of living increase and to consider salary increases with increased education and experience.

In Witness whereof the parties hereto have affixed their signature this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

SIGNATURES:

(Employee)

(Pastor)

Effective DOC/DRE Skills

In addition to being a practicing Catholic who is called to the ministry of the Church, DOC/DRE's should also seek to improve their professional skills. The National Conference for Catechetical Leadership created a nine-part series for parish catechetical leaders in this regard. The series is entitled Effective DRE and is available from Loyola Press. Contact: 3441 N. Ashland Ave. Chicago, IL 60657 or customerservice@loyolapress.com or phone: 800-621-1008. The series applies to the majority of catechetical settings in the United States, thus some of the material may not be applicable in our diocese. All resources should be considered in light of church documents (e.g. CCC, CT, GDC), diocesan guidelines and your particular parish needs.

Below is a list of the nine titles and a brief description.

1. **Communicating Effectively by Donna Couch**

Go beyond the usual communications theory and enter into the real-life situations: how to talk with an irate parent, a discouraged volunteer, or a room full of disinterested people. The author offers practical tips and examples. (*Strongly recommended).

2. **Building Community by Sara Reichert**

Using solid principles of theology and psychology, the author provides a practical process for building community among parish staff, volunteer catechists, students, and parents. (*Article has been included in Section V of this manual entitled, "Fellowship of Catechists" which covers this topic)

3. **Recruiting and Training Volunteer Catechists by various**

Contacting, recruiting, training, supporting, rewarding and even firing the volunteer catechist is included in this booklet. Based solidly on fundamental principles of working with volunteers, it also introduces some innovative concepts that are especially helpful for DREs. (*Article has been included in Section V of this manual entitled, "Fellowship of Catechists" which covers this topic)

4. **Keeping Records and Budgets by Ruth Bradley and Mary Ann Taeger**

The authors explain the tasks of maintaining records, managing budgets, and dealing with the legal issues involved in the ministry. Valuable help to the beginning DRE. (*Recommended.)

5. **Maintaining Professional Balance by Dr. Charlotte Prather**

(*Not reviewed, comments appreciated.)

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6. Catechizing for a Just World by Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo

A practical guide for integrating the principles of the Church's Catholic social teaching into the curriculum and into the very life of the students, parents, and parish community. Personal and group reflection activities are offered, plus an abundance of resources on issues of justice and peace. (*Reading pillar three CCC is essential to benefiting from this text.)

7. Developing a Parish Program by Richard Reichert

Develop a parish catechetical program using this step-by-step process. Especially useful to a new DRE, this booklet also shows how to adapt an existing program. (*Not reviewed, comments appreciated.)

8. Understanding Catechesis by Michael F. Westenberg

A wonderfully concise treatment of the overall history and development of catechetical theory and practice from the early Church to the present. (*Note that this is one perspective on history. The recommendation is to read the catechetical documents of the twentieth century.)

9. Forming Ministerial Relationships by Loyes Spayd

Working relationships or "partnerships" are needed in order to be effective. Relationships with

the diocesan office, with the local DRE organization, with one's pastor and other parish staff personnel, with other parish organizations, and with the larger parish community - all are explored in practical terms. (*Note that this is one aspect – the material does not take into consideration the distinction between baptismal priesthood and ministerial priesthood, specifically the ordained as “in persona Christi capitas”)

Another skill needed by parish catechetical leaders is to be able to handle the various legal issues that may arise. For legal issues pertaining to parish catechetical settings, please obtain a copy of the following: Religious Education and the Law: A Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders by Sr. Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN, 1998. It is available through the National Catholic Education Association, 1077 30th Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20007-3852, (202) 337-6232.

Communicating Effectively

Communicating Effectively by Donna Couch is part of the nine-part series entitled Effective DRE Skills, created by the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and published by Loyola Press.

In this 70 page booklet, the author goes beyond the usual communications theory and enters into the real-life situations that a catechetical leader will encounter e.g. how to talk with an irate parent, a discouraged volunteer, or a room full of disinterested people. The chapters include:

Chapter 1: Language

Chapter 2: Listening

Chapter 3: Non-verbal Communication

Chapter 4: Small Group Dynamics

Chapter 5: Interpersonal Conflict

Chapter 6: Public Speaking

Chapter 7: Written Correspondence and Interpersonal Relationships

The material should be considered in light of church documents of catechesis (e.g. CCC, CT, GDC), diocesan guidelines and your particular parish needs.

To obtain a copy, contact: customerservice@loyolapress.com or phone: 800-621-1008 or write: 3441 N. Ashland Ave. Chicago, IL 60657. (see page entitled Effective DOC/DRE Skills of Section V for a complete list of the nine-part series).

Creating a Fellowship of Catechists

At more liturgical celebrations, the priest prays, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” This fellowship is one of the means that we grow and live as God’s Family, the Church, supporting each other in both the spiritual life and the temporal life. For catechists, this fellowship increases by the act of proclaiming the Good News and furthermore, completes their joy. John writes,

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life (Jesus). For the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete. (1 Jn 1:1-4)

Several practical ideas for establishing a fellowship of catechists includes:

1. Pray together as a faculty (group of catechists) before the beginning of each class session.
2. Arrange for experienced catechists to instruct and support new catechists.
3. Encourage and help your catechists to attend an annual retreat together.
4. Schedule monthly faculty get-togethers to discuss concerns, problems, plans, which may also be spiritual and social in nature
5. Plan days of recollection on the deanery level together.
6. Attend educational conferences and seminars together.
7. Pray for each other when you are not with one another.

Recruiting and Training Catechists

Recruiting and training catechists is essential for most parish catechetical programs and is a task that takes an enormous amount of energy. Even those parishes which pay a stipend to their catechists need to work hard at this task. The catechist is the most important factor in any catechetical setting. Many are faced with a recurring problem of some catechists not returning in the fall. What can be done? How can they be encouraged to stay and teach? How can new catechists be recruited?

I. Express Gratitude

- A. Thank the present catechists personally and publicly, and encourage them to return.
- B. Offer some expression of your appreciation: for example, a dinner in their honor, certificates, small gifts such as money to reimburse them for expenses incurred in the line of duty during the year.
- C. Print their names in the parish bulletin with a note of thanks.

II. Recruitment

- A. Begin recruitment of new catechists in June.
- B. Use a series of bulletin announcements to:
 1. define catechesis and its importance;
 2. stress the vocation of a catechist;
 3. list the qualities of a catechist (cf. *Guide for Catechists*, Vatican, 1993)
- C. Make personal contact with prospective catechists.
 1. It is more effective to personally ask individuals to volunteer than to wait for volunteers to come forward.
 2. It is more difficult to turn down the pastor in person than over the phone.
 3. Interview candidates regarding their:
 - a. personal practice of the Catholic Faith;
 - b. attitude toward the Church and the Diocese;
 - c. knowledge of the faith, and their willingness to learn more;
 - d. competence with children.
- D. Ask people to consider serving as helpers, as a stepping stone to being a catechist
It is a great way to build confidence and form future catechist.

III. The benefit of early organization

- A. Early organization provides catechists with a sense of security, because there is a plan and there is direction.
- B. It enables you to coordinate your parish religious education schedule with diocesan events such as October High School Convention, Northland Conference, Junior High Youth Rally, Walk for Life, SEARCH, and summer camps.
- C. The early distribution of catechist's manuals and copies of catechetical documents, eg. *Guide for Catechists*, *Catechesi Tradendae*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *General Directory for Catechesis*, gives catechists time to understand the Church's mission.

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IV. How to help your catechists

A. Spiritual assistance - personal

1. Offer Mass for them regularly.
2. Arrange for each catechist to have someone praying for them throughout the school year (typically called prayer partner).
3. Provide them with spiritual resources: Bible, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, rosary, Stations of the Cross book, prayer books.

B. Spiritual assistance – communal, fellowship

1. Pray together as a faculty before the beginning of each class session.
2. Encourage and help your catechists to attend an annual retreat together.
3. Plan days of recollection on the deanery level together.
4. Pray for one another when you are not together.

C. Educational assistance

1. Encourage and accompany catechists to attend the Northland Conference.
2. Encourage catechists to do the EPS program/other catechist training programs
3. Host catechist training sessions and other in-parish in-service programs for catechists are available
4. Make use of the adult education materials in the Diocesan Video Library.
5. Arrange for experienced catechists to instruct and support new catechists, for example, on how to use the catechist's manual.

D. Practical assistance

1. Devise a uniform discipline policy for all the catechists to use in their classrooms.
2. Schedule monthly faculty get-togethers to discuss concerns, problems, plans, which may also be spiritual and social in nature
3. Draw up a calendar in advance of the school year with dates for all special programs and diocesan events.
4. Provide supplies needed to carry out the task of teaching.
5. Schedule, as Pastor or DRE, times to visit the classrooms; this is a boost to both catechists and students.
6. Express gratitude, affirm efforts of catechists, and support them in their duties, especially with discipline problems.
7. Provide a clean, well-lit place for a classroom.
8. Encourage support and involvement of parents, especially with helping the children memorize prayers and doctrine.

Real Men As Catechists

Keys to successfully recruiting men to be catechists

For many parishes getting catechists may be a difficult task – getting men to be catechists is even more difficult. Unfortunately, this deficit is a reflection of the growing social problem of fatherlessness in our nation. Studies show that approximately 40 percent of American children go to sleep in homes in which their fathers do not live. Worse yet, when the question is asked, “Does every child need a father?” increasingly, our society's answer is "no", or at least, "not necessarily." Scary philosophy!

Our rural communities do not escape this fact – although we have a statistically lower divorce rate and single parent households, many fathers are working late and leaving early every day.

Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation. It is the driving force behind most social problems – low self-esteem, poor grades, poverty, adolescent pregnancy, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, crime, suicide, etc.. One can only guess that the decrease in the practice of the Faith is at least due in part to the absence of fathers. How can one be expected to know the unconditional love and providential care of God the Father without having a father at all?

Recruiting men to be catechists will have a positive influence on the mission of catechesis and evangelization, especially for children. Research has demonstrated that when men, especially fathers, are involved in their children's education, there is a much higher rate of success. Children learn best when both a father and mother are actively involved, so too, with the Faith.

Here are some tips that may help in recruiting men to be catechists:

1. Help men see catechesis as important. After all, catechesis concerns nothing less than eternal life or eternal death acquired by giving our whole selves to Jesus Christ. This is a great challenge. Women may be motivated to volunteer by a sense of guilt or a desire to rescue a desperate situation, but few men will be. Men are savvy enough to know that if the priest or DOC/DRE is begging for volunteers, something must be wrong with the program.
2. Get men to recruit men. Men know best how to ask other men to be catechists.
3. Make catechesis appear less feminine, a situation which affirms the stereotype that catechesis, especially of children, is "women's work." Take a look at the promotional material used for catechesis to see if it has a predominantly male or female flavor. Little things impact how a ministry is perceived. Are there flowers on everything? Is it all printed in pink? When asking for catechists are masculine or feminine pronouns used? Does the parish only see women (other than the pastor) involved with catechesis? etc.

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4. Once men volunteer, encourage men. Unknowingly, competent female catechists may intimidate male volunteers. Many men (not all of course) are insecure about working with children. Like anyone, men want to do well, but like any new catechist, male or female, there will be a certain awkwardness in doing something new.

5. Let men catechize as men. Men will not teach in the same way as women. Men tend to teach by encouraging problem solving, exploration and risk-taking. Women tend to teach by nurturing and sharing. Both are essential to learning (After all, God gives every child a mother and a father). In order to assist men in knowing how to teach, it may be best to pair new male catechists with experienced male catechists in the beginning rather than with a female catechist.

6. Provide strong and efficient leadership. A capable leader—whether male or female—is very likely to have volunteers who want to follow. The response to a poor leader is different for men and women. Women will often step forward and help the leader be successful, not minding being part of a less than perfect mission. Men often choose to avoid inevitable conflict by leaving the ministry.

SOURCES:

Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem by David Blankenhorn (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1995)

Real Men Do Teach!, 6 keys for recruiting men to children's ministry, by Gordon and Becki West, printed in Children's Ministry Magazine, 1994.

Grandparents As Catechists

Every fall, pastors and DRE's are faced with finding enough volunteers to be catechists both for children and adults. Often times, parents with are the first ones who are asked to teach, overlooking a more obvious choice – the grandparents. Some of the reasons to ask grandparents to be catechists are:

1. Children, teenagers, and young adult love grandparents, especially if they know they care. Older adults hold a lifetime of information and experiences that younger people are just beginning to encounter. Furthermore, senior citizens may provide a living witness of the long time lived for Christ.
2. Statistically, older adults are more faithful churchgoers than any other age group, and they are more committed to one group once they are connected.
3. There are a lot of older adults. Today, 58 million Americans are grandparents and 90 percent of those grandparents take an active interest in their grandchildren. In the year 2005, there will be more than 76 million grandparents in the United States.
4. Generally speaking, older adults have more time to volunteer.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Older adults are in our parishes in abundance, but they may not be willing to get involved. Three of the more significant obstacles to overcome in order to get seniors to volunteer are:

1. Insecurity — Older adults may feel "too old" or "out of touch" with kids today. Somehow, they think that kids won't respond to them because they are old. Older adults also don't feel they are "educated enough" to teach other adults, that is the "priest's job." Some have never taught and cannot imagine learning something new. Asking for small commitments based on the gifts that are readily apparent may help alleviate their insecurities.
2. Apathy — Older adults may also suffer from "retirement syndrome," that is "in our society, when you reach a certain age, you get to quit working and let other people work." This also carries over into volunteer work with the attitude that "I've done my time." Yet, our Salvation Story is riddled with very old adults who continued to serve God in every way, e.g. Adam, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Moses, Jacob, Zachariah and Elizabeth, John the Evangelist, etc. not to mention our modern age Mother Theresa and Pope John Paul II. Seniors could be gently reminded that we are all expected to be saints – every breath counts – and that their witness is greatly needed.
3. Flexibility — Many retired people hesitate to make commitments that tie them down every week. They are looking for flexibility for all sorts of reasons. Some to take care of their spouse or aging relatives and friends, some a busy being "moms and dads" to their grandchildren, and some simply want time to travel and have their freedom. Whatever the reason, flexibility is something older adults appreciate and it is something that parish ministries can provide.

SOURCE: "Getting Senior Adult Volunteers" by Barbara Beach. Children's Ministry Magazine. Copyright 1995.

Keeping Records and Budgets

Keeping Records and Budgets by Ruth Bradley and Mary Ann Taeger is part of the nine-part series entitled Effective DRE Skills, created by the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and published by Loyola Press.

In this booklet, the authors explain the tasks of maintaining records, managing budgets, and dealing with the some of the legal issues involved in the ministry.

For a more comprehensive treatment of the legal issues pertaining to parish catechetical settings, please obtain a copy of the following: Religious Education and the Law: A Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders by Sr. Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN, 1998. It is available through the National Catholic Education Association, 1077 30th Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20007-3852, (202) 337-6232.

Legal Issues In Catechesis and Evangelization

As catechetical leaders we catechize in the context of a fallen world. Especially, when working within and for the Church, we must make every effort to ensure the safety and well-being of each person. With a few exceptions, civil law has been established for the common good of all. We are obligated to uphold the law as it reflects divine law. What legal responsibilities do we have as catechetical leaders? What about our catechists and volunteers?

The following excerpt is from the introduction of “Religious Education and the Law: A Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders” by Sr. Mary Angela Shaughnessy, SCN, 1998 available through the National Catholic Education Association, 1077 30th Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20007-3852, (202) 337-6232.

“This handbook is designed to provide catechetical leaders and others involved in parish catechesis with essential information concerning civil law and its impact on Church institutions and programs. It is not intended as specific legal advice. The information in this volume is arranged in four parts. Each section offers basic legal background to enhance the framework of your ministerial perspective. Issues are grouped according to how they might be addressed when helping catechists understand their essential role in ensuring the safety of all in their care. Part 1 covers issues related to catechists’ professionalism in their privileged role as partners in handing on the Faith. Part 2 is concerned with issues relating to their direct contact with students. Part 3 addresses some of the basic administrative issues that impact you directly as catechetical leaders. Part 4 offers practical suggestions for putting what you’ve learned into the hands of your catechists.”

The handbook goes on to cover the following issues:

- religious education and the constitution
- negligence
- copyright laws
- child abuse laws
- sexual harassment
- AIDS and other diseases
- student rights and discipline
- search and seizure laws
- doing off-site activities
- catechist/student relationships
- what must be reported
- dealing with substance abuse

It is recommended that every parish obtain a copy of this resource and evaluate their parish needs.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM AND LIABILITY WAIVER

Catholic Diocese of Fargo and the Parish of _____ in _____.

Participant's name: _____

Birth date: _____ Male/Female: _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

Home address: _____

Home phone: _____ Business phone: _____

I, _____, grant permission for my child, _____,
(Parent or guardians name) (child's name)

to participate in this diocesan/parish/school event that requires transportation to a location away from the parish/school site. This activity will take place under the guidance and direction of employees and volunteers from the Diocese of Fargo. A brief description follows:

Type of event:

Destination of event:

Individual in charge:

Date of event:

Mode of transportation:

As a parent and/or legal guardian, I remain legally responsible for any personal actions taken by the above named minor ("participant").

I agree on behalf of myself, my child named herein, or our heirs, successors, and assigns, to hold harmless and defend the Diocese of Fargo, its directors and agents, chaperons, or representatives associated with the event, arising from or in connection with my child attending the event or in connection with any illness or injury or cost of medical treatment, and I agree to compensate the Diocese of Fargo, its directors and agents, chaperons or representatives associated with the event for reasonable attorney's fee and expenses arising in connection therewith.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

MEDICAL MATTERS:

I hereby warrant that to the best of my knowledge, my child is in good health, and I assume all responsibility for the health of my child. (Of the following statements pertaining to medical matters, sign only those that are applicable.)

(continued on next page)

Emergency Medical Treatment:

In the event of an emergency, I hereby give permission to transport my child to a hospital for emergency medical or surgical treatment. I wish to be advised prior to any treatment by the hospital or doctor. In the event of an emergency, if you are unable to reach me at the above numbers, contact:

Name & Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Family Doctor: _____ Phone: _____

Family Health Plan Carrier: _____ Policy #: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Other Medical Treatment:

In the event it comes to the attention of the Diocese of Fargo, its officers, directors and agents, chaperons, or representatives associated with the activity that my child becomes ill with symptoms such as headache, vomiting, sore throat, fever, diarrhea, I want to be called collect (with phone charges reversed to myself):

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Medications:

My child is taking medication at present. My child will bring all such medications necessary, and such medications will be well-labeled. Names of medications and concise directions for seeing that the child takes such medications, including dosage and frequency of dosage, are as follows: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

No medication of any type, whether prescription or non-prescription, may be administered to my child unless the situation is life-threatening and emergency treatment is required.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

I hereby grant permission for non-prescription medication (such as aspirin, throat lozenges, cough syrup) to be given to my child, if deemed appropriate.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Special Medical Information:

The Diocese of Fargo will take reasonable care to see that the following information will be held in confidence.

Allergic reactions (medications, foods, plants, insects, etc.): _____

Immunizations: Date of last tetanus/diphtheria immunization: _____

Does your child have a medically prescribed diet? _____

Any physical limitations? _____

Is your child subject to chronic homesickness, emotional reactions to new situations, sleepwalking, fainting?

Has your child recently been exposed to contagious disease or conditions, such as mumps, measles, chicken pox,

etc.? If so, date and disease or condition: _____

You should be aware of these special medical conditions of my child: _____
