

**INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAM
Bk3§500**

Saint John Paul II said that, “the name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ.”¹

The major goal of all catechetical programs in the diocese is to assist in the faith development of all persons.

BK3§501.1 Policy In order to achieve this goal all efforts in catechesis shall incorporate the following tasks:

- Promotion of knowledge of the faith
- Promotion of knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the sacraments
- Promotion of moral formation in Jesus Christ
- Teaching how to pray with Christ
- Preparation to live in community and to actively participate in the life and mission of the Church
- Promotion of missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.¹

¹ John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979), no.1.

² United State Conference of Catholic Bishops, *NDC*, No. 20

PARISH CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS (Parish and School) Bk3§502

Bk3§502.1 PARISH RESPONSIBILITY

Bk3§502.1.1 Policy

Using the guidelines and criteria found in the *National Directory for Catechesis*, a parish shall offer catechetical opportunities for all parishioners.

Bk3§502.2 ELEMENTS OF CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS

Bk3§502.2.1 Policy

In accordance with Church teaching, catechetical programming (See Policy **Bk3§101.1.1**) shall include proclamation of the Word, worship, community, and service and shall invite a response in faith and prayer in a spirit of on-going evangelization.

1. Content within catechesis shall be presented according to the developmental level of the participants and be in accord with the Gospel message and the Magisterium of the Church.
2. Catechesis, following the example of Jesus Christ, shall have an experiential component, i.e., discovering God in the human situation.
3. Liturgy and prayer shall be an integral part of catechesis.
4. Service to the community shall be fostered as an expression of effective catechesis.
5. Catechesis shall take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and ecclesial community.

Bk3§502.3 PLANNING

Bk3§502.3.1 Policy

All parishes shall develop and maintain a comprehensive documented program plan including a calendar for catechesis of all parishioners.

Bk3§502.4 COLLABORATION

Bk3§502.4.1 Policy

The program plan shall be developed by the catechetical staff in collaboration with the pastoral staff and the appropriate education board, committee or council and shall be approved by the pastor.

BK3§502.5 PROGRAM EVALUATION

BK3§502.5.1 Policy

Parish catechetical programs shall be evaluated regularly by the parish staff in accord with objective criteria published in the catechetical program plan documentation.

Bk3§503.1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**Bk3§503.1.1 Policy**

Religious education program development shall include adult religious education and faith formation by implementing the statement of the U.S. Catholic bishops, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*.

Procedure**PRINCIPLES OF ADULT FAITH FORMATION**

The following principles, as taken from the document (Sections 75-87), *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, should be used to assist in the implementation of the adult faith formation plan of the bishops.

General Principles for Adult Faith Formation

1. Plan adult faith formation to serve “the glory of God, the building of the Kingdom, and the good of the Church.”²
2. Orient adult Christian learning toward adult Christian living.
3. Strengthen the role and mission of the family in Church and society.

Principles for Planning Adult Faith Formation

4. Give adult faith formation the best of our pastoral resources and energies.
5. Make adult faith formation essential and integral to the pastoral plan of the parish.
6. Design adult faith formation opportunities to serve the needs and interests of the entire faith community.

Principles for Conducting Adult Faith Formation

7. Use the catechumenate as an inspiring model for all catechesis.
8. Respect the different learning styles and needs of participants, treating adults like adults, respecting their experience, and actively involving them in the learning process.
9. Engage adults actively in the actual life and ministry of the Christian community.

Principles for Inculturating Adult Faith Formation

10. “Bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures.”³
11. Let the gifts of culture enrich the life of the Church.
12. Involve the whole people of God in inculturating the faith.
13. Let adult faith formation programs be centers of service and inculturation.

² International Council for Catechesis, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992), no. 24.

³ John Paul II, *CT*, no. 52.

BK3§503.2 ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

BK3§503.2.1 Policy

Each parish or cluster of parishes shall name an advisory committee that is responsible for assisting the pastor and/or the director of religious education to develop adult religious education and faith formation programs.

Procedure

The pastor may name the parish pastoral council or another group to advise him.

CATECHESIS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (Parish and School)BK3§504

BK3§504.1 CATHOLIC FAITH CONTENT

BK3§504.1.1 Policy

All catechetical programs and courses shall present the central doctrine of the Catholic faith clearly and accurately. The principles and guidelines set forth in the *National Directory for Catechesis* shall guide all catechetical programs, both in the parish and in the schools. Diocesan Religion Standards shall be familiar to all the teachers and readily available to parent(s) or legal guardian.

Procedure

For formation materials pertaining to the *National Directory for Catechesis*, contact the offices.

BK3§504.2 COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS

BK3§504.2.1 Policy

The parish and the Catholic school catechetical programs shall be coordinated. The catechetical program administrators shall collaborate in such matters as book evaluation, sacramental preparation programs, catechist formation, teacher development and parent education. Preparation for the reception of the sacraments shall be conducted jointly between the parish and school.

BK3§504.3 CATECHESIS IN HUMAN SEXUALITY AND PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING

BK3§504.3.1 Policy

Education in sexuality and personal safety training are integral to a student's growth and development and shall be part of the curriculum of parish catechetical programs. Programs in human sexuality and personal safety training shall reflect the norms and guidelines provided in Church documents with special emphasis on those found in Canon Law, the *National Directory for Catechesis* and the safe environment guidelines of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois (Article 12 of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*).

BK3§504.3.2 Policy

Parish catechetical programs shall schedule and conduct personal safety training as part of their yearly curriculum for students as designated by the diocesan Office for Safe Environment.

BK3§504.4 TEXTBOOKS

BK3§504.4.1 Policy

Textbooks used must be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and found on the Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series published by the USCCB Subcommittee on the Catechism.

Procedure

1. The responsibility for selecting catechetical textbooks is that of the pastor and catechetical program administrators in consultation with catechists, teachers and other parish/school professionals.
2. Direct people to the USCCB site. (Religion textbook conformity list for USCCB)

BK3§504.5 CATECHESIS FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

BK3§504.5.1 Policy

Persons with special needs shall be provided with appropriate catechetical opportunities and programs within reasonable accommodations.

Commentary

Ideally, catechetical programs will not segregate persons with special needs from the rest of the community. The goal is to present Christ's love and teaching to all in as full and rich a manner as appropriate. It is particularly important for the family to be involved in the catechesis.

BK3§504.6 TEACHERS AND CATECHISTS

BK3§504.6.1 Policy

All catechists, whether they teach in a school or parish catechetical program, must actively seek formation through the diocesan Catechist Formation Process.

Commentary

Parish programs participate in the catechetical mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The religious goals of these programs are of critical importance and all staff members are expected to contribute to their attainment.

BK3§504.7 CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Commentary

The most effective catechetical programs for adolescents are integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry for youth that includes advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care and prayer and worship.⁴

The Church's ministry with adolescents focuses on three essential goals:

- 1. "Empowering young people to live as disciples of Christ in our world today;*
- 2. Drawing young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community; and*
- 3. Fostering the personal and spiritual growth of each young person."⁵*

BK3§504.7.1 Policy

The following USCCB documents shall be used as guidelines for developing catechetical programs for adolescents:

- 1. Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*
- 2. The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith*
- 3. Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*

BK3§504.8 PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN ALL PROGRAMS

BK3§504.8.1 Policy

Catechetical program administrators shall involve parents in the planning and implementation of catechetical programs where appropriate.

Procedure

One way to ensure this is by having parents as representatives on boards and committees.

⁴ USCCB, *Renewing the Vision*, p. 26

⁵ USCCB, *Renewing the Vision*, p. 2

BK3§504.9 CATECHETICAL VOLUNTEERS

BK3§504.9.1 Policy

The catechetical program administrator shall provide catechetical volunteers with a written job description.

Procedure

Contact the offices for samples.

BK3§504.9.2 Policy

The pastors shall see to it that volunteers submit a written application, and be interviewed, trained, supervised and evaluated.

Procedure

Contact the offices for samples.

BK3§504.9.3 Policy

No parish shall be required to accept volunteer services from anyone, or to retain anyone as a volunteer.

BK3§504.10 CATECHESIS IN SCHOOLS

BK3§504.10.1 Policy

Each Catholic school in the diocese must provide daily instruction in the Catholic faith for every student.

Commentary

It is the responsibility of the pastor and the catechetical administrator to make clear the importance of catechesis in the parish school. All members of the faculty share in this responsibility.

BK3§504.11 LITURGIES AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

BK3§504.11.1 Policy

Liturgical celebrations (especially Mass and Reconciliation), in accord with approved liturgical norms, and service opportunities shall be an integral part of the catechetical program.

Procedure

Every effort should be made to offer weekly Mass for students in Catholic schools.

BK3§504.12 FIELD TRIPS

BK3§504.12.1 Policy

The catechetical administrator shall authorize only those field trips that are appropriate educational or catechetical experiences.

BK3§504.12.2 Policy

On field trips there shall be an adequate number of adult chaperones (age 21 or older) for students and all chaperones must abide by the Policy on Working with Minors for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

Procedure

An acceptable ratio of chaperones is 1 adult (age 21 or older) for every 8 students. The number of chaperones depends on age of children and nature of event.

Commentary

Parental/Legal Guardian authorization is to be obtained in written form only by using the approved diocesan form for each event away from the premises of the parish or school. The completed forms are to be kept by the school/parish for one year from the date of the event unless otherwise advised.

*For information on transportation see **BK3§206**.*

BK3§504.13 ASSESSMENT

BK3§504.13.1 Policy

All parish catechetical programs shall administer a religion assessment using the program and grade levels specified by the offices.

Procedure

Aggregated reports resulting from the annual religion assessment of students should be reviewed and analyzed in this evaluation.

BK3§504.14 HOME SCHOOLING FOR CATECHESIS

BK3§504.14.1 Policy

Parents who choose to carry out the faith formation of their children at home shall meet regularly with the pastor and/or catechetical administrator.

Procedure

These parents are encouraged to use the Faith Formation curriculum materials adopted by the parish.

BK3§505.1 CURRICULUM**BK3§505.1.1 Policy**

The primary goal of the program of instruction in the schools of the diocese shall be to provide those learning experiences which are suitable and appropriate for developing the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for the student's moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

BK3§505.2 OBJECTIVES OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**BK3§505.2.1 Policy**

The instructional program of each school shall be in accord with the educational goals of the school, the educational objectives of the diocese, and meet the Illinois State Board of Education requirements for state recognition of nonpublic schools.

Commentary

These will serve as the basis for the curriculum developed at each local level to meet the particular needs of the student population served.

BK3§505.2.2 Policy

In accord with the Christian philosophy and goals of the Catholic schools, religion classes and courses in Christian family living are essential and integral components of the curriculum and shall be aligned with the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

BK3§505.3 LOCAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**BK3§505.3.1 Policy**

The catechetical administrator and faculty shall be responsible for local curriculum development. The curriculum shall be evaluated by the administration and staff yearly to determine whether it is fostering the achievement of the goals of the school.

BK3§505.4 CURRICULUM AREAS

BK3§505.4.1 Policy

The required curriculum areas for the elementary schools shall be:

- Teachings of the Roman Catholic Church
- Christian family living
- Personal safety training
- Language arts
- Computer literacy
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Fine arts
- Social studies
- Physical education
- Creative writing
- Science

Every school shall have written standards that shall exist for all areas of the curriculum.

BK3§505.5 COURSES ON CONSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AND ILLINOIS

BK3§505.5.1 Policy

Regular courses of instruction on the constitutions of the United States and of the State of Illinois shall be given in all Catholic schools. Each student is required to pass a test which demonstrates mastery of the content of each of the constitutions.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS Bk3§506

Bk3§506.1 CALENDAR REQUIREMENTS

Bk3§506.1.1 Policy

Each school shall draft its own calendar.

Procedure

In cities where there is more than one Catholic school, the principals and pastors should coordinate their schedules so that there is uniformity as to the days of attendance. They should also attempt to coordinate their calendar with the local public school.

Bk3§506.1.2 Policy

A copy of the school calendar must be filed with the Office for Catholic Schools.

Procedure

Use the format established by the Office for Catholic Schools.

BK3§506.1.3 Policy

In preparing this calendar, the following minimum requirements shall be met by all schools:

1. The school calendar shall be based on a minimum of 185 days. The minimal diocesan requirement for actual pupil attendance is 176 days. Attendance days are days on which teachers meet students, either in the school or at some other learning site.
 - Provision shall be made for at least two (2) full days for teachers' institutes (including the required Diocesan Adult Enrichment Conference) and five (5) days for weather emergency. The remaining two (2) days may be designated as days of recollection, records' days or parent-teacher conferences.
 - Five of the 176 pupil attendance days may be utilized for faculty workshops, in-service programs and the required diocesan sponsored Regional workshop. On such days classes shall be conducted for at least three (3) hours.
 - The official closing date shall be the 185th school calendar day following the beginning date. This date may be modified according to the number of unused emergency days.
2. All schools shall close on the following days: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day and Fourth of July.
3. The following days mark important events in our nation's history and should be celebrated with an appropriate observance: Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, President's Day and Casimir Pulaski Day.
4. If school is in session on holy days of obligation, such as the Assumption of Mary (Aug. 15), All Saints (Nov. 1), Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), or other major feast days such as Ash Wednesday, parish patron feast day, anniversary of the dedication of the parish church, or All Souls (Nov. 2), appropriate liturgical celebrations shall be planned for the students during the school day.
5. All schools will be closed so teachers will attend mandatory Diocesan Catechetical events including Regionals, Diocesan Adult Enrichment Conference, etc.

BK3§506.2 LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAYS

BK3§506.2.1 Policy

The ordinary school day shall consist of a minimum of five and one-half (5-1/2) hours of instruction on a five-day per week basis.

BK3§506.3 TIME DISTRIBUTION

BK3§506.3.1 Policy

Every school shall develop a classroom time schedule which fulfills the recommendations of the Office for Catholic Schools.

Procedure

The time distribution schedule should demonstrate priorities based on the particular educational approach of the school.

BK3§506.4 CLASS SIZE

BK3§506.4.1 Policy

Class size shall be set at the local level.

Procedure

It is strongly recommended that the maximum class size not exceed thirty (30) students.

BK3§506.5 TEXTBOOKS

BK3§506.5.1 Policy

Textbook selection shall be a local responsibility. The selection of catechetical textbooks should conform to **BK3§504.4**.

Procedure

To guarantee the selection of excellent materials, local evaluation committees are formed, consisting of teachers, principals, supervisors and curriculum experts. These committees are charged with the responsibility of reviewing all available materials in each of the subject areas.

BK3§506.6 TEACHER PLANS

BK3§506.6.1 Policy

The teacher's daily lesson plan for every subject (learning objective, instructional strategies and means of assessment) shall be carefully recorded prior to the week of the instruction. Such a record should be regularly reviewed by the principal or his/her delegate to ensure that the instruction offered is meeting both the individual needs of the students served and the stated curriculum requirements.

BK3§506.7 ASSIGNMENTS

BK3§506.7.1 Policy

Each school shall develop its own policy on assignments and communicate it to the parents.

Procedure

When an assignment is given, it should provide for an application of previously learned material. Departmental structures would require coordination of assignments.

BK3§506.8 SPECIAL SERVICES

BK3§506.8.1 Policy

The principal shall meet with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the teacher to develop a modification or individual student plan for a student that is in need of special services. A record of this recommendation shall be kept by the principal.

BK3§506.9 TECHNOLOGY PLANS

BK3§506.9.1 Policy

All schools shall have a technology plan that is also approved by the state.

Procedure

Two options are available:

1. Schools may use the technology plan written by the diocesan technology committee and file all required documents with the Office for Catechesis.
2. Schools may write their own technology plan to be approved by the diocesan technology committee and file all required documents with the Office for Catechesis.

BK3§507.1 DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

BK3§507.1.1 Policy

All elementary schools shall follow the achievement assessment program as outlined by the Office for Catholic Schools.

Procedures

Schools may supplement the diocesan achievement assessment requirements for grade placements, diagnostic purposes and the like.

Prior to entering kindergarten or first grade, students may be given a readiness assessment prior to entering kindergarten or first grade.

BK3§507.1.2 Policy

All elementary and high schools are required to administer a religion assessment using the program and grade levels specified by the Office for Catholic Schools.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL EVALUATION

BK3§508

BK3§508.1 PROGRAM EVALUATION

BK3§508.1.1 Policy

The principal shall establish an ongoing, well-planned and sequential program of evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational and catechetical programs.

BK3§508.2 STATE RECOGNITION OF NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

BK3§508.2.1 Policy

All schools shall apply for and sustain state recognition as outlined by the Illinois State Board of Education. All schools shall successfully complete an educational review process by the Office for Catholic Schools.

Bk3§509.1 ATHLETICS

Commentary

The purposes of school-sponsored athletic programs are to teach the skills of games, to foster healthy exercise, to teach fair play and to give enjoyment to students. Athletic programs which deny to certain students these opportunities, or that exert undue pressures on students, are inconsistent with these purposes.

Bk3§509.1.1 Policy

Any school-sponsored athletic programs shall be part of the school curriculum and shall be subject to policies of the pastor and local school board as well as to the general administrative responsibilities of the principal of the school.

Bk3§509.1.2 Policy

Further, school-sponsored athletic programs shall be guided by the general curriculum goals of the school and should in no way detract from the academic and religious goals of the school. Academic and religious policies and norms for students participating in these programs shall be established by the pastor or governing body and principal and enforced by the principal.

Procedure

Athletic programs for girls and boys are encouraged.

BK3§509.1.3 Policy

The following are requirements of elementary school-sponsored athletic programs:

- Written permission of parents
- Physical examination completed by a licensed physician for the appropriate school year
- Proof of medical insurance coverage
- Competent supervision by qualified adult coaches who understand the sport, child growth and development and first aid
- Students shall be grouped into teams on the basis of grade level⁷
- Proper physical conditioning prior to participation in games
- Appropriate equipment, including properly fitting protective gear and well-maintained facilities
- scheduling of athletic programs not in conflict with local liturgical schedules
- Reasonable scheduling of practices and games—generally, this would exclude games requiring substantial travel time on weekdays unless followed by a free day
- Basketball schedules shall not exceed fifteen (15) regular season games, plus two tournaments or shall follow the Illinois Elementary School Association regulations.
- Athletic schedules shall be approved by the principal

BK3§509.1.4 Policy

High School athletic programs shall follow Illinois High School Association standards.

BK3§509.1.5 Policy

All athletic directors and coaches shall be trained.

Procedure

Contact the Office for Catholic Schools for information on resources and training in Christian formation for athletic directors and coaches.

⁷ In those cases where the number of students prohibits play under the current policy, exceptions to the two clauses marked may be permitted by mutual agreement of the local pastor, local board(s) and local school principal(s) in accordance with the purpose outlined at the beginning of the section

BK3§509.1.6 Policy

The following practices shall be prohibited in elementary school-sponsored athletic programs:

- The denial of play by students who cooperate with coaches through effort and practice
- The participation of students on more than one team in the same sport⁸
- High-pressure contests, excessive publicity, elaborate recognition ceremonies, or exploitation of children in any manner
- Bullying

Procedure

Hazing follows Diocesan Policy on Bullying **BK3§402.8.2**. High schools follow IHSA By-Laws.

BK3§509.2 CHEERLEADING**BK3§509.2.1 Policy**

Cheerleading programs shall abide by the following practices:

- Follow **BK3§509.1**
- Operate as an athletic program
- Use safe practices when cheering
- Have uniforms reflecting the dignity of the student

BK3§509.3 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**BK3§509.3.1 Policy**

Schools shall determine policies and procedures to cover all other extracurricular activities.

⁸ see preceding note