

Catechetical Program Inventory-Grades K-8 2015-2016

The Office of Catechesis and Youth Ministry of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee conducted a survey of parish religious education programs during June - July 2016. 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 124 of 199 parishes--a 62 percent response rate. These responses came from 104 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.¹

Position titles

33 respondents (32%) said their job title was Director of Religious Education (DRE), the most frequent title. Other common titles included Director of Child Ministry (8), Director of Faith Formation or Life Long Faith Formation (8), Director of Christian Formation (4), Director of Youth Ministry (7), Pastoral Associate (3).

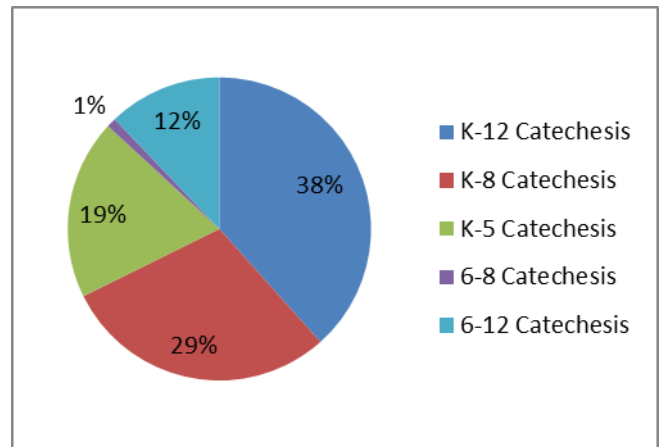
¹ The responses in this report will not all add to 104 because: (1) many questions asked respondents to check all areas that applied; and (2) not all responded to all questions or all parts of a question. Responses are often reported in order of magnitude, not necessarily in the order listed in the questionnaire. Percentages are rounded, and so sometimes do not total 100%.

Areas of responsibility

Respondents were asked to check all the areas that applied. The graph shows the range of grade levels respondents are responsible for. 38% of the respondents identified that they were responsible for Catechesis for grade K-12.

Area of responsibility	# of responses	% of responses
K-5 catechesis	86	85%
Sacramental preparation	81	80%
6-8 catechesis	80	79%
Preschool catechesis	55	54%
Family Formation	54	53%
9-12 catechesis	50	50%
Confirmation preparation	47	47%
Youth ministry	36	36%

Total Respondents: 101



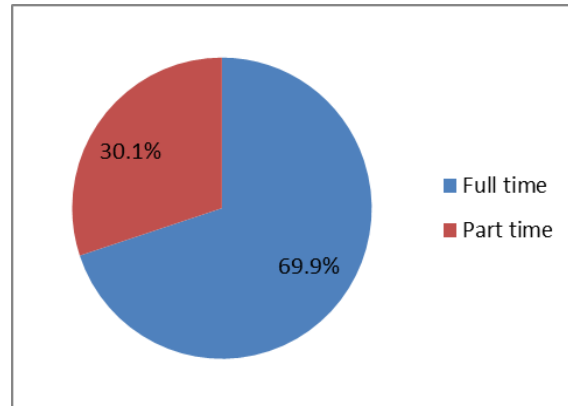
Other areas identified by several respondents included adult formation, RCIA & RCIC, baptism prep, Children’s Liturgy of the Word, human concerns, bereavement, safe environment coordinator, VBS, and young adult formation.

Full or part time position

When asked if their position was full or part-time, over two-thirds of the respondents (70%) reported holding full time positions.

Status of position	# of responses
Full time	72
Part time	31

Total Respondents: 103



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. About one in four respondents (21%) were involved in a collaborative program with more than one parish.² Thirteen respondents were involved in 2-parish arrangements, 8 in 3-parish arrangements, 1 in a 6-parish setting.

Parish collaboration	# of responses	% of responses
Responsible for one parish only	81	79%
Responsible for joint/collaborative programs in more than one parish	22	21%
Collaborate with a staff person from another parish on a joint program	8	8%

Total Respondents: 103

² To explain the 21 percent reference, note that 79 percent of respondents indicated they were responsible for one parish only; respondents could and did respond positively to both other alternatives.

Association membership

Respondents were asked what professional associations they belong to. Only 37% of respondents answered this question. Of those who indicated that they belonged to an association; over three fourths belong to Mareda. 9 respondents stated that they belonged to multiple associations. “Other” responses included WDREF, NALM, NCEA, ACCCA.

Association	# of responses
Mareda	37
NCCL	10
NACYML	7
PMMA	6

Total Respondents: 46

Management of religious education program data

Respondents were asked how they manage of Religious Education Program Data. Not all respondents answered this question. “Other” responses made up 41% of the responses and included Excel (13), Access (3), Combination of software (5), Paper files (7).

Area of responsibility	# of responses	% of responses
PDS	43	43%
ACS	9	9%
Parishsoft	6	6%
WeShare	2	2%

Total Respondents: 101

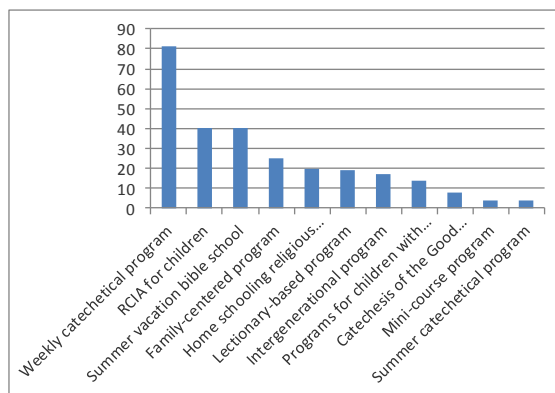
Catechetical Program Information

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.

Models of religious education	# of responses	% of responses
Weekly catechetical program	81	85%
RCIA for children	40	42%
Summer vacation bible school	40	42%
Family-centered program	25	26%
Home schooling religious education	20	21%
Lectionary-based program	19	20%
Intergenerational program	17	18%
Programs for children with special needs	14	15%
Catechesis of Good Shepherd	8	8%
Mini-course program	4	4%
Summer catechetical program	4	4%

Total Respondents: 95



Number of participants in catechetical programs

Respondents were asked for a count of participants in their programs, by grade level. The total numbers for each grade level is shown in the chart below.³ The total number of participants in K-8 programs varies greatly, from one parish total of 12 to another parish with 523 participants.

Grades	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Total # participants	872	1562	1950	1455	1369	1290	1271	1254	1321
Program size	0-53	2-138	0-123	2-57	2-70	1-48	0-64	0-60	1-61
# of responses	79	79	79	77	78	78	76	75	76

Annual contact hours

Grades	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
Average contact hours	27	28	30	28	28	28	29	29	29
Range of hours	12 - 60	17 - 60	17-60	17 - 60	17 - 60	17 - 60	17 - 60	17 - 60	17 - 60
Median	27	28	30	28	28	28	29	28	28
# of respondents	76	79	79	77	78	79	79	77	78

³ Not all respondents answered the question and some did not report participants at every grade level.

Catechetical textbooks/series used

Respondents were asked what textbook or series they used for 1st-6th grade catechesis. Parishes reported using 15 different series by the major Catholic publishers including 5 bilingual series. 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, Faith and Word Edition (1-6)*, RCL Benziger, 2008 (15% of respondents); *Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts (1-6)*, Loyola Press, 2005, 2013 (13% respondents) ; *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies: What the Church Believes and Teaches Handbook*, Pflaum, 2010 (11 % respondents); *Alive In Christ*, Our Sunday Visitor, 2014 (10% respondents); *Call to Faith (K-6)*, Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum, 2005, 2009 (10% respondents). Some 6th grade programs are using middle school materials such as *Edge by Life Teen (7)*. The total number of respondents was 90.

There was even greater diversity at the middle school level, with 17 different textbooks or published programs used, along with supplemental and locally produced materials. The most commonly used textbooks were *Catholic Connections for Middle Schoolers*, Saint Mary's Press, 2009, 2014 (15%), *Blest Are We (7-8)*, RCL Benziger, 2003, 2010 (8%), *Christ Our Life: New Evangelization Ed.*, Loyola, 2016 (8 % respondents) *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies with What the Church Believes and Teaches Handbook*, 2010 (7%). Some other common responses were *Edge by Life Teen (7)* and *Catholic Faith Handbook (4)*The total number of respondents was 75.

The most commonly used programs for preschool and kindergarten were: *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*, Pflaum Publishing, 2010 (20%), *God Loves Us / God Made Everything series (3, 4, K)*, Loyola Press, 2008, 2010 (14%), *Allelu! Growing and Celebrating with Jesus (3, 4, 5K)*, Our Sunday Visitor, 2010, 2011, 2012 (11%), *Blest Are We*, RCL Benziger, 2002, 2004, 2008 (10%). The total number of respondents was 70.

Class times

Respondents were asked when they held classes. The largest number held classes on a Sunday Morning (72%), followed by Weekday evening (62%).⁴

When classes are held	# of respondents	% of respondents
Sunday morning	68	72%
Weekday evening	59	62%
Sunday evening	14	15%
After school	9	9%
Summer weekdays	5	5%
Saturday morning	5	5%

Total Respondents: 95

Scheduling alternatives

When asked if they offered more than one scheduling option for a particular level, 39 percent said yes; 61 percent said no. 9 respondents did not answer the questions.

⁴ Numbers add up to more than 100% because some parishes offer one 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 indicated they use take-home materials.

Methods of parent involvement	# of responses	% of responses
Take-home materials	82	89%
Special programs for parents	56	61%
Intergenerational sessions	43	47%
Work with children in the classroom	37	4%

Total Respondents: 92

"Other" opportunities included children take home work to be completed with parent, parent/child sessions, parent meetings, "breakfast in Bethlehem," adult education at same time as children's class, and emails to parents.

Annual fees

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

	One child	Two children	Three children	Maximum
Lowest fee	\$10	\$30	\$35	\$20
Highest fee	\$210	\$420	\$630	\$630
Average fee	\$95	\$185	\$234	\$237
Median fee	\$95	\$173	\$230	\$225
# of respondents	92	86	81	76

Assessments

Respondents were asked what assessments they use. About half of the respondents, 51 percent, said they use tests provide by their textbook publisher.

Assessment	# of responses	% of responses
Tests provided by textbook publisher	48	51%
None	30	32%
Archdiocesan Religious Assessments	29	31%
NCEA's ACRE	3	3%

Total Respondents: 94

"Other" methods of assessment included assessments developed by catechists.

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)	12
Mainstream children with extra assistance from catechists or aides	10
Catechist or tutor works one-on-one or in special group	1
Treat each child and situation individually as needed	5
Looking into or in process of creating program	2

33 respondents answered this question.

Summer vacation bible school

46 respondents indicated they planned to hold a summer vacation bible school in 2016. Most programs began with 3K or 4K. The ages of the oldest participants varied however many programs ended around middle school. Almost all respondents used published VBS materials.

Children’s liturgy of the word

Respondents were asked how often their parish offers Children’s Liturgy of the Word during Sunday Mass. Over one third of respondents stated that they offer it weekly.

Frequency of CLoW	# of responses	% of responses
Weekly	26	35%
Doesn’t Offer	17	23%
Other	17	23%
Bi-weekly	9	12%
Monthly	5	7%

Total Respondents: 74

“Other” responses included: during summer, school year, and during Lent and Advent.

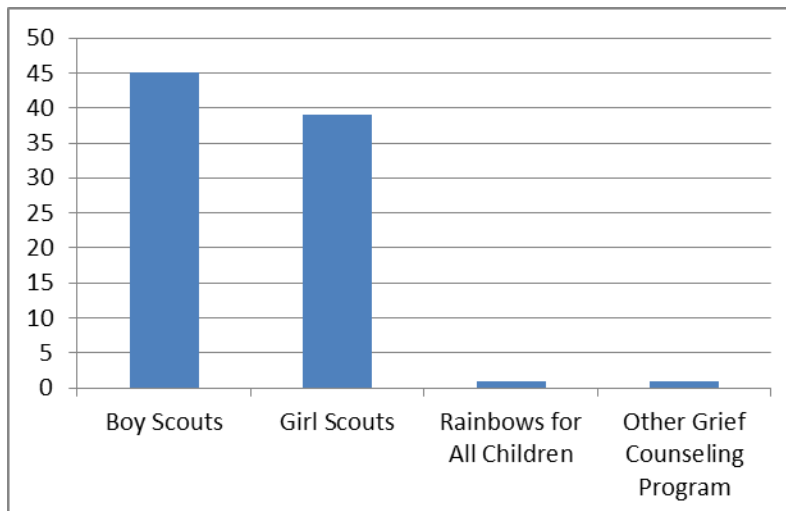
Additional Programs for Children

Respondents were asked to indicate additional programs that are offered at their parishes for children. Two thirds of the respondents who answered this question, offer both Boy and Girl Scouts at their parish.

Additional Programs	# of responses	% of responses
Boy Scouts	45	85%
Girl Scouts	39	74%
Other	10	19%
Rainbows for All Children	1	2%
Other Grief Counseling Program	1	2%

Total Respondents: 53

“Other” responses included: Athletics, Little Flowers Girl Group, youth rallies, retreats, Children’s Chorus, Healing Hearts. A few respondents stated that Scouts was offered either through the school or independent of the parish.



Infant Baptism Preparation

Position responsible for infant baptism preparation

Respondents were asked what position is responsible for Baptism preparation at their parish. 18 respondents (20%) said that the Deacon was responsible for baptism preparation, the most frequent position. Other common positions included Director of Religious Education or Director of Faith Formation(17), Pastoral Associate (12) Pastor (9) Combinations (Ex: Pastor & Deacon or Pastoral Associate, Pastor or Pastoral Associate & DRE) (9), Volunteer (8), Baptism Coordinator (1). 90 respondents answered this question.

Baptismal Preparation Model

Respondents were asked what model they use for infant baptismal preparation. Over half of the respondents who answered the question, use the group model.

Baptismal Preparation Model	# of responses	% of responses
Group	46	60%
Individual	23	28%
Other	10	12%

Total Respondents: 81

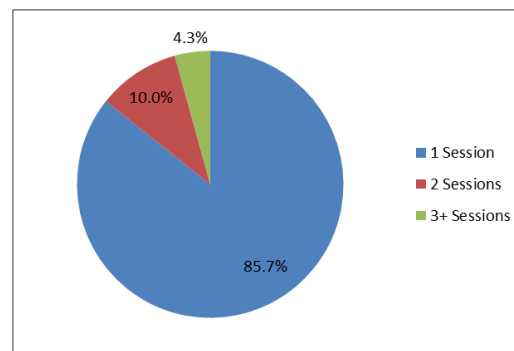
A majority of those who chose other stated that they offer both individual and group.

Baptismal Sessions

Respondents were asked how many parent sessions are in the baptismal preparation. Over 80% stated that the baptismal preparation is only one (1) session.

# of Sessions	# of responses	% of responses
1	60	86%
2	7	10%
3+	3	4%

Total Respondents: 70



Baptismal resources

Respondents were asked what resources they use for baptismal preparation. 49 respondents answered

Some of the common resources were *Your Baby's Baptism* (8), *We Believe and Celebrate Baptism* (4). Many stated that they used multiple sources (15) or materials created at parish (7).

Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation - number of participants

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

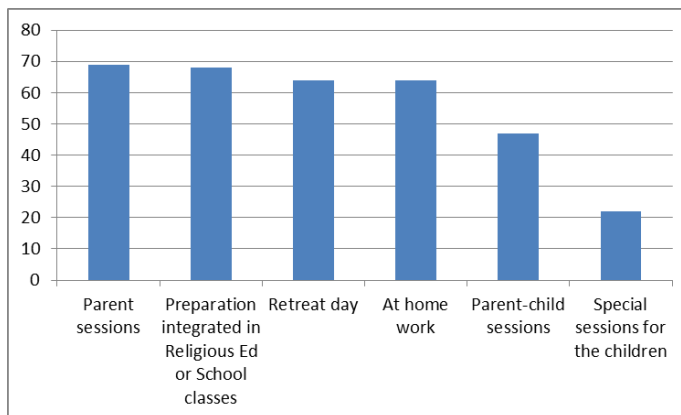
Program	First Communion	First Reconciliation	RCIA for children
Smallest class	2	2	1
Largest class	155	150	12
Average	39	39	3
Total	3202	3203	126
# of respondents	83	83	67

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 81 percent.

Sacramental programs	# of responses	% of responses
Parent sessions	69	81%
Integration with religious ed or school classes	68	80%
Retreat day	64	75%
At home work	64	75%
Parent-child sessions	47	55%
Special sessions for the children	22	26%

Total Respondents: 85



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 19 respondents. *Call to Celebrate: Reconciliation*, OSV Curriculum, 2007 was indicated by 8 respondents. The most used Spanish book is *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace (primary)*, RCL Benziger, 2006, 2015, which was indicated by 5 respondents. Seven other published texts were also reported. Some respondents said they used locally prepared or customized materials; others simply used the grade-level religion textbook. 69 respondents answered this question.

When asked about textbooks for First Reconciliation for older children, only one text was used by more than 10 respondents: *God's Gift – Reconciliation (Intermediate)*, Loyola Press, 2016, was indicated by 12 respondents. *Call to Celebrate: Reconciliation and Eucharist (intermediate)*, OSV, 2007 was indicated by nine respondents. The most used Spanish book is *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace (intermediate)*, RCL Benziger, 2006, 2015, which was indicated by 6 respondents. Eight other published texts were also reported. Some respondents said they used locally prepared or customized materials; others simply used the grade-level religion textbook. 57 respondents answered this question.

When asked about textbooks for First Communion preparation for grade 2, only one textbook was used by 20 or more respondents: *God's Gift-Eucharist (Primary)*, Loyola Press, 2009 , 2016. *Call to Celebrate: Eucharist*, OSV Curriculum, 2007 was indicated by 9 respondents. Eight other published texts were also reported. Some respondents said they used locally prepared or customized materials; others used the grade-level religion textbook. 71 respondents answered this question.

Regarding textbooks for First Communion for older children, 11 different published texts were reported, as well as locally developed materials, with one textbook used by 11 respondents, *God's Gift – Eucharist (Intermediate)*, Loyola Press, 2016. Other commonly used books were: *Call to Celebrate: Reconciliation and Eucharist (intermediate)*, OSV, 2007 (9), *Eucharist: We Give Thanks and Praise (intermediate)*, RCL Benziger, 2006, 2015 (8).

There was no consensus among the 34 respondents who reported on material they used for RCIA for children. The most used material is *Journey of Faith* (9). Other responses included several different texts that present a summary of the Catholic faith, adaptation of grade-level materials and self-created lessons.

Sacramental preparation fee

Respondents were asked about fees they charge for sacramental preparation. 40% had no fee for First Reconciliation preparation; 25% had no charge for First Communion preparation. Only 8 respondents reported having a fee for RCIA for children. The chart below reports on those parish programs who charge fees for sacramental preparation.

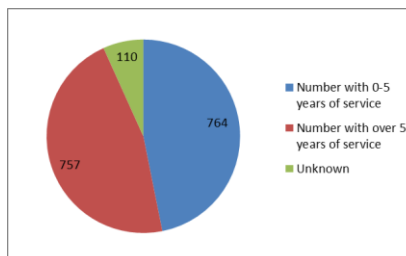
	First Reconciliation	First Communion	RCIA for children
# that charge a fee	48	59	8
Lowest fee	\$5	\$7	\$20
Highest fee	\$75	\$75	\$90
Average fee	\$27	\$31	\$51
Median fee	\$25	\$30	\$50
# of Respondents	81	79	57

Catechists And Assistants

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 1 to 52 catechists. 59 respondents indicated they had one or more certified catechists.

Total number of catechists reported	1631	
Number with certification	312 ⁵	19%
Number with 0-5 years of service	764	47%
Number with over 5 years of service	757	46%



Adults serving in religious education program

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

Service	# of responses	% of responses
Substitute catechists	83	90%
Catechist aides	65	71%
Office assistants	41	45%
Hall monitors and greeters	40	43%
Presenters on special topics	39	42%
Craft and project assistants	36	39%
Special event team	31	34%
Assistants for children with special needs	30	33%
Field Trip Chaperone	30	33%
Set up/equipment assistants	19	21%

Total Respondents: 92

Individual respondents added: Children's Liturgy of the Word Teacher, Nursery, Vacation Bible School, Religious Education Committee, gym monitor, parking lot attendant, and service/retreat leaders

Catechists - formation

Respondents were asked what kind of formation they provide for their catechists. Individual orientation was most often mentioned (85% of respondents). Over half also used in-service training, sharing reading materials, and catechist group sharing.

Formation opportunities	# of responses	% of response
Individual orientation	82	85%
In-service training	64	66%
Sharing reading materials	63	65%
Catechist group sharing	59	61%
Speakers/adult education	40	41%
Funding to attend conferences/courses	39	40%
Forming the Catechetical Spirit program	25	26%
District catechist day	24	25%
Mentor program	9	9%
Echoes of Faith	5	5%

Total Respondents: 97

⁵ Several reported they did not know how many of their catechists were certified.