

**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES  
COUNCIL FOR CATECHESIS**

**Parish Faith Formation Policies/Regulations**

**CATECHISTS/VOLUNTEERS**

**Screening**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese that all persons who volunteer or are employed to work in a parish faith formation program must have both a background and a reference check conducted.

Permission to conduct a background check must be given by the prospective employee/volunteer. (See approved diocesan form entitled: "Background Screening.") The screening must include any previous or present involvement in activities that would indicate these persons should not be involved in faith formation programs/activities: e.g., child abuse, criminal record, sexual abuse.

The background check must be conducted and approved by the Diocese of Des Moines. Any and all information gathered must be shared with others only on a need-to-know basis. Information gathered shall be confidentially maintained in a safe location.

Each applicant for a stipend or a volunteer position must list at least three personal references and all places of previous employment along with appropriate contact information on his/her application. Potential employers must conduct reference checks in order to obtain knowledge about the persons; their skills, abilities, job performance, work habits and other relevant information pertaining to the applicant's employment history.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Catechist Certification**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that all parish catechists obtain initial (basic) catechist certification utilizing the diocesan catechist certification process. Ongoing catechetical formation is expected to maintain certification.

It shall be the responsibility of the parish to financially support initial and ongoing faith formation for parish and catechists.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Handbook**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that each parish catechist and faith formation volunteer receives a copy of their parish's Faith Formation Handbook. The handbook must be kept current annually.

The handbook must contain a signature page which stipulates that the catechist/volunteer has read the handbook and will abide by the rules, regulations and procedures contained therein. Each catechist/volunteer member must sign and date the signature page and return it to the Parish Catechetical Leader as soon as possible.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Catechist Handbook Signature Page**

**Diocese of Des Moines**

I have read the \_\_\_\_\_ Catechist/Volunteer Handbook for  
(year) \_\_\_\_\_. I agree to abide by and follow the policies and procedures contained  
therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Catechist /Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Signed form is due in the Parish Office of Faith Formation by \_\_\_\_\_.**

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Appraisal/Evaluation**

The main purpose of a performance appraisal/evaluation is the growth and improvement of the catechist in order to increase the 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 catechists be evaluated through an ongoing process to collect data for formative and summative purposes. The processes and instruments will be included in the Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders: Sowing the Seeds of Discipleship.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008

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**Adult Supervision**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that all faith formation programs and activities follow the Diocesan regulations concerning adult supervision of children/ youth participants.

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**Adult Supervision**

Supervision of faith formation program/activity participants is a grave and serious responsibility; therefore, each parish must determine how many supervisors are necessary for the various types of programs and activities. Those between the age of 18 and 21 may be used to help with large number of children/teens but should be paired with an adult supervisor age 21 or over.

Due to the differing purposes of various faith formation activities, the following is encouraged:

- 1) Faith formation activities on parish property should have a minimum of two adults, age 21 and above, present on site.

However, depending upon the age and number of youth involved, as well as the planned activity, there may be need to increase the number of supervisors, e.g., twenty pre-schoolers, teen overnight retreat, etc.

- 2) Faith formation activities off parish property should have:
  - a minimum of two adult chaperones for any event; these same two chaperones will be able to cover up to 16 participants,
  - a minimum of one adult chaperone per eight participants after the first 16 participants.

For example, if your event has 24 participants, you would need 3 adult chaperones. If you have 12 participants, you would need 2 adult chaperones. All of the chaperones must be 21 years of age or older.

The administration and persons responsible for activities involving large numbers of participants and/or spectators, or the possibility of higher risk of injury, both on and off site, are to determine the number of supervisors and scope of their responsibility prior to the event/activity.

- 3) Some activities may suggest the presence of trained medical personnel.
- 4) All supervisors should be informed of their responsibilities and receive any necessary training prior to their service.

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**Incident Involving Health and Safety**

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines that all faith formation programs make and permanently retain adequate documentation of all incidents involving health and safety on the Incident Report form. These records must be available to the Parish Catechetical Leader and stored in the parish.

An incident is defined as: An action or episode involving persons that may have serious results. These may involve but are not limited to:

- a) an action which creates an unsafe, unhealthy or uncomfortable situation.
- b) an action which violates the rules, regulations or policies of the parish or diocese.

Policy Reviewed: August, 2008



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**Incident Report Form**

Complete this form in its entirety and maintain it for the parish faith formation records.

**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person or Persons Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Preventive Measures for Future: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Person Making the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Regulation Reviewed: August, 2008