

DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR

PARISH CATECHETICAL LEADER HANDBOOK

“Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’. If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: ‘We have found the Messiah!’”

-- Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 120

Part I: Introductory Items

Important Terminology

Evangelization is the bringing of the Good News into the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new ([Evangelii Nuntiandi](#), Pope Paul VI, 1975, 18). As the USCCB summarizes, evangelization is the bringing of the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel.

The role of evangelization is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as to lead each individual Christian to live the sacraments as true sacraments of faith - and not to receive them passively or reluctantly (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI, 1975, 47).

Catechesis is Greek for “to echo the Gospel.” It is an ecclesial act... and aimed at making the proclamation of [Jesus’] passion, death and resurrection continually resound in the heart of every person, so that his life may be transformed... [I]t is accompaniment, education, and formation in the faith and for the faith, an introduction to the celebration of the Mystery, illumination and interpretation of human life and history (Directory for Catechesis, 2020, 55).

Religious Education is formal instruction in the beliefs, tenets, and practices of the faith. Religious education in a Catholic setting is always a part of catechesis, but it is not the only part.

Youth Ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community. It is much more than just programs. It is about reaching out in relationship to the young people in the community, and giving them opportunities to use their gifts within the community. All ministry with youth must be directed toward presenting young people with the Good News of Jesus Christ, and inviting and challenging them to become his disciples (*Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, USCCB, 1997).

Faith Formation can be used synonymously with catechesis; however, the term is not as rich in meaning as catechesis. It is a term that envisions a process of formation in faith from birth to death. It is a lifelong process. Faith Formation encompasses all ages - infants, children, youth, young adults, adults, elderly. It brings all participants into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ by bringing all the faithful together to learn, share and participate in the Catholic Church. Faith Formation means that we are always learning through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, prayer, liturgy and God’s presence in our lives.

CCD are the initials for the movement called **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine**. This association was formed in Rome in 1562 for the purpose of giving religious instruction. In its more modern usage, CCD became the term used for the religious teaching program of the Catholic Church. These classes are taught to school age children to learn the basic doctrines of their faith. It was later replaced with the term Religious Education.

Different names of catechetical leader positions:

Director of Evangelization (DE) guides a parish on mission by implementing the vision of the parish while coordinating small groups, helping parishioners come to know and love Jesus personally, and nurturing

others in love and devotion to their Catholic faith.

Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL) serves as the director or coordinator of the catechetical, religious education, faith formation or youth ministry programs of the parish. This person is responsible for the administration of a specified area of the religious education and faith formation program to fulfill the catechetical mission of the parish.

DRE (Director of Religious Education) is responsible for the development, organization and administration of the specified areas of religious education and faith formation programs in fulfillment of the catechetical mission of the parish. Usually a person holding this title has at least a bachelor's degree in catechesis or other religious studies, but it may be used synonymously with CRE in the Diocese of Superior.

CRE (Coordinator of Religious Education) is responsible for the organization and administration of the specific areas of religious education and faith formation programs in fulfillment of the catechetical mission of the parish. In the Diocese of Superior this title may be used synonymously with DRE.

Youth Minister is responsible for the development, organization and administration of programs for youth, which include developing relationships, outreach to youth and families, planning and implementing events and programs and leading youth to a deeper life of discipleship, thus helping fulfill the catechetical mission of the parish.

Faith Formation Director is a term that can be used interchangeably with PCL, DRE, CRE and/or Youth Minister.

Other important terms to be aware of:

Bishop Hammes Center (BHC) – the Curia office building in Haugen, WI that houses the offices of Catholic Formation, Evangelization, Marriage & Family, and Schools. (The Curia is the offices of those who the Bishop appoints to assist him.)

Canon Law – the ecclesial law of the Roman Catholic Church. The bishop has final responsibility for all Church law in his diocese. Although he may delegate power, he can never delegate responsibility. In the Diocese of Superior, parishes are governed by a pastor who is the ultimate authority in the parish, subject only to the bishop. Church governance is not a democracy. One would hope that the pastor operates in a collegial spirit; however he stands alone under canon law as the ultimate one responsible for the decisions that guide the life of the parish.

Canons 773-780 pertain to Catechetical Instruction. Highlights of these Canons are:

Canon 774, §1 reiterates that all types of catechesis are under the supervision of legitimate ecclesiastical authority [the Bishop].

Canon 774, §2 states that parents above others are obliged to form their children by word and example in faith and in the practice of Christian life.

Canon 775, §1 presents an explicit directive by saying that “it is for the diocesan bishop to issue norms for catechesis, to make provision that suitable instruments for catechesis are available, even by preparing a catechism, if it seems opportune, and to foster and coordinate catechetical endeavors.”

Canon 776 exhorts pastors to provide for the catechetical formation of children and to promote and foster the role of parents in family catechesis.

Canon 777 enlists the pastor to take care in a special way that suitable catechesis is imparted for the celebration of the sacraments.

Canon 780 directs that the diocesan bishop is a supervisor of catechesis and he is to ensure that catechists are duly prepared to fulfill their function properly, and that they learn in theory and practice the methods proper to the teaching discipline.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) – is the catechism promulgated for the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1992. It sums up, in book form, the beliefs of the Catholic faithful. The catechism was updated with the second edition in 2019.

Charter – this is the document created in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in response to the sexual abuse crisis.

Directory for Catechesis (DC) – a document published in 2020 by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, based in Rome, that discusses practical and theoretical aspects of linking catechesis to evangelization.

Extreme Faith Camp (EFC) – is a weeklong camp held over four weeks during the summer for middle school youth to experience faith in a deeper way.

High School Discipleship Weekends (HSD) – are a place for high school youth to gain knowledge to live out their faith as leaders or disciple builders.

National Evangelization Team Ministries (NET Ministries) – an organization established in 1981 under the ecclesiastical care of the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis which has teams that travel across the U.S. for nine months to share the Gospel with young people and their families.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) – a process of education, faith sharing, and rituals for parishes to welcome new members into the Catholic Church. This process was formerly called RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

Parish Life Coordinator (PLC) and Parish Director (PD) – qualified deacons, religious, or lay persons entrusted with a participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish where there is no resident pastor.

Parochial Administrator – a priest who may have the same duties and scope of authority as a pastor; however, these may be limited by the bishop.

Pastor – “the proper shepherd” of a parish – a priest who exercises his authority as an extension of the bishop and in the example of Christ, the Good Shepherd. He must care for the souls of the faithful entrusted to him. A pastor must fulfill his duties to teach, to sanctify and to govern the faithful with the cooperation of assistant/associate/sacramental priests, deacons, religious and laity of the parish.

Sacramental Minister – a priest that does not have any administrative roles, and is responsible for preaching the Gospel and celebrating the Sacraments while collaborating with a Pastor, Parish Life

Coordinator or Parish Director who coordinates the activities of a parish.

SPIRITUS Ministries – an organization that travels to parishes to lead youth into life-changing encounters with Jesus through retreat ministry, prayer and parish youth ministry. SPIRITUS missionaries stand as joyful witnesses to the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church while inspiring young Catholics to embrace a life of faith and form leaders for the church.

Steubenville Conferences – a weekend in the summer dedicated to bringing high school age students closer to Jesus through talks, witness, Sacraments, praise and worship and fellowship. These conferences are held at various locations throughout the United States each summer, spearheaded by Franciscan University Steubenville, Ohio. [Franciscan LEAD](#) is a five-day, Christ centered, Sacrament-soaked, prayer fueled immersion in Catholic teachings on leadership, evangelization, and discipleship inspired by the life and witness of St. Francis of Assisi. These weeks are held the week before a Steubenville youth conference in several locations.

Totus Tuus (TT) – is a summer Catholic youth program dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith through evangelization, catechesis, Christian witness, and Eucharistic worship.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) – an assembly of the bishops of the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands who jointly exercise certain pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful of the United States.

Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) – a conference of the bishops of Wisconsin that serves as an advocate on matters related to the interests and values of the Church; provides decision makers with studied positions on social and moral issues; offers a forum for diocesan personnel to meet, exchange information, deliberate and recommend policies or actions; and formulates and publishes opinions and positions on legislation and public policy.

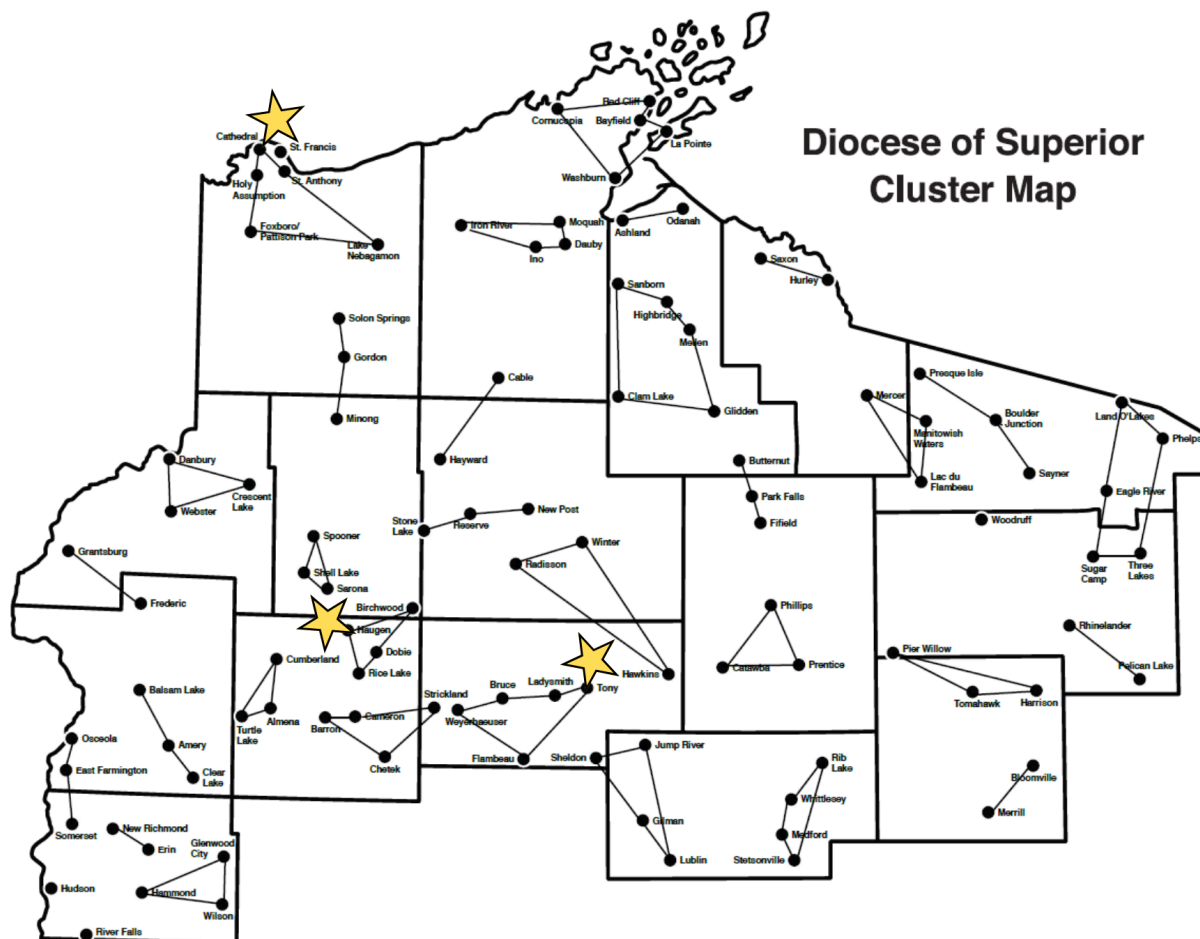
The Diocese of Superior

The Catholic Diocese of Superior, established in 1905, comprises the 16 northern counties of Wisconsin, which include: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Lincoln, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rush, Sawyer, St. Croix, Taylor, Vilas and Washburn. The Diocese covers 15,715 square miles and has a Catholic population of over 78,000. There are 103 parishes in about 33 clusters with about 65 parish religious education programs and 14 schools. There are just over 3,000 students in religious education and about 1,600 in the schools.

Diocesan Mission Statement:

The Catholic Diocese of Superior is a people of diverse ethnic and cultural traditions called in unity by the love of Christ to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, and give witness through joyful lives of prayer and service to Northern Wisconsin and throughout the world.

DIOCESAN OFFICE LOCATIONS ★





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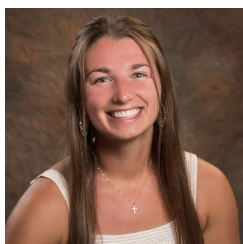
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See diocesan website (catholicdos.org) for all staff.

DIOCESAN SUPPORT

Bishop Powers is the chief pastor and catechist of the Diocese of Superior. He is responsible for the catechetical and formational program of the diocese. He appoints diocesan personnel to make sure Vatican and Diocesan guidelines are carried out at the local level. He delegates the responsibility to carry out the catechetical mission to the parish leader (i.e. pastor) and the diocesan staff.

The Director of Evangelization & Missionary Discipleship has been appointed by Bishop Powers to ensure that the guidelines and mission of catechesis and evangelization are carried out within the diocese. To do this, these diocesan components have been developed.

Annual Report/Survey – Every fall the diocesan offices ask the parish catechetical leaders to complete a survey of information about the local parish programming. This survey allows the diocese to 1) check to ensure the mission of the Bishop is being carried out and 2) to determine the needs of the parishes and services to provide.

Calendar – A diocesan calendar of events is established for the catechetical year. This calendar can be found in the PCL shared Google Drive and on the diocesan website.

Catechetical Sunday – This day is usually celebrated on the third Sunday in September. Information regarding this day as well as resources for catechist commissioning are provided by the diocesan staff.

Cenacles – Named after the Latin word for the upper room in which the Apostles gathered to await the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, these are small groups for PCLs. They are one hour long, weekly online discipleship gatherings with 4-6 PCLs in similar ministries, facilitated by the Bishop Hammes Center.

Chancery Bulletin – The Chancery Bulletin is a newsletter that is distributed electronically each month. Within this newsletter you will find information on programs, updated guidelines, planning and formation. Past issues of this bulletin are found on the diocesan website at <http://catholicdos.org/chancery-bulletin>.

Diocesan Website – <http://catholicdos.org/>

Evaluation, Planning, and Programming – Diocesan staff set expectations and are available to assist parishes in developing programming and establishing a catechetical plan. Staff are also available to meet with pastors and to assess their local programs.

Fall Catechist Workshop – This workshop is held virtually to help PCLS form their parish catechists. Clusters are encouraged to gather all catechists together at one location and participate in the workshop together. The theme of the two talks during this workshop is based off of the theme from the Parish Catechetical Leader Conference held in August.

Fall Conference – A diocesan conference held in late October or early November every year to provide continuing formation for principals, teachers, catechists and parish catechetical leaders. The bishop celebrates Mass and a well-established key-note speaker offers inspiration. All programs are asked to encourage their catechists to attend this impactful conference.

Google Drive - This shared drive serves as a centralized resource hub containing forms, checklists, guidelines, informational documents, and other helpful materials. The contents are updated regularly as new resources become available. Within the drive, you will find information related to diocesan events, training and catechetical resources, planning tools, and notes or materials from previous conferences, all organized for your reference and ongoing use.

Parish Catechetical Leadership Directory - A directory of all catechetical leaders in the parishes and schools of the diocese is formatted and distributed from the Bishop Hammes Center every fall, it is kept updated and in the PCL shared Google Drive.

Parish Catechetical Leaders Conference – Every August, the diocese holds a two day conference for parish catechetical leaders to come together for rich formation and important updates for the upcoming catechetical year.

Personnel Policies for Parish Employees and Parish Volunteers – These policies can be found on the diocesan website - <https://catholicdos.org/personnel-policies-1>. Contact the Bishop Hammes Center to obtain the employee password. There is a human resources handbook for those employed and those who volunteer for the parish. Also located on this page are the Morals and Ethics Policies for the diocese. These policies all need to be signed and on file for all employees and volunteers.

An important part of these policies is this statement:

All employees/volunteers within the Church, whether at the parish, school or diocesan levels, are to support and exemplify in conduct both Catholic doctrine and morality. Employees/Volunteers shall be consistent, in expression and example, with the teaching and practices of the Catholic faith and shall not teach, advocate, encourage or counsel beliefs or practices contrary to the Catholic faith.

There is also a Supervisor's Guide to the Personnel Policies that can be obtained from Cindy Gronski (cgronski@catholicdos.org).

Policies & Procedures – The Diocese has policies and procedures manuals for programs, employees, volunteers and safe environment requirements. These documents can also be found on our web page and in the shared PCL drive.

Policy Manual – Every parish has a copy of the DIOCESAN POLICY MANUAL. It consists of two green binders, one labeled Policy Manual and the other labeled Appendices. These policies are related to such things as: sacraments, worship, canonical norms, the Chancery, pastoral ministry, diocesan and parish administration, diocesan and parish finance, human services, faith formation, and societies and organizations. This is also available online at <https://catholicdos.org/diocesan-policies>.

Safe Environment – The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires every diocese to provide a program for the protection of young people. Our diocese has an established Safe Environment program with guidelines found on the diocesan website (<http://catholicdos.org/safe-environment>) as well as a binder found at every parish. The coordinator for this program is Bonnie Thom.

Safe Environment Resource Binder – The Safe Environment binder provides all the guidelines necessary to ensure a safe environment for students in parish programs. This binder includes forms and documents pertinent to safe environment and curriculum guidelines and resources. It is required that all parish

volunteers and employees follow guidelines that are outlined. The information is also found on the diocesan website (<https://catholicdos.org/safe-environment-resource-binder>) and any questions can be directed to Bonnie Thom.

SACRAMENTAL GUIDELINES

Guidelines for the preparation for and reception of the sacraments come from Canon Law and Diocesan policy. Local parish leaders must be aware of and work under these guidelines. All sacramental guidelines are found at <https://catholicdos.org/sacraments>.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Guidelines for faith formation curriculum can be found on the diocesan webpage <https://catholicdos.org/religious-education-curriculum>

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (OCIA)

The process by which un-baptized individuals beyond the age of reason (typically 7) are received into the Church is called OCIA. It is a beautiful process that includes many smaller rites, catechesis, and mentorship in the Christian life. Information about the OCIA in the Diocese of Superior can be found online at <https://catholicdos.org/order-of-christian-initiation-for-adults>.

For OCIA questions pertaining to the liturgical aspects contact Paul Birch.

For OCIA questions pertaining to formation contact Christopher Hurtubise.

For OCIA questions pertaining to children coming into the Church contact Tyler Kircher.

Part II: GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

DIOCESAN POLICY

Catholic Formation

The Diocese of Superior is committed to the ongoing Catholic formation of its people. This formation looks toward the person's final end, and at the same time toward the common good of society. Such formation is fostered so that individuals can develop their physical, moral and intellectual talents, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and a correct use of freedom, and be educated for active participation in social life (cf. c. 795). The diocesan Department of Catholic Formation has the charge of creating and maintaining programs of formation and education within the diocese.

Personnel in Catholic Schools and Parish Religious Education Programs

Catechetical leaders and parish catechists and teachers of religion in schools must be Catholics who have admission to the full sacramental life of the Church and are actively engaged in a Catholic parish community.

All catechetical leaders (school or parish programs) and teachers of religion in Catholic schools must hold Elevated level catechetical certification within eight (8) years of beginning their ministry, and continue catechetical enrichment each year thereafter.

School teachers and parish catechists must hold Foundational level catechetical certification within three (3) years of beginning their ministry.

School teachers and parish catechists must earn 15 clock hours or 1 semester credit in religious studies or a related field every five (5) years after obtaining certification.

All catechetical leaders must earn 45 clock hours or 3 semester credits in religious studies or a related field every five (5) years after obtaining certification.

All catechetical leaders need to attend Diocesan offerings to achieve on-going spiritual and professional development, e.g. leadership days, meetings, conferences, workshops.

These policies are based on the standards established by the Wisconsin Catholic Conference.

Parental Involvement in Education of Children

Since parents are the primary educators of their children, they are to be directly involved in the children's educational program. (cf. Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965).

The parish shall provide adult formation for parents so that they will be able to share in the religious instruction of their children.

Religious Education At Home

Generally, formal catechesis of children takes place in parish religious education/faith formation programs. Families may choose to provide formal systematic catechesis for their children in the home, apart from parish programs. The parish will work to support and assist the family in their decision.

Home catechesis is to be in accord with all applicable diocesan guidelines and policies for catechesis, including assessment and evaluation. Families establish the process of home catechesis with their parish community in the following manner:

1. Parents/guardians, the pastor and/or his designated catechetical leader enter into a dialogue regarding mutual responsibilities, time frames, material fees and expectations for catechesis in the home. This dialogue culminates in an agreement on time schedules and a regular review process among the pastor or his designated catechetical leader, family, and the child.
2. The pastor and/or his designated catechetical leader provides parameters and guidance in the selection of text and other materials to ensure conformity with the Church's catechetical documents and diocesan recommendations.
3. The family, pastor and catechetical leader witness to and provide for the communal dimension of catechesis, to include:
 - Participation in parent/family sessions
 - Invitation to catechist formation sessions and the provision of information on offerings for catechist/parent formation throughout the diocese
 - Participation in sacramental programs, retreats, liturgical celebrations, etc.
 - Interactions with peers and the parish community in worship and other events as are determined by shared dialogue.
4. The pastor and the parish catechetical staff will provide resources and support for home-based catechesis, including material and opportunities for the parents' faith development.

Safe Environment Training for Students

All students in school or religious education programs must be offered the opportunity to attend at least one (1) hour of age-appropriate safe environment training each year.

Parents have the right to choose whether or not their children will participate in the Safe Environment training. Parishes (schools and religious education programs) must notify parents by mail of the scheduled Safe Environment training. The letter must include specific instructions allowing parents to "opt-out" of the training for their children.

All children will participate in the Safe Environment training unless the parish (school or religious education program) has a document signed by a parent refusing permission for the child to participate. Failure to return a permission form is not an "opt-out." In the absence of a parent-signed refusal, the child will participate in the training. Parishes must keep all signed refusal forms on file.

In all situations where a child does not participate in Safe Environment training, the parents must be mailed a copy of the “Safe Environment Parent Guide.” This expectation applies regardless of the reason for the absence of the child.

Participation in Safe Environment training by minors enrolled in a Catholic school or parish religious education program must be documented at the parish. Data on the numbers of participating minors, opted-out minors, and absent minors is to be supplied to the Diocese via CMG Connect. The deadline for submitting this data is January 25 each year. Instructions for this form are found in the Safe Environment Resource Binder – Tab 1.

Field Trips and Outings

The written consent of parents/legal guardians must be obtained for every person participating in a field trip or outing including planned extracurricular activities. This applies to field trips planned for religious education classes, youth groups and other parish or diocesan groups as well as school groups. No one may participate unless a signed “Parent or Legal Guardian Permission Slip and Indemnity Agreement” and “Adult Liability Waiver and Health Information Form” for the specific event is on file with the catechetical leader prior to the date of the event (cf. Appendix S, pp. 21-22). All “Safe Environment” requirements are to be followed as described in the Safe Environment Resource Binder.

Parish Religious Education Course of Study

The parish is to provide on-going religious instruction for children and youth in grades K-12. There should be at least 24 hours of instruction in a catechetical year. Every attempt should be made to meet weekly, making catechesis a priority in the lives of families. Curriculum guides can be found on the diocesan website at <http://catholicdos.org/religious-education-curriculum>.

For Early Childhood - ages 3-6, strongly consider utilizing or partnering with neighboring parishes in (if you have low numbers) Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS). Specific training to use this curriculum is required.

For Elementary - ages 7-10, if not running a CGS program, we strongly encourage using a published series to ensure content specific to the age development and life experiences of the students is relayed in a sequential manner.

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist should be part of the regular catechetical curriculum for grade 2. There does not need to be separate instruction.

For Middle School - ages 11-13, strongly consider utilizing a format that couples rich catechesis with strong applicational and relational components drawing them deeper into discussion that relates to their daily life and struggles - the best programs available for this right now are LifeTeen’s EDGE or YDisciple.

For High School - ages 14-17, strongly consider utilizing a format that draws them deeper into discussion that relates to their daily life and struggles - i.e. LifeTeen and YDisciple.

In addition to the “regular” curriculum, these items are required:

- Ruah Woods Theology of the Body (for grades K-12)
- Vocations Lessons
 - To access these visit: vocationslessons.com,
 - Teacher access code: SuperiorVocations715,
 - Student access code: OpenHeart
 - Note many grades are using the Vocations lessons from Ruah Woods, see required Ruah Woods lessons in PCL drive.
- Circle of Grace and Chosen (Safe Environment Training for Minors - <https://catholicdos.org/safe-environment-resource-binder>)

Parish Religious Education Committee

Pastoral councils of parishes having a religious education program shall have an education committee that reports its recommendations to the parish pastoral council. This committee is to provide consultation to the pastor and catechetical leader concerning the operation of the religious education program.

The education committee carries out the responsibilities delegated to it by the pastor and parish pastoral council. The agenda for regular committee meetings is to be prepared jointly with the pastor, parish catechetical leader and chair of the committee.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Whatever style program your parish elects to run, quality is key. The work of catechesis is as vital to the mission of the Church as always. In our efforts to highlight the desperate need for relationship and evangelization, there could be a softening in catechesis. This cannot happen. We need to be producing well-formed disciples if they are going to survive our deeply divisive and confusing times. We need to use the best resources available, with the best training available.

Traditional Classroom –

A traditional educational setting with classrooms, desks, direct instruction and some discussion with children and youth. Usually a designated textbook is the resource used to instruct the curriculum. Tasks here include:

- Schedule and require approved content/curriculum to be discussed, yet allowing for flexibility in discussing topics of importance to youth.
- Take attendance - this leads to a sense of accountability and importance. Reach out to those not attending - call or visit them.
- Ensure all adults working with minors are background checked and trained and renewed on time.
- Establish a routine check in time with catechists to understand the questions children/youth have.
- Ensure proper training of catechists to teach the faith, mature knowledge of the content being taught, and how to maintain a classroom.

Small Groups –

The faith is taught in a more natural setting of discussion and accountability. Catechesis is incorporated throughout this discussion. Tasks here include:

- Schedule and require approved content/curriculum to be discussed, yet allowing for flexibility in discussing topics of importance to youth.
- Take attendance - this leads to a sense of accountability and importance. Reach out to those not attending - call or visit them.
- Ensure all adults working with minors are background checked and trained and renewed on time.
- Establish a routine check in time with catechists to understand the questions children/youth have and what content was covered.
- Ensure proper training on leading small groups in the faith, and mature knowledge of the content of faith topics.
- If these sessions occur in the community (not at the parish):
 - Ensure all parents/guardians are aware of content shared, times and location of meetings. Know where all meetings are taking place.
 - If in the homes of families, visit the home before signing off on locations for small groups.
 - If in the homes of families, ensure all adults within that home are background checked and trained.
 - Ensure additional training of group leaders on safe environment protocols for small group meetings in public locations or homes.
- If virtual:
 - Have specific requirements for the class times, i.e. camera must be on, participants must be dressed appropriately, etc.
 - Ensure all parents/guardians are aware of content shared and times of meetings.
 - Provide a safe and secure platform to host the virtual setting.

Family-centered –

This method either:

1. Teaches the families together as a group within a parish setting.
2. Provides materials for families to teach their own children at home, or
3. Provides traditional catechesis for the children with sessions set aside to invite the families into the parish to be catechized together.

Whichever format is adopted it is essential that the parish:

- Lay out clear expectations and directions for families.
- Hold at least one required meeting/training for families per month. Either keep parents and children together or separate them. Take attendance - this leads to a sense of accountability and importance. Reach out to those not attending - call or visit them. Provide a sense of community - social aspects, prayer, etc.
- Ensure all adults working with minors at the monthly gatherings are background checked and

trained and renewed on time.

- Communicate regularly with families - preferably weekly - to encourage, catechize and assist them in their role as teacher to their own children.
- Establish a routine check in time with group leaders and parents to understand the questions they or their children/youth have.

Lectionary-based –

A method of teaching the faith to children and adults that uses the Sunday Mass Scripture readings as the basis for catechetical sessions. Usually this is done in a traditional classroom style.

Mini-courses –

A method of teaching the faith to children and adults that breaks catechetical material into courses. Usually this is done in a traditional classroom style.

Home-based –

This method allows the parents to catechize their children in the home setting. It is either directed by the parish or by the parents. (See diocesan policy)

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) –

CGS is a Montessori based program for children. It consists of three different levels. Level I is for ages 3-6. Level II is for ages 6-9. Level III is for ages 9-12. Sacramental preparation can happen in the atrium as well. Extensive training is required for catechists, but is offered in multiple locations in and near the diocese with regularity. Most parishes that offer CGS offer it as an option alongside other catechetical programs such as classroom or family-based.

Programs for children with Special Needs –

These programs can either be specifically designed for individual students to learn the faith or be adapted so they can participate with other parish offerings, or they can be in a group setting for children with special needs.

Summer catechetical –

Summer programming can take on different methods. Generally summer catechesis is offered as Vacation Bible School or Totus Tuus. Summer catechetical programs can also be intensive or general catechesis offered to children, youth and adults in place of school year catechesis.

Part III: ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

1. Establish a calendar or framework for the catechetical year.
2. Identify the texts and other resources that will be used for each grade level in regard to diocesan curriculum guidelines.
3. Review and/or post for student registrations for the catechetical program.
4. Interview and invite credible, faith-filled adults to the ministry of catechesis.
5. Review and update the communication forms and/or parent handbook in the catechetical program which includes items such as: a discipline policy, expectations and requirements for sacraments and procedures for dropping off and picking up of children.
6. Establish opportunities for orientation and in-services for catechists in the areas of good catechetical praxis and continuing adult faith formation.
7. Develop a “reminder file” for each event. Put information on planning and procedures as well as notes on what needs to change for the next year.
8. Set up modes of communication for parents – bulletin boards, emails, bulletin announcements, mailings, texts, social media, and handbooks.
9. Establish a database of all families in the program which includes names of all family members and ages, phone numbers, addresses and emails.
10. Complete beginning of the year paperwork for catechists:
 - a. Distribute a copy of the Parish Personnel Policies for Volunteers or Lay Employees to all NEW catechists. Collect a signed Acknowledgement of Receipt and a signed Morals and Ethics Assurance Statement from each person.
 - b. Distribute a copy of the Annual Affirmation Statement to returning catechists who are not up for renewal of their background check. Those needing to renew their background check should be given a copy of the Morals and Ethics Policy along with the Morals and Ethics Assurance Statement. Collect the signed statements and file at the parish.
11. Review CMG Connect at least monthly to determine who needs to renew their Safe Environment training and background check. Catechists should be given at least 30 days advance notice of the expiration of their background check as well as a copy of the appropriate CMG Connect instructions on how to accomplish this.
12. Provide catechists with teaching materials and curriculums they will be expected to cover throughout the year.
13. Provide catechists with a handbook outlining procedures and responsibilities.

HANDBOOKS

Each parish program should have a handbook for both employees/volunteers and participants in the program. These handbooks help to guide the program as well as inform those working and participating in the program of what is expected.

An Employee and Volunteer Handbook should include such things as:

- The Parish Mission Statement
- Goals for the Program
- Qualifications of Catechists
- Job Descriptions

- Guidelines for Presenting Good Sound Doctrine
- Specific local policies in these areas:
 - Sacramental prep guidelines
 - General discipline and classroom use
 - Attendance and dismissal
 - General conduct and discipline
 - Dress code
 - Emergency and First Aid
 - Fire and Natural Disaster procedures
 - Harassment and Child Abuse
 - Diocesan Policies
 - Intruder and other Safety procedures
 - Confidentiality
 - Field Trips
 - Medication Distribution Policies
- Ministry guidelines for catechists:
 - Check-in
 - Manuals and handbooks
 - Curriculum and student textbooks
 - Supply lists and request forms
 - Substitutes
 - Guest Speakers and visitors
 - Parties/snacks
 - Classroom reminders
- Other relevant information
 - Annual calendar
 - Volunteer catechist agreement
 - Catechist formation process
 - Parish catechist certification record
 - Prayer for catechesis

A Family or Participants Handbook should include such things as:

- The parish mission statement
- Goals of the program
- Names and numbers of the pastoral staff members
- Annual calendar
- Specific policies and procedures
- Registration materials
- Sacramental prep guidelines
- General discipline guidelines
- Attendance and dismissal procedures
- Dress code policy
- Fire, natural disaster and emergency procedures
- Harassment and child abuse reporting procedures
- Field Trips and visitors policies
- Medication procedures
- Curriculum and textbooks information
- Information about snacks

POSITION DESCRIPTION

It is important to ensure that there is a job description for the position being held. This job description explains the qualifications and requirements of the position as well as the expectations. These components then are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the person within the position. There should be a job description for the PCL, catechists as well as any volunteers. Sample job descriptions can be obtained from the Office of Catholic Formation or found on the diocesan website - <https://catholicdos.org/human-resources>. Contact the Bishop Hammes Center office for the employee password.

RECORDS

Accuracy of the Faith Formation office records keeps the program running efficiently. It is key to have a method for coordinating and retrieving Student and Family information in these areas:

- Registration (new and re-registration)
- New student inquiries
- Permanent family records
- Medical situations and emergencies
- Transfers
- Attendance
- Sacraments
- Field trip permission forms
- Image and likeness (photo) permission forms

It's also important to keep accurate records for Personnel and Volunteers and ensure they are kept in a locked file cabinet. Some items to have in a personnel/volunteer file are:

- Resume and/or contact information, experience and parish commitments
- Emergency contact information
- Signed Morals and Ethics Assurance Statement
- Signed Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Personnel Policies
- Job description
- Copy of signed Code of Conduct
- Commendations and recommendations
- Attendance record
- Performance evaluations
- Catechetical Certification transcripts

All records pertaining to payroll should be kept in the parish business office.

REGISTRATION

Registration of children and youth in parish programs allows the parish to maintain a record of parish families as well as pertinent needs for catechetical instruction. Information collected should be what is important and necessary for maximum efficiency. It is easiest to conduct registrations in the spring of the year for the following school year; however that is not always practical or efficient. Having registration available online is the most beneficial process for

accessibility to parents, but mailing registrations out to prospective families can be done as well, ideally by mid-summer. The earlier the registrations are received the easier it is to plan for program materials and numbers of catechists.

Sample Registration form:

Date: _____			
Father's Full Name: _____ Religion: _____ Phone: _____ ☐ Work ☐ Cell ☐ Home Email: _____ _____ Mailing Address/City/State/Zip: _____			
Mother's Full Name: _____ Religion: _____ Phone: _____ ☐ Work ☐ Cell ☐ Home Email: _____ _____ Mailing Address/City/State/Zip: _____			
Custodial Agreement: ☐ Joint ☐ Mother ☐ Father Note: Copies of court ordered restrictions or parental rights must be on file in the Faith Formation Office			
Emergency Contact Person: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____ ☐ Work ☐ Cell ☐ Home			
Child's Full Name	Birthday	Current Grade Baptism Date Communion Date	Reconciliation Date
List all other children living at home, name and birthdate.			
List any special needs, allergies or considerations for any of the given children.			
Registration Fees: \$40.00 for 1 child: _____ \$60.00 for 2 children: _____ \$75.00 for 3 or more: _____ Additional Fees: _____ \$15.00 for Reconciliation & First Communion _____ \$10.00 for Confirmation Total Registration Fees: _____ Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____ Class Times: Grades PK-K: Sunday 8:30-9:30 Grades 1-6 (please check your choice): _____ Sunday 8:30-9:45 AM OR _____ Wednesday 4:00-5:15 PM Grades 7-8: Wednesday 6:00-7:30 PM Grades 9-10: Wednesday 7:30-9:00 PM Confirmation: Sunday 6:30-8:30 PM			

CALENDAR

When developing the calendar for the year, create separate ones for the catechists and the parents. Advise the diocesan calendar of events and include pertinent opportunities. Advise the parish calendar to not conflict with other activities and meetings as well as promote faith opportunities. If using the classroom model, lay out a minimum of 24 face-to-face classes. If using other formats, establish the dates and times for those meetings and events. Include any parish, sacramental, continuing education/in-service or liturgical events and celebrations in the calendar that may be beneficial to the catechists and parents in enhancing faith opportunities. By beginning the year with an established calendar, you will be able to better prepare yourself for each activity.

CATECHIST MEETINGS & INSERVICES

It is important to provide catechists with meeting and in-service opportunities. Periodically scheduled meetings allow for the PCL to give catechists information regarding calendar events, procedure changes or other pertinent matters. In-services allow the Parish Catechetical Leader to provide the catechists with training in specific areas of need, such as teaching techniques, classroom management, or faith formation topics.

SUBSTITUTES

Have a list of volunteer catechists who are willing to substitute for other catechists. Establish procedures for obtaining these substitutes. Inform catechists what they should have prepared for substitutes. All substitutes need to be background checked and safe environment trained.

DIRECTORIES

Directories listing families and volunteers for the parish program are acceptable. Having this directory may help in planning for events or for catechists to have contact with families. The information included in such a directory may include name, address, phone number or email address. In order to publish this information, written consent needs to be given by the individual/family.

COMMUNICATION

It is important to establish good communication strategies with peers, catechists and parents. Good communication relies on positive relationships with others. In the role of Catechetical Leader, it is vital to portray oneself as a minister of Christ's Word – which means to act in accordance to His teachings. Good communication consists of speaking clearly and honestly, listening and understanding, giving positive nonverbal feedback and being collaborative in discussion.

Communication may take several forms – written, verbal or electronic. Whichever form it takes it is important to keep in mind the pastoral mission of the role as Catechetical Leader.

TRANSPORTATION/DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Parish programs rely on many different modes of student transportation to and from classes and events. When relying on Public School Buses to drop off students for after school programs, a safe designated area must be established for the buses to maneuver and students to exit the buses. Public school buses may also be used for field trips and transportation to and from specific events. In these cases it is important to follow the policies and rules established by the school bus company.

Most programs rely on Parental Transportation for student attendance at parish programs. It is important that there is a safe designated area for parents to drop students off. Students need to be able to go from the vehicle to the building without having to “dodge” moving vehicles. It usually works best if parents are required to bring their child(ren) into the building when dropping them off and then coming to the building when it is time to pick up the child(ren).

Some programs rely on Student Personal Transportation. When working with youth ministry and high school programs, many of the students have their driver’s license. Policies need to be established on how students are expected to enter and exit parking lots, drive with other students in the vehicles, etc.

FIELD TRIPS

The Diocesan Safe Environment Resource Binder has specific guidelines for Field Trips -<https://catholicdos.org/safe-environment-resource-binder>. For legal and liability reasons, parishes are expected to follow these guidelines and use the diocesan forms.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

It is imperative that every student feel safe within the parish program. Therefore, the parish should have a crisis/safety management plan. This plan should be formed in collaboration with the local safety community (fire, police, etc) as well as the parish and school community (teachers, parents, children, etc.). Guidelines for the crisis/safety plan are available from the diocese.

FIRE, TORNADO, INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

It is imperative that students and volunteers know how to exit the building in case of a fire. It is also important to practice this drill so younger students are not frightened and that all students know what to do so catechists can maintain order during such an incident.

For the same reason as a fire drill, tornado drills are strongly recommended. It is recommended to practice the tornado drill at least once every fall and spring. Procedures and plans need to be established for fire and tornado drills as well as what will occur for possible other natural disasters such as inclement weather or flooding.

BUDGET

Budgeting and financial requirements are directed through the Diocesan Finance Department. Generally the parish drafts the overall parish budget and specified amounts are designated for

faith formation programming. If there is no allocation to faith formation, it is recommended to advocate for it. Continuation of the faith is not possible without putting financial resources into it.

Possible categories to include in personal office budgeting include:

INCOME EXPENSES
Tuition / Registration Conferences / Inservices / Workshops / Meetings
Fees Food
Fundraising Travel / Transportation
Parish Allocation Equipment / Office Supplies
Postage / Shipping
Repairs / Maintenance
Dues / Subscriptions
Instruction Materials
Printing / Photocopying
Public Relations / Hospitality

EVALUATING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

It is always important to evaluate any program in progress and at the end of the year. Evaluation does not mean finding something wrong, but rather looking at the pros and cons of what is happening. Effective evaluation will allow for the program to grow and keep current with modern strategies. To conduct an evaluation, one might simply talk with those involved – students, parents, catechists – or put out a survey periodically. It is always important to ensure that there is growth and possibly change with a program to keep it interesting and “in-tune” with parish needs and vision. The diocese is available to help in this evaluation process.

CATECHETICAL PLANNING

Through his encyclical [Catechesi Tradendae](#), Pope John Paul II laid out a framework for a renewal of catechesis. Because of this, the Code of Canon Law was revised and the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) and the General Directory of Catechesis and now the new Directory for Catechesis were published. From this the United States Bishops published the National Directory of Catechesis which mandates parishes to develop a systematic plan for the ministry of catechesis. To do this the parish needs to establish a team of individuals invested in the progress of faith formation to look at the parish mission, assess the current reality and write a plan of goals, objectives and strategies. The diocese is available to assist the parish in carrying out this process.

Part IV: DIOCESAN YOUTH EVENTS

REGISTRATION

Youth event registration consists of two steps:

1. Parish Registration: The parish leader must first complete and submit the Parish Registration Form.
2. Participant Registration: Parents or guardians, together with the participating students, must then complete the online registration form.

PARISH REGISTRATION FORM

The Parish Registration Form is required for each event and includes the names, gender, and grade of every student participating. It also asks for the names of chaperones who will be attending and provides basic event information. This form serves as a confirmation of commitment for those listed and must be submitted along with payment for each participant. **Please note: spots will not be reserved until both the Parish Registration Form and the full payment are received by mail.**

Each event has its own specific Parish Registration Form, which is updated regularly and can be found on the Youth Ministry section of the website under the corresponding event. Please be sure to include all chaperones and clergy on the form. While clergy and religious attend at no cost, they still need to be listed (though they do not need to be included in the payment total). Depending on the current capacity of an event, multiple Parish Registration Forms may be submitted. Each event has a designated deadline by which the initial Parish Registration Form and payment must be received (see the “Deadlines” section). After that date, if space is still available, parishes may continue to submit additional forms and payments until the event is full. Once an event is at capacity, or the final deadline passes, no further registrations will be accepted. If an event fills before the final deadline, parishes will be notified.

PARTICIPANT ONLINE REGISTRATION

The second part of registration requires the parish leader to send out online registration information to the families of those participating in the event, and track each family’s registration status. The diocese currently uses Active for online registration. Once the Parish Registration Form has been received, parish leaders will receive the online registration link to share with families. Steps for how to complete online registrations to follow at a later date.

FINANCES

The youth events that the diocese offers (High School Discipleship Weekend, March for Life, and Extreme Faith Camp) give unique opportunities for students to encounter the Lord in the sacraments, through formation, adventure, and within each other. As with most other Catholic youth events, providing experiences such as these does have a financial commitment tied to it. Of course, this is not the main focus of these events, but it is important for the diocese and parishes to be prudent and clear in financial procedures.

SUBMITTING PAYMENTS

All three youth events use a two-part registration system. Part one utilizes a Parish Registration Form submitted for a parish / parish cluster with the names and roles of people attending the event. Part two utilizes an online registration system (see “Registration”) for the parents of the students attending (as well as the students themselves) to work together filling out necessary forms and permission slips. Due dates for the Parish Registration Forms and online registration forms can be found in the deadlines section according to each event. Please plan for mailing time from your location to the address below when referencing the deadlines. When you are ready to commit people from your group for an event:

1. Mail the filled out parish registration form to:

Bishop Hammes Center
attn. [insert event name]
PO Box #280
Haugen, WI 54841

2. Include the corresponding check in the correct amount per student. (example: Extreme Faith Camp deposit for 10 kids = \$1,000)

Please note: spots will not be secured until the correct amount of money has arrived along with the Parish Registration Form with the names of the people it is covering. Thus, emailing the Parish Registration Form is unnecessary as it will not secure any places for your group.

DEPOSITS

The diocese uses a deposit balance system for two of its three youth events: March for Life, and Extreme Faith Camp. Deposits indicate a firm commitment of a person attending an event and as such, are non-refundable. If a person has been registered via a Parish Registration Form, and then cancels, their deposit cannot be refunded. It can, however, be transferred to another person attending (see “Substitutions and Transfer of Funds”). Deposits for both Extreme Faith Camp and March for Life are \$100. Remember that clergy attend youth events free of charge. Deposits can never be put forth to use for a different youth event.

BALANCES

In the timelines leading up to an event requiring a deposit and balance, clear deadlines will be given for when both are due. Balances can be refunded before the final registration deadline (see “Deadlines”) Balances can also be transferred to a different person in the case of a cancellation (see “Substitutions and Transfer of Funds”). Remember that clergy attend youth events free of charge. Balances can never be put forth to use for a different youth event. When submitting your balance:

1. Mail a final Parish Registration Form (with every person’s name on it) to the

- Bishop Hammes Center (address above).
2. Include corresponding check written in the correct amount for the group on your form (example: Extreme Faith Camp balance for 32 people = \$13,760 @ \$430 / person)

ONE-TIME PAYMENTS

High School Discipleship does not use the deposit/balance system, but instead, requires a one-time payment for each person. When submitting payment for your group:

1. Mail a final Parish Registration Form (with every person's name on it) to the Bishop Hammes Center (address above).
2. Include corresponding check written in the correct amount for the group on your form (example: High School Discipleship Weekend Payment for 12 people = \$1,560 @ \$130 / person)

One-time payments can be refunded based on the circumstance of cancellation. Contact the Bishop Hammes Center for questions. One-time payments can also be transferred to another person (see "Substitutions and Transfer of Funds").

Spots WILL NOT be secured until the correct amount of money has arrived along with the Parish Registration Form with the names of the people it is covering. Thus, emailing the Parish Registration Form ahead of the check is unnecessary as it will not secure any places for your group.

SUBSTITUTIONS & TRANSFER OF FUNDS

In the case that a person cancels after Parish Registration Form and according payment has been received, transfers of funds (deposits, balances and one-time payments) can be made to a different person. If a cancellation occurs, the money paid for their spot still secures that space for that youth event. Parish leaders can recruit to fill that spot and turn in a new Parish Registration Form with the new person's information when / if they have done so. From that point, balance for the substitute (if the person the substitute is replacing did not have a balance submitted yet) must still be received by the final deadline (see deadlines). If a whole payment is being transferred for a cancellation to a new person, mailing the Parish Registration Form is not necessary. Note that if the event is filling up, the diocese reserves the right to request that substitutions be the same grade and gender as the person being replaced. Under no circumstances can funds be transferred and used for a different youth event.

Examples:

1. Person A has been registered for camp via the Parish Registration Form (deposit has been paid). Person A cancels before the final deadline. Parish finds Person B to take their spot. Person B may use Person A's deposit, but must pay the balance before the final deadline.
2. Person A has been registered and paid in full for the March for Life. Person A cancels. Parish finds Person B to take their spot. Depending on how full the event is, Person B may attend in Person A's place and may use the whole of Person A's payment.
3. Person A has been registered and paid in full for High School Discipleship Weekend. Person A cancels. Parish finds Person B to take their place, but it is after the final deadline and the event is full. Person B is unable to attend, and Person A's payment cannot be refunded/.

*Note that the diocese will of course take into consideration the reason for cancellation when deciding if a refund can be made (death in the family, injury, etc.)

DEADLINES

The Diocese of course wants to accommodate participants registering as late as possible. Nevertheless, to be able to get food and materials orders in, make rooming assignments, small groups, busing contracts, etc., we have to set deadlines. We appreciate parish leaders getting things in on time and understanding that we have to work with deadlines on our end too. Yearly lists of deadlines for youth events are available in the PCL Google Drive, found on Parish registration forms, or confirmed by reaching out to us to confirm any dates.

WAITLISTS

In the case that an event fills, and there are still students who are interested in attending, a waitlist might be started. The waitlist will be organized on a first-come, first-serve basis. To reserve a place on a waitlist, turn in a Parish Registration Form with the student(s) name and information. Note that no financial commitment is needed right away, so the Parish Registration Form can be emailed in this case (jjohnson@catholicdos.org). If a spot opens up, the parish leader of the person on the top of the waitlist will be promptly notified.

As soon as the parish leader is notified, the family/student will have 24 hours to complete online registration. If the spot opens up beyond the final deadline (see “Deadlines”), the Bishop Hammes Center will need to receive full payment no later than one week after the parish leader has been notified of the opening. If the spot opens before the final deadline, full payment will be due by that date.

CHAPERONES

According to diocesan policy, a parish attending an event must bring enough chaperones to cover the students that are attending. The student to chaperone ratio is currently six to one, and is gender-specific. A parish must bring one male chaperone for every one to six male students who are attending. A parish must bring one female chaperone for every one to six female students who are attending. If a parish has seven students of one one gender attending, they must provide two chaperones for that gender.

Clergy members who are attending from a parish that has students participating may not be counted as a chaperone given the wide range of responsibilities they already hold. Clergy must be included on the Parish Registration Form, but will not be counted in the chaperone ratio for each group. Note that clergy do not need to pay to attend events.