

**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES  
COUNCIL FOR CATECHESIS**

**Parish Faith Formation Policies/Regulations**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Parish Catechetical Leader**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that each Parish (or group of Parishes) secure the services of a parish catechetical leader (director/coordinator of religious education/faith formation) who is a practicing Catholic, in good standing with the Church and meets the educational and formational requirements necessary to exercise the ministry to which he/she is called.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Parish Catechetical Leader - Recruitment, Interview and Selection**

Procedures for recruiting, interviewing, and selecting a Parish Catechetical Leader.

1. Each Pastor/Parish Council for Catechesis will notify the Department of Faith Formation as soon as it is known that a new Parish Catechetical Leader is needed. The Department of Faith Formation will work with the Pastor/Council in selecting a Parish Catechetical Leader. (Ordinarily a vacancy should be known by March 1.)
2. The Pastor/Parish Council for Catechesis should review the Parish Catechetical Leader job description to assure that the expectations of the parish are reflected in the description so that it can be distributed to applicants for the position.
3. A committee will be established to recruit and interview. Committee responsibilities will be:
  - a. Advertise the opening in the parish bulletin, in newspapers and periodicals.
  - b. Respond to those interested by sending a job description and application form.
  - c. Request transcript of credits, personal file and references for each applicant.
  - d. Study materials received and conduct personal interviews with possible applicants.
  - e. Follow-up written references with telephone contacts.
  - f. Recommend one or two candidates to the pastor/council.
4. The local Council for Catechesis should strive for consensus among its members in recommending a candidate.

Regulation Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Parish Catechetical Leader-Letter of Agreement**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that Parish Catechetical Leaders be provided with a letter of agreement at the time of hire which will include the salary (stipend) amount along with a list of the benefits provided.

Policy Reviewed: July, 2008

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**Parish Catechetical Leader-Benefits**

A list of benefits to be provided to the Parish Catechetical Leader shall include but not be limited to the following: health and dental insurance, vacation, sick leave, mileage, diocesan training and formational opportunities.

For further information see, **Just Practices of Compensation**, Department of Human Resources, Diocese of Des Moines

Regulation Reviewed: July, 2008

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**Parish Catechetical Leader Ministry/Job Description**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that each Parish Pastoral Leader has a written job description or list of ministry responsibilities. The ministry/job description shall outline the main duties and responsibilities. The ministry/job description shall be reviewed and updated annually.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Leaves**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that, all Parish Catechetical Leaders, employed by a parish be granted the following leaves of absence, if applicable:

- sick leave and cumulative sick leave
- family medical leave to those who meet the requirements
- personal leave for business which cannot be conducted outside working hours
- funeral leave for members of immediate family
- military leave pursuant to state and federal law
- jury duty

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Reason for Family Medical Leave**

It shall be the regulation of the Diocese of Des Moines that parishes in the Diocese of Des Moines shall abide by the regulatory criteria of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA):

Any eligible employee (who has been employed by the same employer for at least 12 months during which at least 1,250 hours of actual work has been performed) may request up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during a 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child or the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care. Any leave for this reason must conclude within 12 months of the birth or placement.
2. To care for an immediate family member, that is, spouse, child (under 18 years of age or one 18 and older in case of an inability to provide self care), or a parent (who has a serious health condition).
3. When the employee, because of a serious health condition, is unable to perform the tasks of the job.

Regulation Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Family Medical Leave**

The following definitions, criteria and stipulations apply to the Family Medical Leave (FML):

1. All leave is unpaid unless the employee has paid vacation, personal or sick days, and elects to use some in lieu of unpaid leave.
  - a. If an employee has more than 30 days of accrued sick leave, it shall be at the discretion of the employer to grant use of more than 30 days paid leave for Family Medical Leave.
2. A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that requires inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider.
  - a. Continuing treatment by a health care provider as one that includes a period of incapacity (inability to work) of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days and treatment by a health care provider on two or more occasions.
  - b. Ordinarily, unless complications arise, the common cold, the flu, earaches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches, etc. are examples that do not meet the definition of a serious health condition.
3. Spouses, employed by the same employer, who request FML are jointly entitled to a total of 12 work weeks.
4. An employer may require proof of necessity for leave when requested for reasons 2 and 3 of FMLA.
5. Employees may take health-related intermittent leave; however, leave for care of a newborn, newly adopted or child placed for foster care is only allowed if the employer and employee agree to the arrangement.



6. During FMLA leave, the employer shall maintain its share of the employee health benefits.
  
7. Employees who have taken FMLA leave are entitled to return to their previous position or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits. However, if the employee is unable to return to perform the essential functions of the position, the employer is not obligated to reassign the employee to another position.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Performance Appraisal/Evaluation**

The main purpose of a performance appraisal/evaluation is the growth and improvement of the parish catechetical leader in order to best serve the parish's desire for growth in faith of the children and youth. Therefore, it is essential that personnel be afforded the right and opportunity to be properly appraised/evaluated.

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that the parish catechetical leader(s) be evaluated through an ongoing process to collect data for formative and summative purposes. The process and instrument for this appraisal/evaluation can be found on the diocesan website under the Office of Catechetical Services.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Parish Catechetical Leader Renewal/Non-Renewal**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that Parish Catechetical Leaders be notified on or before the date stated (March 15th) in the Diocesan Performance Appraisal materials of the pastor/Council for Catechesis' intent to renew or not renew the Parish Catechetical Leader's contract or letter of agreement for the coming year.

Renewal or non-renewal of the Catechetical Leader's contract or work agreement shall be based on a performance appraisal of the Catechetical Leader's job description/ministry responsibilities.

If a pastor contemplates the non-renewal of a contract or work agreement for a Parish Catechetical Leader, the Diocesan Director for Catechetical Services shall be consulted in advance of such action.

Notification that the Parish Catechetical Leader's contract or work agreement will not be renewed shall be delivered to the Catechetical Leader by registered mail or in person by the pastor. The notification shall be signed by the pastor and the chairperson of the parish's Council for Catechesis.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Catechetical Leadership Certification**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that Parish Catechetical Leaders shall hold initial (basic) catechetical leadership certification (from the diocesan Office of Lay Ministry Formation) and receive consistent and ongoing religious faith formation to maintain this certification. It is the responsibility of the parish to financially support the ongoing religious faith development for the Parish Catechetical Leader(s).

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Qualifications for Catechists**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that parish catechists shall be member of the Catholic Church, in good standing with the church, openly practicing their faith and either have acquired initial (basic) diocesan certification or are willing to work toward certification.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Catechist Certification**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that Parish Catechetical Leaders provide for the initial (basic) and ongoing formation of parish catechists utilizing the diocesan guidelines for initial (basic) certification and certification renewal.

For more information, contact the diocesan Office of Lay Ministry Formation or the Office of Catechetical Services.

It is the responsibility of the parish to provide adequate financial support for these efforts – see Diocesan Five Year Plan for Catechesis, Diocesan Council for Catechesis, 2006.

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**Statistics**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that the Office of Catechetical Services collect data from the parish faith formation programs and compile annual information and statistics. Various reports shall be generated and disseminated.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Crisis Management Plan**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that, for the safety and care of all parish personnel, children and youth, each parish faith formation program shall develop a Crisis Management Plan. This plan must be updated annually and made known to all catechists and volunteers. When appropriate, the plan is to be practiced in order to be successful.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008



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**Crisis Management Plan**

All Crisis Management Plans should include the following provisions:

1. Emergency Phone Numbers for police, fire, poison control, medical/hospital, and utility companies.
2. Directions to be followed in case of a fire, natural disaster, weapons on property, hazardous material spill, medical emergency, intruder, bodily fluids, suicide, transportation accident, bomb threat, etc.
3. Arrangements made for the use of some alternate facility in case of the need to evacuate your facility in an emergency (fire, gas leak, etc.)
4. A listing by name, position and phone number of specific persons who will assume various tasks in emergencies, e.g. contact authorities and pastor, secure access to alternate facility if need be, keep parents informed, maintain communication with catechists/volunteers, children, youth, etc., speak with the press.
5. Some emergency situations will not allow the use of the intercom to explain, e.g. armed intruder in building. Therefore, a secret code should be devised and made known to staff only. This code should be both audio and visual so there is a system no matter what the emergency. Verbal code such as "The Assistant Bishop is in the building" or 2 short beeps repeated three times would indicate there is a crisis. A different code should be devised for crisis that requires all to leave the building to a predetermined location.



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**Federal and State Labor-Safety Laws**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that each parish post in a location easily accessible for all catechists and volunteers to see and read, the federal and state labor-safety laws as required by law.

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