

Dept. of Evangelization &  
Catechesis

Growing Disciples – Wednesday Wrap  
Glorifying God – Growing in Faith  
Living our Catholic Faith in the World

November 2, 2016 Edition

**The Saga Continues – Department of Labor Mandate Part 3:**



When last we visited it appeared that Catholic lay ministry professionals would need to move from an employee exempt status to an employee hourly status because most of us do not earn the minimum threshold salary of \$913.00 per week. Based upon information that we had available to us it didn't appear that most of us would pass the "duties test" of the ministerial exemption.

Within the past three weeks new insights on the ministerial exemption has become available thanks to the efforts of the USCCB, the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA), and human resource professionals from other dioceses. This information was provided to our diocesan legal counsel, Mr. Frank Harty, with recommendations to Bishop Pates.

Bishop Pates has made the decision that we will be able to use the "Ministerial Exemption" to cover positions within our diocese in which one's responsibilities include "the proclamation of the Gospel." Besides those whose job responsibilities include lifelong formation in faith, it also includes directors of music ministry and also those whose primary responsibility is conducting retreats.

Attached to this E-Newsletter you will find updated job descriptions that have been approved by the Diocesan Office of Human Resources with accepted language that supports our exemption from the updated Fair Labor Standards Act that goes into effect on December 1, 2016.

If you have questions, please visit with your pastor and/or business manager first. You could also contact Eileen Valdez at [evaldez@dmdiocese.org](mailto:evaldez@dmdiocese.org) or call her at 515-237-5058. I am happy to answer basic questions regarding the job descriptions.

The job descriptions themselves have been carefully created using language that supports the new Department of Labor mandate. Please do not change any word of the areas titled: Role Specifics, Primary Job Function, Physical Demands and Work Environment. The area that can be changed in these sample job descriptions is titled Position Responsibilities. There may be things that you are required to do and others that are not part of your parish role. Some parishes may combine elements of adult faith formation with religious education and there is language to

support those roles. You will also notice language that is similar across all the job description roles. They are designed to promote good ministerial practices and lifelong formation of the lay minister. These include the following responsibilities:

- Participates and seeks consultation and input at regular meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council and/or Lifelong Faith Formation Council.
- Informs the parish staff and leadership about documents and developments in the area of adult catechesis.
- Represents the parish in diocesan and regional efforts and events to promote and educate about adult faith formation.
- Maintains a relationship with the Diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis (and the St. Joseph Educational Center in the Des Moines region) for consultation, support and resourcing.
- Tends to his/her own ongoing formation through participation in opportunities for professional development.
- Supports a program of catechist formation according to diocesan certification norms.
- Assures that appropriate legal responsibilities are met within the context of a parish program.
- Participating in diocesan professional development opportunities for youth ministers (AFF and RE directors/coordinators) and in any local associations.

I am very willing to come to your parish community and work with you and your pastor/business manager to develop the best job description for your parish position that is in-line with the FLSA policies. Please work closely with your pastor/business manager to make sure a new job description is in place by the end of November, 2016.

### **November is National Bullying Prevention Month:**

**Our colleagues at RCL Benziger have shared this article written by Mary A. DuQuaine. It is full of helpful information. Please consider sharing it with your catechists and your parents.**

A common goal for parishes and schools is to create a healthy environment where children and families thrive. Preventing bullying is a key element to providing a safe and secure community. There are life-skills and patterns of behavior we can practice in order to strengthen our everyday commitment to healthy relating. When members know and agree to social norms of a loving Christian community, we provide an optimal environment for living, learning, and praying together.

Board games and sports activities are good examples of training children in the values of playing by the rules within set boundaries. When players abide by the rules of the game, the play is considered “fair.” Children delight in learning how to play by the rules, testing the boundaries in safe ways, and experiencing the consequences of mistakes and “foul balls.”



There are social and interpersonal boundaries as well. Sometimes these may seem harder to identify than the lines painted on a checkerboard or basketball court. On a checkerboard, the boundary lines and the moves are very simple. Once you learn the rules, fair play is pretty evident; when a player makes a wrong move, their opponent will be quick to say, “Hey, you can’t do that!” This challenges the opponent to reverse their false move and return back to fair play.

In personal relationships, boundary lines are much more complex. Plus, some people have learned different patterns of behavior and may have different social expectations. Much of childhood is a process of learning how we can find successful ways to function within the social and cultural norms of our community.

### **Coach Children on the Benefits of Healthy Relating**

Adults have an important role in helping children learn and experience healthy boundaries. And, like a coach, they have an opportunity to challenge students to practice skills of healthy relating. For example, many catechists and teachers begin the year with a “classroom contract of behavior.” Take the opportunity to make this a living document in the classroom, and bring it out on a regular basis. Together with your students, sit down and discuss how your class is functioning within the boundaries of the agreement. Do members feel respect? What are ways to make the contract easier to follow? What changes need to be made, or is it all working pretty well?

Helping children to identify the way to signal when someone has “crossed the line” is an essential piece of healthy relating, as well as having a plan of response. How do we respond in a loving and forgiving way to help restore relationships when boundaries have been crossed?

In sports and games, we need to practice, practice, practice to improve skills and develop mastery. So too with children and social skills:

- Practice conscious listening in pairs.
- Practice saying, “Please” and “Thank You.”
- Write journal entries on what it means to be a good friend.
- Practice greeting each other in the morning.
- See if you can “catch” each other smiling throughout the day.
- Role-play common playground scenarios so children can experience different outcomes based on what people say, or how they react to conflict.
- Practice serving and being served.
- Invite children to pray for each other.
- Encourage ways to live Gospel values like patience, respect, courage, reconciliation, and justice in the classroom, on the playground, and at home.

### **Creating an Environment with Healthy Boundaries**

When we strengthen our community and provide a healthy environment, it is easier to identify conflict and resolve bullying problems before they go too far. Having a response plan is essential to creating stable social interactions. When members know and agree to social norms of a loving Christian community, we provide an optimal environment for living, learning, and praying together.

## Highlight the Positive

Good experiences strengthen healthy bonds and draw attention to the positive aspects of your classroom relationships. Help children internalize the good feelings of living in a healthy environment by asking them to reflect upon these questions:

- How does it feel when a friend or classmate does something nice for you?
- Can you think of a time when someone's care helped you to feel good?
- What does it feel like when you are affirmed by your friends and get positive attention?
- What can you do to help create a healthy environment?

Identifying everyone's strengths helps members of the group appreciate one another. However, it is also important to acknowledge when behavior is destructive in order to work through the "false moves" and bring the environment back into fair play.

The beauty of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is that it helps us to clearly identify the right relationship. It helps children know everyone makes mistakes. We all have our moments of weakness. And, instead of staying in our weakness, through the sacrament we receive God's mercy and loving forgiveness. Once we examine our conscience and know where we have fallen short, we then have the opportunity to reconcile, to make things right and restore relationships with God, others, and ourselves.

Did you ever notice when children receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation there is an air of happiness? Everyone loves to begin again with a clean slate.

God wants all of creation to live in a right relationship. As adults we can help set up healthy boundaries in our classrooms and in our homes so we can all identify healthy relating. By having the intention, and practicing live-giving patterns of relating, we equip children with essential life skills to function successfully with their family, friends, and the world.

RCL Benziger's *Family Life* is a helpful resource to provide a safe and healthy environment. It is also a comprehensive moral catechesis for families. *Family Life* is designed to complement religious education and strengthen Catholic identity in your school or parish. This best-selling program presents the teachings of the Church with clarity, and offers unparalleled support for Catholic families!

*Mary A. DuQuaine started working in professional church ministry in 1993, she worked in the Archdioceses of Milwaukee and Chicago. She earned a Master of Theology Degree from Catholic Theological Union as a Bernardin Scholar where she specialized in Spirituality and Ethics. She is the author of several books on liturgical catechesis and spirituality.*



*Today I ask you,  
in the name of Christ and the Church, never tire of being  
merciful."*

*Pope Francis  
The Church of Mercy*