

Parish Advocate for Faith Formation/ Religious Education of Persons with Disabilities

Roles and Responsibilities Statement

Ministry: The Parish Advocate for Faith Formation/Religious Education works within the Parish to implement the *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities*. This document calls for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in Catholic faith formation programs and its related activities. The term “disability” refers to any severe condition that may be a barrier to full participation in the religious education programs of the Church, such as mobility limitations, cognitive impairments, severe emotional conditions, hearing or visual impairments, and serious medical conditions.

Principle Duties and Responsibilities:

- Works to raise awareness within the parish about disabilities.
- Works with parents of students with disabilities, faith formation catechists and students to identify needs of students with disabilities, able bodied students and teachers who are there to ensure the optimal success of students with disabilities.
- Works with and assists all appropriate parish staffs to ensure that these offices plan for the inclusion of parishioners with disabilities in all faith formation/religious education programs. The Parish Advocate works primarily with the Parish Catechetical Leader (Director or Coordinator of Religious Education).
- Assesses the faith formation/religious education needs, in conjunction with C/DRE, of parishioners with disabilities, and addresses unmet needs. Acts as a consultant to the various parish committees, including local Parish Board/Committee of Education, Building and Grounds and Social Concerns on matters pertaining to accessibility to catechesis.
- Works with Diocesan Disabilities Resource Consultant and parish Pastoral Council as needed to ensure that people with disabilities are able to participate fully in all parish-sponsored faith formation activities, including youth groups and other faith formation programs.
- Maintains contact with the Diocesan Disabilities Resource Consultant, diocesan parish advocate network, and other relevant diocesan offices (e.g. social justice office).

Supports Necessary for Parish Advocate:

- Diocesan Disabilities Resource Consultant should be available for direction, access to diocesan/Church materials on persons with disabilities, and references for networking outside the parish.
- Subscriptions to relevant publications (e.g. *NCPD*, *National Update*).
- Opportunities for networking with other Parish Advocates within the diocese to exchange ideas, resource materials, and reference information.