

LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY

Since the Second Vatican Council there has been a remarkable increase in the number of people who exercise ministry in the Catholic Church. In 1995, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reflecting on the thirtieth anniversary of the “Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity” issued “Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium.” This document affirmed the gifts of the laity and used the term “lay ecclesial minister” to describe laypersons who hold positions of pastoral leadership in Church. Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, a resource prepared by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to guide the development of lay ecclesial ministry, notes that they are not trying to establish “a new rank or order among the laity” but that the term is “generic” and “meant to encompass several possible roles” (CW, p. 11). Some possibilities are the parish pastoral associate, the parish catechetical leader, the youth ministry leader, the school principal and the director of liturgy. The term “lay ecclesial minister” does however reflect certain “key realities:”

- The ministry is *lay* because it is service done by lay persons. The sacramental basis is the Sacraments of Initiation, not the Sacrament of Ordination.
- The ministry is *ecclesial* because it has a place within the community of the Church, whose communion and mission it serves, and because it is submitted to the discernment, authorization, and supervision of the hierarchy.
- It is *ministry* because it is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ who is priest, prophet and king. The application of “ministry” to the laity is not something to be confused with ordained ministry nor in any way construed to compromise the specific nature of ordained ministry (CW, p. 11).

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord also defines several “general dispositions” which the lay ecclesial ministers should possess:

- Being in full communion with the Catholic Church, able to minister joyfully and faithfully within the hierarchical communion that is the Church
- The desire to serve the Church and its mission, which proceeds from love of God and God’s people
- A commitment to regular personal prayer, frequent participation in the

*“The gift you have received,
give as a gift.” Matthew 10:8*

Mass beyond the Sunday obligation and in the other sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Penance

- Zeal to live a Christian life, and willingness to live and teach as the Magisterium teaches
- Emotional maturity, including the ability to sustain friendships and professional relationships and the management and appropriate expression of both anger and affection
- The intellectual gifts needed for the specific ministry
- A commitment to good communication and conflict resolution skills (CW, p. 30).

Lay ecclesial ministry in our country continues to grow and flourish. In 2005, there were close to 31,000 lay ecclesial ministers who held paid positions in parishes and nearly half of those ministers work in catechetical ministry (See CW, p. 13).

THE PARISH DIRECTOR OF CATECHETICAL MINISTRY

According to Canon Law, "the Christian faithful, since they are called by baptism to lead a life in conformity with the teaching of the gospel, have the right to a Christian education by which they will be properly instructed so as to develop the maturity of a human person and at the same time come to know and live the mystery of salvation" (CCL, 217). In 1990, the International Council on Catechesis reaffirmed and augmented this Canon noting "all Christians...have a right and an obligation to be catechized" (ACCC, 21). The National Directory for Catechesis notes that "the parish organizes its catechetical priorities to ensure that all segments of the parish have a realistic opportunity to grow in their understanding and practice of the Catholic faith. A comprehensive parish-based catechesis harmonizes the catechesis of adults, families, parents, youth, children in the parish catechetical program and Catholic school, children in the parish baptismal catechumenate, and small Christian communities" (NDC, p. 256).

Diocesan Policy asserts that it is the responsibility of every parish to provide for the catechetical formation of its parishioners—adults, young people and children, including persons of particular ethnic or cultural groups and persons with disabilities. This formation should be systematic and formal and should be of sufficient length to

See
Policy 100
Policy 200
Policy 220

ensure effective faith and sacramental formation. It is also the responsibility of the parish to engage sufficiently trained ministers, compensated and/or non-compensated, to meet the catechetical needs of the parish. Parishes with three hundred or more families should hire a qualified Director of Catechetical Ministry (DCM) and in parishes of five hundred or more families, the Director of Catechetical Ministry should be a full time employee.

In the Diocese of San Diego, the parish Director of Catechetical Ministry (DCM) is the professional staff person who, under the supervision of the pastor, ensures the catechetical formation of the total parish community. This lay ecclesial minister strives to fulfill the goals and tasks of catechesis by leading persons to mature faith within the context of the faith community. The National Directory for Catechesis notes that the “single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader” (NDC, p. 224). While there are various job descriptions for this catechetical leader, the main responsibilities include the overall direction of the parish catechetical program and implementation of policy.

In naming a Director of Catechetical Ministry, a parish community entrusts a person who possesses the necessary gifts, qualities and competencies with responsibility for the development, coordination, administration, and evaluation of various programs in order to meet the catechetical needs of the parish community. The DCM ensures the development of catechetical programs which assist various age groups, cultural groups and those with special needs in the continuous process of being formed and informed by the Word of God, the sacramental life of the Church, the Church’s rich tradition and Catholic moral teaching.

The National Directory lists the main responsibilities of for this position as:

- Overall direction of the parish catechetical program for adults, youth, and children
- Planning, implementation and evaluation of the parish catechetical program
- Recruitment, formation, ongoing development, and evaluation of catechists
- Implementation of diocesan and parish catechetical policies and guidelines, including the areas of catechist certification and supervision, and

- administrative policies related to negligence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and the safety and protection of minors
- Collaboration with the pastor, other parish ministers, and appropriate committees, boards, and councils
- Assistance in liturgical planning
- Attention to their own personal, spiritual, and professional development (NDC, p. 225).

The focus of the work of the Director of Catechetical Ministry goes well beyond the formation of children and the coordination of the elementary catechetical programs. The DCM views adult formation as a priority in the parish community since “adults have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form” (CT, 43). She or he understands that effective adult formation will assist the Church in fulfilling its mission to evangelize and that “every Church ministry will be energized through a dynamic ministry of adult catechesis” (OHWB, p. 13).

The role of the DCM should be clearly outlined in a job description. "A job description that sufficiently details the responsibilities of the position and can be used in both performance evaluations and decisions about continuing employment/assignment is essential" (Department of Education, p. 42). The National Directory notes that "...pastors who employ parish catechetical leaders should formulate a clear and specific agreement with them that lists the responsibilities of the position and elements of equitable compensation. Parish catechetical leaders should be full members of the parish pastoral staff and attend all its meetings" (NDC, p. 225).

The Director of Catechetical Ministry needs a clear sense of her/his ministry. The function of the DCM is to ensure that the catechetical needs of the parish are met. The DCM is not all things to all people. She/He is not a counselor, spiritual director, priest, prayer group leader, maintenance person or secretary. While ministries may overlap and intertwine, if the DCM does not understand her/his primary function and responsibility, the catechetical work of the DCM will be diluted. If the DCM loses sight of the specifically catechetical nature and purpose of her/his ministry, the ministry may become so diffused and so demanding that

See
Guideline 1
Guideline 2
Sample Job
Descriptions

dissatisfaction, frustration and burnout may be experienced. The chief focus of the DCM’s ministry is the intentional, systematic formation of informed disciples (See GDC, p. 56).

This task is therefore primarily catechetical, educational, formational—understood in the widest and most contemporary interpretation of these words. In this light, the [DCM’s] service in the Ministry of the Word in the Church is very direct and explicit. He/She occasionally may be called upon to engage in allied activities (e.g. liturgical celebration, social ministry) but the focus of his/her service is catechetical—oriented toward the strengthening of the content of the faith in a mature manner adapted to the needs and stages of development of individuals and the local community.

There are other legitimate pastoral roles in the local community to which men and women are called. The service of a parish total catechetical program, however, is so vital and so demanding that it is important that roles and functions not be confused and that those who seek a position as [Director of Catechetical Ministry] do so with full commitment to their important and specifically catechetical task (NCEA, 10).

OTHER CATECHETICAL AND EVANGELIZATION LEADERS

In ensuring that the catechetical needs of the parish are met, the DCM may collaborate with other staff persons or coordinators who are responsible for given areas of evangelization and catechetical ministry, such as the RCIA Coordinator, the Evangelization Coordinator, the Adult Faith Formation Coordinator, the Hispanic Coordinator, the Preschool Coordinator, the Special Religious Education Coordinator, etc. The size of the parish community, the number of programs which the parish provides, the cultural and ethnic makeup of the parish, the age distribution, the competencies and experience of the leadership, and the financial situation of the parish are just some of the factors which are considered in structuring the parish catechetical and evangelization ministry.

In addition, the DCM also works closely with other professional staff persons of the parish community, such as the clergy, the Coordinator of Youth Ministry, the

School Principal, the Director of Liturgy, etc. to provide effective programming. Collaboration is key. "...The Church's pastoral ministry can be more effective if ministers become true collaborators, mindful of their weaknesses, but grateful for their gifts. Collaboration challenges ministers to understand that “we are, in reality, joined in Christ's body, that we are not separate but interdependent” (CG, p. 24).

BALANCING MINISTRY AND PROFESSION

The Catechetical or Evangelization leader strives for delicate balance as both minister and professional: "a call to ministry and being a professional are not incompatible. The former puts the emphasis on service, the latter on competence and skills" (NCEA, p. 7). As a catechist, the minister receives and responds "to an interior call, the voice of the Holy Spirit" (NDC, p. 228). The General Directory for Catechesis notes that the call to the ministry of catechesis “springs from the sacrament of Baptism” and that “the Church awakens and discerns this divine vocation and confers the mission to catechize” (GDC, 231). The catechetical leader is sent with "a mission or a purpose to be for others, to hear the call of one’s faith so penetratingly that the natural response is to be for others, enabling that same faith to happen over and over again” (LL:19, 243). The Catechetical or Evangelization minister is a professional by virtue of training, expertise and experience in ministry. They are well-formed, skilled and competent to complete their work.

QUALITIES AND COMPETENCIES

The leader who discerns a call to minister in evangelization and catechesis must be both a model and a witness. “Only fully initiated, practicing Catholics who fully adhere to the Church’s teaching in faith and morals and who are models of Christian virtue and courageous witness to the Catholic faith should be designated as parish catechetical leaders” (NDC, p. 225). As a person intimately involved in the evangelizing, catechizing mission of the Church, the minister must first and

foremost be a person whose life is centered on Jesus Christ—a person compelled to share the message of Jesus in word and action. In addition to the dispositions mentioned above, the leader possesses certain personal qualities and catechetical and administrative competencies.

See also
Guideline 3
Core
Competencies

Personal Qualities

As a representative of the Church the life, lifestyle and ministry of the leader proclaims, teaches and echoes the Word of God as it is:

- Revealed in Scripture – the catechetical minister studies and reflects on the Scriptures, integrates the Word into life and ministry, and believes in the Gospel and its power to transform lives. She or he understands that “Sacred Scripture, the word of God written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has the preeminent position in the life of the Catholic Church and especially in the ministry of evangelization and catechesis” (NDC, p. 70).
- Expressed in the Rich Tradition of the Church – the minister is firmly committed to the Church and bonded to it with deep love. The minister understands that the Church interprets the Word of God through the Magisterium, which “ensures the Church’s fidelity to the teaching of the apostles in matters of faith and morals” (NDC, p. 54). She or he is aware that the Church is a “natural environment for catechesis... [and] the place where men and women are invited to conversion and discipleship...” (NDC, p. 57). The minister is also aware of the vast contribution which the Church has made to human growth and potential and also of its need for conversion and renewal.
- Experienced in Community - the catechetical minister is able to foster community because she or he has experienced community. The minister creates an environment where a true sense of communion and community can be experienced. She or he understands that faith grows and is nurtured in the catechetical process and that “ that catechesis

springs from the Church” (NDC, p. 56).

- Celebrated in Prayer and Sacraments - She or he is strengthened and supported in her/his ministry by a life of prayer and participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. The leader provides opportunities for members of the catechetical and evangelization staff to pray, grow and celebrate together.
- Lived in Service - The leader seeks to meet the needs of those with whom she or he works. In a spirit of true discipleship she or he gives generously and willingly.

In short, catechetical or evangelization leaders have responded to the call to discipleship and freely share the gift of faith, taking to heart the Gospel imperative "the gift you have received, give as a gift" (Matthew 10:7-8). They are patient and understanding, gently leading and inviting persons to grow toward mature faith, yet fully aware that the gift may not be accepted, or that they may not see the fruits of their labor. With a spirit of true humility, these leaders realize that they are the Lord's instruments and have a healthy appreciation of their own limitations. As persons of mature faith, catechetical and evangelization leaders are open to change yet hold deep Christian convictions. The Church calls forth leaders who are "deeply committed to the fullness of the Christian proclamation in the Roman Catholic tradition, and who are at the same time committed to the process of change" (Department of Education, p. 3).

Catechetical Competencies

The catechetical activity of the Church is a "prime aspect of [the Church's] mission" (CT, 15). The catechetical leader has a firm grasp on the teachings of the Church as put forth in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, applicable ecclesial documents and pastoral letters. The DCM understands that "at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus..." (CCC, 426; CT, 5). She or he is able to articulate and promote a vision for catechesis which is Christocentric and Trinitarian (See GDC 82).

Christocentricity in catechesis also means the intention to transmit not one’s own teaching or that of some other master, but the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Truth that he communicates or, to put it more precisely, the Truth that he is.... Whatever be the level of his [or her] responsibility in the Church, every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his [or her] teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus (CT, 6).

The California Diocesan Directors of Catechetical Ministry and Directors of Youth Ministry propose several competencies which should be possessed by those involved in the ministry of catechesis. Those leaders have the ability to:

- assist people in understanding and interpreting their lives and faith experiences in light of Scripture and the Church’s Tradition;
- articulate a vision of evangelizing catechesis and the catechetical process as stated in contemporary documents of the Church;
- apply appropriate principles of human development, especially faith and moral development in programs;
- utilize appropriate methodologies of adult-centered or child-centered learning;
- implement and support the program of catechist certification in accordance with diocesan guidelines;
- choose and implement an appropriate curriculum consistent with diocesan guidelines;
- provide opportunities to experience Christian service, linking such opportunities to foster peace and justice;
- recognize the various cultural expressions of Christian faith within the community and incorporate them into programs and celebrations;
- provide opportunities for participation in prayer, personal spiritual development and communal worship. (Adapted from “Guidelines for the Certification of Parish Catechetical and Youth Ministry Coordinators”)

Administrative Competencies

Since the work of evangelization and catechesis is person-centered, the catechetical or evangelization leader must be able to relate well and work effectively with others. She or he holds a healthy respect for individual growth and differences, is aware of individual and community needs and is capable of adapting to various situations. The leader is sensitive to differing personality types, a variety of leadership styles and varying views of Church and ministry. She or he is skilled in communication techniques and the dynamics of working with various ages and

See
Practical
Helps 3-5
Scheduling
Planning

groups. The effective leader can creatively dwell within tension, bringing a sense of balance which prizes unity and appreciates diversity.

Organizational ability is a definite requirement for all catechetical and evangelization leaders, but especially for the Director of Catechetical Ministry. The ability to successfully manage an office, schedule activities, plan and carry out programming, conduct meetings, prepare budgets, and keep adequate records are necessary competencies. A well-organized leader ensures the optimum use of time, money, materials, space and personnel.

Organization, however, does not imply rigidity. Well-organized procedures and programs will free the catechetical or evangelization leader to tend to the inevitable “unplanned for” events that creep into the daily routine. The leader must be gracious and approachable, with a spirit of hospitality and invitation which welcomes people. The catechetical or evangelization minister understands that numerous persons whom one encounters, the phone calls and emails, and the written communications to which she or he must attend each day are not interruptions in one’s planned events but rather are opportunities for evangelization and ministry. The attentive leader is aware that she or he is often a person’s initial contact with the Church when they inquire about neglected sacramental preparation for their children, or how to become “Catholic” or how to “come back” to the Church.

The recruitment, formation and empowerment of numerous persons necessary for various programs are key responsibilities of the catechetical or evangelization leader. The leader should possess a dynamism and spirit which invites, encourages and motivates others. All of the catechetical and evangelization leadership of a parish should view recruitment and empowerment of persons as a major task, always seeking to put the correct person, with the corresponding gifts, in the correct position. While the DCM may have major responsibility for recruiting catechists, and the RCIA Coordinator may have major responsibility for recruiting team members and sponsors and the Evangelization Coordinator may have major responsibility for home visitors, all catechetical and evangelization leadership should consistently seek out people who can serve in any of the ministries of the

**See
Practical
Help 1-2
Recruiting for
Evangelization
and
Catechetical
Ministry;
Nurturing
Those who
Serve**

parish. The effective leader cultivates the skill needed to work with other professional staff persons, volunteers, parents, parish boards and other members of the parish community.

These qualities and competencies provide both an ideal and a challenge to the leader. It is unlikely that any one person embodies all the qualities and competencies, but the effective minister strives for the ideal with a constant awareness of the need for on-going growth and continued conversion and commitment.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

In order to assure quality programming, it is of utmost importance that the Catechetical and Evangelization leaders be adequately prepared to assume responsibility for ministry in the parish. Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord designates four areas of formation which provide a framework for the formation of priests, deacons and lay ministers:

- *Human qualities* critical to form wholesome relationships and necessary to be apt instruments of God’s love and compassion
- *A spirituality* and practice of prayer that root them in God’s Trinitarian life, grounding and animating all they do in ministry
- Adequate *knowledge* in theological and pastoral studies, along with the *intellectual skill* to use it among the people and cultures of our country
- The practical *pastoral abilities* called for in their particular ministry (CW, p. 34).

The National Directory for Catechesis notes that “preparation for service as a parish catechetical leader should include advanced studies in theology, Scripture, Liturgy, catechesis and catechetical methodology, educational psychology and theory, and administration, as well as practical catechetical experience with adults, youth, and children” (NDC p. 225). This background will provide the DCM with the theological and catechetical expertise necessary to fulfill the requirements of the position.

See
Guideline 4
Recommended
Qualifications

*“The gift you have received,
give as a gift.” Matthew 10:8*

In the Diocese of San Diego, it is highly desirable that the professional Director of Catechetical Ministry hold a Masters Degree in the area of Religious Education, Theology or Catechetics. It is strongly recommended that the person who does not hold a degree and wishes to minister as a DCM or Program Coordinator in evangelization or catechetical ministry deepen and complete their theological formation by obtaining a Certificate in Catechetical Ministry offered by the San Diego Diocesan Institute. It is commendable that many parishes offer financial support to their ministers who are completing their formation.

See
Guideline 6
Job
Classifications

EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

While academic degrees are highly valued, it must also be noted that the experience which one brings to his or her position is of great importance. All Directors of Catechetical Ministry should have successful experience in catechetical programming and experience in teaching religion at various levels. Program Coordinators should have experience in their area of ministry, such as RCIA, Special Religious Education, Adult Faith Formation, etc. All catechetical and evangelization leadership should have experience in working with adults and be sensitive to the various people and cultures that comprise the Church of San Diego.

PROCEDURES FOR SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

The Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry accepts resumes of persons seeking positions as a DCM or Program Coordinator and will forward resumes to pastors seeking to employ ministers. Pastors interview candidates and hire the person best suited to the needs of the parish community. Compensated leadership are parish employees. The parishes of the Diocese are Equal Opportunity Employers and do not unlawfully discriminate.

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SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

All new personnel (compensated and non-compensated) receive and understand the Diocesan Policies on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Abuse by Church Ministers, and Safe Environment Programs and agree to comply with these policies. All adults who work with children or young people on a regular basis are screened and acknowledge in writing that they understand and will abide by the *Diocesan Code of Ethical Standards for Church Ministers*.

See
Diocesan Policy
Administration
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22
23
24

COMPENSATION FOR SERVICES

While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes...Those who serve the Church by their labor, including priests and religious, should receive a sufficient livelihood and enjoy that social security which is customary in their region. Lay people should be given fair wages and a system for promotion (JW, section III).

The ministry of the Director of Catechetical Ministry provides the parish community with a much needed service in order for the parish community to effectively and systematically fulfill its teaching mission. The question of adequate salary and benefits for the DCM is one which presents concern on the part of both the parish community and the DCM. The Director of Catechetical Ministry has a right to expect a living wage. The National Directory for Catechesis notes that “depending on the size and scope of the parish catechetical program, parishes should allocate their resources so that they are able to acquire the services of a competent and qualified catechetical leader (or someone in the process of becoming qualified and competent) or to share those services with another parish” (NDC, p. 224). The parish may need to examine its priorities in order to provide a just salary for the DCM. “It may be that some individual [DCM's], in addition to their gift of catechesis, have a special charism of poverty; but it is wrong for clergy and parishioners—especially those who themselves have relative financial security—to demand extraordinary

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sacrifices of the [DCM]" (NCEA, 54).

In order to assist parishes in determining an appropriate salary for the DCM or other Program Coordinators, the Diocese of San Diego, Office for Human Resources provides sample job classifications and pay ranges for parish-based positions in the Diocese.

In addition to salary and benefits, the parish should provide the Director of Catechetical Ministry with appropriate office space and adequate secretarial assistance in order to carry out her/his ministry.

... The Church is bidden by God and by events—each of them a call from him—to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. This is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith. And an attitude of faith always has reference to the faithfulness of God, who never fails to respond (CT, 15).

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

The leader is accountable for her/his work and views giving responsible account of time, program, personnel, budget, successes and failures, not as a lack of trust, but rather as a means of assuring the parish community that the catechetical and evangelization needs are being met in the best possible manner. The Director of Catechetical Ministry or Program Coordinator, whether compensated or non-compensated, is accountable for his or her work and welcomes evaluation. The parish community has a right to expect and be assured that a competent job is being accomplished.

Regular reports of programs, statistics and finances should be considered routine. The maintenance of adequate records of students, catechists, personnel, programs, income and expenditures, etc. is normative. Catechetical and Evangelization leadership understand that money, materials and space belong to the parish community and they have a responsibility to be accountable and use these

See
Guideline 6
Job
Classifications

See
Policy 240

See
Practical
Help 11-12
Budget
Preparation

parish resources wisely.

In addition to regular reports to the pastor, pastoral council and parish community, the leader should conduct periodic self-evaluations and on-going evaluation of programs. The pastor or immediate supervisor of the DCM should conduct periodic appraisals of the DCM; DCM’s should conduct periodic appraisals of those under their supervision. The performance appraisal should be based on the job description. It should include identification of strengths and weaknesses of the leader and realistic goals and objectives for future improvement. If open communication, regular reporting and on-going program evaluation is occurring, the performance appraisal should not be overly time-consuming, threatening or traumatic.

See
Guideline 8
Sample
Evaluation
Form

CONTACT WITH THE DIOCESAN OFFICE

Upon assuming responsibilities at the parish, the new catechetical or evangelization leader should contact the Diocesan Director for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry. New leaders are asked to complete a Leadership Profile and are also encouraged to attend orientation meetings for new personnel and initiatory interviews, if they desire. It is suggested that the leader forward a copy of her/his job description to the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry when it is agreed upon with the Pastor.

The Diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry maintains a personnel file on each DCM and Program Coordinator who submits a profile. All Catechetical and Evangelization leaders are invited and encouraged to attend leadership inservices and other programs designed for their specific ministry and to keep in close contact with the Diocesan Office to maintain open communication and foster a spirit of collaboration.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The Catechetical or Evangelization leader is aware of the need for continual growth and learning. In the Diocese of San Diego, opportunities for professional growth are offered on an on-going basis. The Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry provides regular inservice days for Catechetical and Evangelization Leaders which enhance their ministry. The varied program offers workshops, lectures and roundtables in the areas of theology, catechetics, sacraments, evangelization, administration and spiritual growth. An orientation program for new DCM's and Program Coordinators is scheduled yearly in the fall. The office offers an Advent morning of reflection and end-of-year retreat.

The Diocesan Office sponsors conferences, workshops and renewal days given by persons of national or local prominence, providing opportunities for growth in knowledge and expertise in specific areas. Program offerings are listed in the Program Brochure issued at the beginning of each year, on the diocesan website, in the diocesan newspaper and in periodic mailings. The San Diego Diocesan Institute provides courses in the areas of theology, scripture, liturgy and ministry. Other diocesan offices also provide workshops and courses in their areas of responsibility.

The National Directory notes that these catechetical leaders should not simply be viewed as administrators. “The need for systematic training and study should not be minimized. They are catechists first. They should continue their personal, spiritual, and professional development and participate in diocesan programs of inservice, training and formation, catechetical institutes, conventions, retreats and accredited programs” (NDC, p. 226). Attendance at these events should be considered a normal part of the work schedule for the catechetical or evangelization leader and should be negotiated with the pastor and included in the job description.

Tracking Professional Growth

It is recommended that DCM's and Coordinators keep a record of the renewal

and professional growth activities which they have completed. The Office will maintain a current file on each DCM, but it is the responsibility of the DCM to inform the Office of completed renewal hours. Forms for this purpose are sent to DCM's and Coordinators in the spring of each year.

AVOIDING BURNOUT

Taking into account all that has been said, it is easy to understand why many Church leaders are candidates for stress, exhaustion or burnout. The catechetical or evangelization leader will strive to achieve the delicate balance of burning with zeal and enthusiasm without burning out. Certainly prayer, spiritual direction, discernment, and support of others involved in the ministry of catechesis will provide strength to meet the many challenges. Use of allotted vacation benefit will provide refreshment and renewal each year.

Catechetical and evangelization leadership will need to eliminate certain stress causing behaviors, such as the tendency to over plan each day, the inability to relax without feeling guilty, the compulsion to overwork, impatience with interruptions, or the tendency to think about all the projects one is involved in at the same time. Stress is not necessarily bad, but the effective leader learns how to deal with stress creatively. Leaders will need to discern which stresses actually energize and allow them to perform optimally, and which stresses make them "stressed out."

The leader can be easily overwhelmed and caught in a dichotomy familiar to all Church ministers—the better the person is in the ministry, the more people will be drawn to the leader and the easier it is to be consumed in the process. The minister wants to touch as many people as possible and yet must remain in personal, physical and spiritual health so that she/he has something to offer. It is important for Catechetical and Evangelization leaders to know themselves, to set attainable goals and to use common sense in planning programs and activities.

**See
Practical
Help 13
Stress/
Burnout**

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Professional counseling service is available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to employees and their family members who are experiencing problems of a personal nature.

DCM’s, Program Coordinators and other employees of parishes within the Diocese of San Diego, and any members of their family living in their households, are eligible to use the EAP counseling services free of charge (up to eight sessions per year) and in complete confidentiality. To make an appointment, call the EAP directly at 1-800-342-8111.

**See
Guideline 9
Employee
Assistance
Program**

HARASSMENT

In accord with our respect for the dignity of each individual, the Diocese of San Diego maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment in any form, including sexual harassment. Harassment is any form of conduct that is not welcome, is personally offensive, and undermines the integrity of employment and professional relationships. The Church takes particular offense to this type of behavior.

Any employee who is found to harass or to discriminate against another employee on any unlawful or inappropriate basis will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The diocese encourages individuals who believe they are being harassed to promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. However, if this is either ineffective in stopping the behavior or, for whatever reason, employees are not comfortable with this direct communication, they should immediately contact their supervisor. If the supervisor is the source of the prohibited harassment, or is unwilling or unable to assist the employee, the matter should be reported to the Office for Human Resources as soon as possible.

The Diocese of San Diego has implemented a formal Policy on Sexual Misconduct which provides reporting requirements and procedures for the

**See
Diocesan
Personnel
Policies
Harassment**

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investigation and remedy of harassment incidents. If a person believes that they have been the object of sexual misconduct, or have witnessed such behavior, they should notify their immediate supervisor or the Director of Human Resources, Diocese of San Diego. Any such notification will be kept confidential.

TERMINATION

In accordance with civil law and within the context of the social teaching of the Church, absent individual employment contracts, personnel are employed for an indefinite period and are subject to termination at any time, for any legal reason, with or without cause or notice. In like manner, employees may terminate their employment at any time for any reason.

When employees are contemplating termination of their employment, it is recommended that ample notice be given so that catechetical and evangelization programming will not suffer and appropriate replacements can be found. It is good practice to give as much notice as possible, but at least two weeks notice is recommended.

When employment is terminated, all records of students and personnel are the property of the parish.

**See
Guideline 10
Code of
Conduct**

**See
Policy 240**