

§1700 HOME CATECHESIS

1701.1. Policy It shall be the responsibility of the pastor, in accord with the norms established by the diocesan bishop, to provide for the catechesis of all the faithful. The various catechetical roles shall be exercised under the supervision of legitimate ecclesiastical authority. (Canons 528, §1; 773; 774, §1; 776; and 777)

1701.2. Policy The pastor shall promote and foster the role of parents in catechesis. (Canon 776)

1701.3. Policy Since parents have the primary responsibility and the right to select those means through which they can provide more suitably for the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teachings of the Church, the Church community shall fulfill its responsibility to parents in their catechetical role by providing programs, resources and support. (Canons 226; 774, §2; 778-780; 793; 798; and 914)

Procedures

- a) Parents are to provide for their children's deepening catechesis "aimed at inserting him or her organically into the life of the Church" by enrolling them in a Parish Religious Education or parochial school program. (Catechesi Tradendae #37) These programs are under the authority of the pastor and in accord with diocesan catechetical policies. (See *Book III The Teaching Office of the Church, Policies and Procedures for Religious Education*)
- b) Home Catechesis: In special cases, parents may choose to provide formal systematic catechesis for their children at home, apart from parish programs. This home catechesis is to be in accord with all applicable Archdiocesan policies for catechesis. (See *Book III The Teaching Office of the Church, Policies and Procedures for Religious Education*) Parents establish the process of home catechesis with their local pastor in the following manner:
 - 1) Parents, their pastor and/or his designated catechetical leader enter into a dialogue regarding mutual responsibilities and expectations for catechesis. The dialogue culminates in a written covenant between the pastor, parents and the child.

- 2) The pastor and/or his designated catechetical leader provides parameters and guidance in the selection of texts and other materials to ensure their conformity with the Church's catechetical documents. If a text or series is approved by the Archdiocese, it may be used by parents even if it is not used in the parish.
- 3) Parents catechizing at home are expected to participate in the life of the parish. This may include:
 - i) Participation in parent sessions.
 - ii) Attendance at parish and Archdiocesan catechist formation sessions.
 - iii) Participation in sacramental programs, retreats, liturgical celebrations, etc.
 - iv) Interaction with peers and the parish community in worship and such events as are determined in dialogue.
- 4) The pastor, his designated catechetical leader and parish catechetical staff will provide resources and support for parental catechizing, including materials and opportunities for the parents' faith development.

1701.4. Policy The pastor or his designate shall determine the readiness of children in light of their disposition and preparation prior to the first reception of the sacraments (Canons 777 and 914), according to the following criteria.

Criteria

- a) Penance or Reconciliation (criteria are to respect the natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances of the individual child)
 - 1) understanding of the relationship of the sacrament to his/her life
 - 2) ability to recognize good and evil
 - 3) understanding of repentance
 - 4) understanding that one can turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church
 - 5) knowledge that faith is expressed through being forgiven and forgiving
(NCD # 126)
- b) Eucharist (criteria are to be adapted to the child's intellectual capacity)
 - 1) awareness of God's love
 - 2) awareness of the call to participate in Christ's sacrifice
 - 3) knowledge of the gift of the Spirit
 - 4) understanding that the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ

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- 5) ability to participate in experiences of sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking, celebrating
- 6) knowledge of the mystery of Jesus' life (cf. Canon 913)
- 7) ability to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion (cf. Canon 913)
(NCD #122)

(cf. *Archdiocese of Chicago Policies and Procedures Book IV: The Sanctifying Office of the Church*, Policy §104.3.1. See also the provisions for "Sacramental Readiness Review," *Archdiocese of Chicago Policies and Procedures Book I: General Norms, Accountability and Ecclesiastical Processes*, Policy §1002.)