

**Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
Office of Catechesis & Youth Ministry**

**Grades K-8 Catechetical Program Inventory  
2011-2012**

The Office of Catechesis and Youth Ministry of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee conducted a survey of parish religious education programs during May-July 2012. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on what our parishes are doing in the way of catechesis, sacramental preparation and youth ministry. Information will be used to identify trends, to review and update policies, to plan resources and professional development, and to share with parishes for their own assessment and planning.

Two questionnaires were developed--one for programs for grades K-8 and one for programs for grades 9-12. This document reports on the responses to the K-8 survey.

Responses were received for 130 of 204 parishes--a 64 percent response rate. These responses came from 101 catechetical leaders, several of whom serve more than one parish. They identified themselves by name, title, and parish(es) served. This document reports on their responses to the survey questions.<sup>1</sup>

**Position titles**

34 respondents (34%) said their job title was Director of Religious Education (DRE), the most frequent title. Other common titles included Director of Christian Formation (14), Director of Child Ministry (11), Director of Faith Formation or Life Long Faith Formation (8). All respondents answered this question.

**Areas of responsibility**

Almost 70 percent of respondents identified grades K-5 and 6-8 catechesis as well as sacramental preparation in their areas of responsibility. Respondents were asked to check all the areas that applied.

<b>Area of responsibility</b>	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
K-5 catechesis	87	87%
Sacramental preparation	86	86%
6-8 catechesis	78	78%
Confirmation preparation	52	52%
9-12 catechesis	50	50%
Youth ministry	39	39%

100 respondents answered this question.

Other areas identified by several respondents included adult formation, family programs, and the catechumenate.

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<sup>1</sup> The responses in this report will not all add to 101 for three reasons: because (1) non-responses were not recorded herein; (2) many questions asked respondents to check all areas that applied; and (3) not all responded to all questions or all parts of a question. Responses are reported in order of magnitude, not necessarily in the order listed in the questionnaire.

### Collaboration among parishes

Respondents were asked whether they were responsible for catechetical programs in one parish only or for joint or collaborative programs with more than one parish. Nearly than one in four respondents (24%) were involved in a collaborative program with more than one parish. To explain the 24 percent reference, note that 76 percent of respondents indicated they were responsible for one parish only; respondents could and did respond positively to both other alternatives.

Parish collaboration	# of responses	% of responses
Responsible for one parish only	75	76%
Responsible for joint/collaborative programs in more than one parish	23	23%
Collaborate with a staff person from another parish on a joint program	8	8%

99 respondents answered this question.

### Full or part time position

When asked if their position was full- or part-time, almost three-quarters of the respondents (72%) reported holding full time positions; 28% were part-time.

### Models of religious education

When asked to indicate what models of religious education they used and to check all that applied, over 80 percent said they used a weekly catechetical program. Less than 50 percent of the respondents reported using any other models listed for their consideration.

Models of religious education	# of responses
Weekly catechetical program	84
RCIA for children	36
Summer vacation bible school	35
Family-centered program	24
Home schooling religious education	21
Lectionary-based program	18
Programs for children with special needs	15
Intergenerational program	14
Catechesis of Good Shepherd	7
Summer catechetical program	6
Mini-course program	4

99 respondents answered this question.

### Number of participants in catechetical programs

Respondents were asked for a count of participants in their programs, by grade level. Not all respondents answered the question and some did not report participants at every grade level. The total numbers for each grade level is shown in the chart below. The total number of participants in K-8 programs varies greatly, from one parish total of 25 to another parish with 645 participants.

Grades	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Total # of participants	1018	1887	2588	1921	1763	1716	1774	1608	1612
# of responses	76	85	85	85	86	86	84	81	82

### Annual contact hours

When asked about the number of contact hours per year in each grade level, respondents reported an average of 30 annual contact hours for 1st through 8th grade. The responses ranged from 10 hours to 60 hours; the mode (the number of hours that occurred most frequently) was 30 hours. 85 respondents answered this question.

Kindergarten averaged 28 contact hours annually, with a range from 8 to 56 hours and a mode of 24 hours. 68 respondents answered this question.

### Catechetical textbooks/series used

Respondents were asked what textbook or series they used for 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade catechesis. Parishes reported using 10 different series by the major Catholic publishers. A few do not use a basal series, but use other published materials or produce their own. The most frequently reported textbook series were: *Blest Are We*, RCL Benziger, 2002 (23% of respondents); *We Believe*, William H. Sadlier, Inc, 2004, 2011 (14%), and *Faith First Legacy Edition*, RCL Benziger, 2006 (12%). 86 respondents answered this question.

There was even greater diversity at the junior high level, with 15 different textbooks or published programs used, along with supplemental and locally produced materials. *Blest Are We*, RCL Benziger, 2002 was the most frequent used for 7th and 8th graders (15% of respondents). The next most common were *Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers*, Saint Mary's Press, 2009 (10%) and *Call to Faith*, Harcourt/OSV, 2007 (9%). 78 respondents answered this question.

There was little consensus on materials for kindergarten programs. 9 respondents said they used *I am Special*, Our Sunday Visitor, 2007-2009; 9 used *Stories of God's Love*, RCL Benziger, 2009, 2011; and 8 used *We Believe*, William H. Sadlier, Inc., 2004, 2011. Twelve other resources were also reported.

### Class times

Respondents were asked when they held classes and to check all that applied. The largest number held classes on a weekday evening (69%), followed by Sunday morning (67%).<sup>2</sup>

When classes are held	# of respondents	% of respondents
Weekday evening	68	69%
Sunday morning	66	67%
Sunday evening	10	10%
After school	8	8%
Summer weekdays	8	8%
Saturday morning	4	4%

97 respondents answered this question.

### Scheduling alternatives

When asked if they offered more than one scheduling option for a particular level, 39 percent said yes; 61 percent said no. 99 respondents answered this question.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers add up to more than 100% because some parishes offer on class schedule for lower grades and another for upper grades, and some offer more than one class option.

**Parent involvement**

When asked how they involved parents in catechetical programs, most said through take-home materials.

Methods of parent involvement	# of responses	% of responses
Take-home materials	84	87%
Special programs for parents	53	55%
Work with children in the classroom	40	41%
Intergenerational sessions	37	38%

97 respondents answered this question.

"Other" opportunities included family day, monthly parent meeting, safe environment session, "breakfast in Bethlehem," and adult education at same time as children's class.

**Annual fees**

Respondents were asked what they charge for their religious education programs.

	One child	Two children	Three children	Maximum
Lowest fee	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$25
Highest fee	\$185	\$310	\$465	\$525
Average fee	\$83	\$146	\$195	\$210
Median fee	\$75	\$140	\$195	\$155

99 respondents answered this question.

**Assessments**

Respondents were asked what assessments they use. A majority of respondents, 52 percent, said they use tests provide by their textbook publisher.

Assessment	# of responses	% of responses
Tests provided by textbook publisher	51	52%
Archdiocesan Religious Assessments	37	37%
NCEA's ACRE	3	3%
None	30	30%
Other	12	12%

99 respondents answered this question.

Some respondents who answered "other" noted that catechists developed their own assessments.

**Programs for children with special needs**

Respondents were asked to describe their programs, if any, for children with special needs.

Response to Special Needs	# of responses
Special program (SPRED, Vine & Branches, ARISE, Journey, Risen)	30
Mainstream children with extra assistance from catechists or aides	9
Catechist or tutor works one-on-one or in special group	9
Treat each child and situation individually as needed	5

38 respondents answered this question.

One program is conducted in American Sign Language and is exclusively for deaf students. Several respondents said they employ multiple approaches, depending on the particular needs.

**Summer vacation bible school**

39 respondents indicated they planned to hold a summer vacation bible school in 2012. Most programs began with 4K or 5K and included children to 4<sup>th</sup> grade (11 respondents) or 5<sup>th</sup> grade (17). A few included older participants. 35 respondents used published VBS materials; 4 developed their own programs.

**Sacramental preparation - number of participants**

Respondents were asked how many participants they had for preparation for First Communion and First Reconciliation and RCIA for children.

Program	First Communion	First Reconciliation	RCIA for children
Smallest class	5	4	1
Largest class	158	158	14
Average	44	44	4
Total	3829	3863	131
# of respondents	85	87	36

**Sacramental preparation – program elements included**

Respondents were also asked what program elements were included in their Sacramental programs. Parent sessions received the largest number of mentions with 93 percent.

Sacramental programs	# of responses	% of responses
Parent sessions	82	93%
Integration with religious ed or school classes	71	81%
At home work	69	78%
Retreat day	63	72%
Special sessions for the children	36	41%

88 respondents answered this question.

A few noted “other” components such as sessions for parents and children together, a family interview, teaching Mass, rite of blessing, or a day of reflection (mystagogy) after first communion.

**Textbooks used for Sacramental preparation**

Respondents were asked to indicate what textbooks they used for First Reconciliation, First Communion and RCIA for children.

In response to the question for First Reconciliation in Grade 2, only one text was used by more than 10 respondents: *God's Gift - Reconciliation*, Loyola Press, 2009, was indicated by 14 respondents. Nine other published texts were also reported. Some respondents said they used locally prepared or customized materials; others simply used the grade-level religion textbook. 77 respondents answered this question.

When asked about textbooks for First Reconciliation for older children, 10 different published texts were reported, as well as “other” locally developed materials, with no single text used by more than 6 respondents. 56 respondents answered this question.

When asked about textbooks for First Communion preparation for grade 2, only one was used by 10 or more respondents: *God's Gift-Eucharist*, Loyola Press, 2009, was used by 16 respondents. Twelve other published texts were also reported. Some respondents said they used locally prepared or customized materials; others used the grade-level religion textbook. 75 respondents answered this question.

Regarding textbooks for First Communion for older children, 12 different published texts were reported, as well as locally developed materials, with no textbook used by more than 7 respondents.

There was no consensus among the 25 respondents who reported on material they used for RCIA for children. Responses included several different texts that present a summary of the Catholic faith, a pamphlet series, and adaptation of grade-level materials.

### **Sacramental preparation fee**

Respondents were asked about fees they charge for sacramental preparation. 29% had no charge for First Communion preparation; 43% had no fee for First Reconciliation preparation. 2 respondents reporting having a combined fee for First Communion and First Reconciliation. Only 8 respondents reported having a fee for RCIA for children. The chart below reports on those who do charge fees for sacramental preparation.

	<b>First Communion</b>	<b>First Reconciliation</b>	<b>RCIA for children</b>
# reporting a fee	60	50	8
Lowest fee	\$5	\$5	\$20
Highest fee	\$85	\$75	\$150
Average fee	\$28	\$25	\$58
Median fee	\$25	\$25	\$42

87 respondents answered this question.

### **Catechists - demographics**

Respondents were asked how many catechists they have, how many have completed training for basic religious education certification, and their years of service. Respondents reported numbers ranging from 2 to 57 catechists. 61 respondents indicated they had one or more certified catechists.

Total number of catechists reported	1723	
Number with certification	257 <sup>3</sup>	15%
Number with 0-5 years of service	949	55%
Number with over 5 years of service	697	40% <sup>4</sup>

94 respondents answered this question.

<sup>3</sup> Several reported they did not know how many of their catechists were certified.

<sup>4</sup> Five respondents did not indicate years of service for their catechists.

### **Catechists - formation**

Respondents were asked what kind of formation they provide for their catechists. Individual orientation was most often mentioned (by 84 percent of the respondents). Over 50 percent said they used in-service training, sharing reading materials, catechist group sharing, and speakers/adult education.

<b>Formation opportunities</b>	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of response</b>
Individual orientation	80	84%
In-service training	76	80%
Sharing reading materials	64	67%
Catechist group sharing	57	60%
Speakers/adult education	48	51%
Funding to attend conferences/courses	40	42%
District catechist day	38	40%
Forming the Catechetical Spirit program	18	19%
Echoes of Faith	12	13%
Mentor program	8	8%

95 respondents answered this question.

### **Adults serving in religious education program**

Respondents were asked in what ways adults serve in their religious education program other than as catechists.

<b>Service</b>	<b># of responses</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Substitute catechists	87	91%
Catechist aides	68	71%
Office assistants	50	52%
Hall monitors and greeters	43	45%
Craft and project assistants	34	35%
Special event team	32	33%
Assistants for children with special needs	31	32%
Presenters on special topics	30	31%
Set up/equipment assistants	16	17%

96 respondents answered this question.

Individual respondents added: field trip chaperone, child care, cooking for intergenerational program, and Children's Liturgy of the Word.